



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

**IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES USED TO MANAGE CONFLICT BETWEEN
STUDENTS AND STAFF IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: TOWARDS A
COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK**

**VALENTINO TIPITANA ZIMPITA
201506882**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION, FACULTY
OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

SUPERVISOR

PROFESSOR SYMPHOROSA REMBE

JANUARY, 2018

**IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES USED TO MANAGE CONFLICT BETWEEN
STUDENTS AND STAFF IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: TOWARDS A
COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK**

VALENTINO TIPITANA ZIMPITA

2018

Abstract

The study aimed at examining how strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented. This was after it had been noted that conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi usually ended in violence. The study employed a pragmatic research paradigm. In this paradigm, a researcher employs mixed methods approach which collects both quantitative and qualitative data. Using a concurrent triangulation mixed method design, the two types of data were collected concurrently and analysed simultaneously. Study participants were head teachers, teachers, students, education officials and parents. Most of the teachers were randomly sampled while a few other teachers, the head teachers, the education officials and the parents were purposefully sampled. The study found that there were various causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi which included misunderstanding of human rights, poor communication between students and staff, poor school management by head teachers and lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them. The study further found that conflict was in a way beneficial to schools as it was a learning point for both students and staff. However, such benefits were overshadowed by the many evils that violence brought such as disturbing teaching and learning. The study also found that there were two approaches in the way schools managed conflict; engagement of students and calling for police intervention. It transpired that on the overall, stakeholders were aware of different conflict management skills but they did not know how best to use them. In addition, it transpired that stakeholders were not comfortable with win-win approaches to conflict management. This was against a background that the stakeholders were involved in conflict management in different ways. It also came out clear that support to secondary schools in the management of conflict was at two levels; school level and system level. On the part of monitoring, it transpired that the mechanism which were there were ad hoc and they included inspection visits and the requirement that head teachers should always submit reports which could carry issues related to conflict. The study concluded that poorly managed conflicts which turned into violence were a menace to secondary schools in Malawi. In this regard, there was need to ensure effective conflict management in order to avoid violence. To achieve this, the study has made a number of

recommendations. Among them, it has been recommended that schools should from time to time take stock of the likely causes of conflict and address them accordingly. It has also been recommended that schools should put in place mechanisms for ensuring two way communication so that students feel free to air out their concerns. At Ministry level, it has been recommended that the MoEST should take guidance and counselling seriously by among other things training teacher councillors and making the post an established one. It has also been recommended that the MoEST should make sure that head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers, parents and even education officials are inducted in conflict management.

Keywords: Conflict management, conflict resolution, strategies, stakeholders

Declaration

I hereby solemnly declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis entitled *“Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi: Towards a comprehensive framework”* is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for the award of any degree or qualification. Where I have used information from the published or unpublished work of other scholars, I have acknowledged such sources both in the text and in the list of references.

Valentine Tipitana Zimpita

January, 2018

Signed.....

Date.....

Declaration on Plagiarism

I **Valentino Tipitana Zimpita**, student number **201506882** hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on plagiarism and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations.

Signature.....

Declaration on Research Ethics Clearance

I **Valentino Tipitana Zimpita**, student number **201506882** hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on research ethics and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations. I have obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Fort Hare's Research Committee and my reference number is: REM301SZIM01

Dedication

To my last born son, Lazarus – Mwana wa a Dad – you remain my hope when life loses its meaning. May the loving God bless you abundantly.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank **Yahweh the Almighty** for his ever growing love and care. He has been very faithful throughout my academic journey which has not been that easy having left secondary school in 1985 with just a Junior Certificate of Education (JCE). He has seen me through thick and thin till today; I am submitting this paper for a PhD in Education. I shall always sing the “Magnificat” – the canticle of Mary – to the glory of the everlasting King; for ever and ever. Amen.

I wish to register my sincere thanks and gratitude to Professor Symphorosa Rembe, my supervisor, for working tirelessly to ensure that I produce an academic paper like this one. She pushed for action where there was need and gave advice on how to proceed where it was necessary. I do not take this for granted. Over and above this, I would like to sincerely appreciate her motherly love through which I benefitted from supervisor-linked bursary. It came at a time when the going got tougher and hope was being overtaken by hopelessness. I do not take her support for granted. Without the Professor, this paper would be a nonstarter. My God bless her abundantly.

I should also sincerely acknowledge the love that the late Dr. Arnold Mwanza had for me. He linked me to University of Hare and encouraged me to take the offer head on although there was no sponsorship. He could not do me any greater favour than this. May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.

It might be lack of appreciation if I do not acknowledge the support I received from Dr. Henry Chinhara who always accommodated me when I was on campus for my studies. His gesture made my stay at the University very easy. To Dr. Jenny Shumba, Dr. Akinyemi Adeola Folasade and all the postgraduate education students, I say thank you very much for your support and encouragement without which my studies would not be easy. May God bless you all.

I owe the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD) a lot of thanks for allowing me to proceed on a paid leave any time I travelled to South Africa. I was able to spend time away from office without

any worries of putting my work at stake. I hope to pay back to the Government through more efficient service delivery using the knowledge, skills and values that I have acquired in the study and similar other experiences.

To my family, thanks a lot for being by my side throughout the study period. There were times when I felt like giving up but you were always there with moral, material and spiritual support that I needed most. In a special way, I would like to thank my second born son, Emmanuel, who assisted me in analysing quantitative data using SPSS and compiling the table of contents using formulas. I felt very good to be assisted by my own child. My God bless you.

Approval by the supervisor

Supervisor Signature

.....

Date:

.....

Candidate Signature

.....

Date

.....

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Declaration	iii
Declaration on Plagiarism	iv
Declaration on Research Ethics Clearance	v
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Approval by the supervisor	ix
List of tables	xx
Acronyms.....	xxii
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Conceptualising conflict.....	2
1.3 Types of conflicts	4
1.4 Classification of conflict	5
1.5 Some cases of conflict in secondary schools	7
1.6 The Malawian context.....	10
1.7 Statement of the problem	14
1.8 Purpose of the study	15
1.9 Research questions and research objectives	15
1.9.1 Main research question	15
1.9.2 Sub-research questions	15
1.10 Significance of the study	16
1.11 Delimitation of the study.....	17
1.12 Limitations of the study.....	17
1.13 Definition of terms	18
1.13.2 Conflict Resolution.....	18
1.13.3 Strategies	18
1.13.4 Stakeholders.....	19
1.14 Chapter outline	19
1.15 Chapter summary.....	20
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	21

2.1 Introduction	21
2.2 Theoretical Framework	21
2.2.1 Views on Conflict	22
2.2.1.1 The Traditional View	23
2.2.1.2. The Human Relations View	23
2.2.1.3 The Interactionist View	23
2.2.1.4 The Managed Conflict View	24
2.2.2 Conceptual guide for stakeholder identification	24
2.2.3 The theories guiding the study	25
2.2.3.1 Human needs theory	25
2.2.3.2 Contingency theory	28
2.2.3.3 The scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology	30
2.3 Review of related literature	31
2.3.1 Causes of conflict in schools	31
2.3.1.1 Unfair treatment of students by administration and teachers	33
2.3.1.2 Use of dictatorial leadership strategies	34
2.3.1.3 Poor communication	35
2.3.1.4 Poor quality or insufficient food	35
2.3.1.5 Lack of entertainment	36
2.3.1.6 Poor sanitation	37
2.3.1.7 Harsh punishments	37
2.3.1.8 Sabotage by students withdrawn from school	38
2.3.1.9 Administrative incompetence	38
2.3.1.10 Non-involvement of students in school administration	39
2.3.1.11 Insufficient resources	40
2.3.1.12 Students' indiscipline	41
2.3.1.13 Other causes	42
2.3.2 Conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi	42
2.3.3 Processes followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools	44
2.3.3.1 Conflict Resolution Education Programme Models	45
2.3.3.2 Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A (CRM-A)	46
2.3.3.3 Louis R. Pondy's Conflict Process Model (CPM)	48

2.3.3.4 Robbins' and Judge's (2013) conflict process and the corresponding two dimensions models	50
2.3.4 Strategies and skills used in the management of conflict.....	51
2.3.4.1 Strategies used in the management of conflict	51
2.3.4.1.1 Competing	55
2.3.4.1.2 Collaborating	56
2.3.4.1.3 Avoiding	56
2.3.4.1.4 Accommodating	57
2.3.4.2 How to use the strategies	58
2.3.4.3 Skills used in the management of conflict.....	59
2.3.5 How stakeholders are involved in the management of conflict in secondary schools.....	62
2.3.5.1 Involvement of head teachers and teachers in conflict management	63
2.3.5.2 Involvement of parents in conflict management	64
2.3.5.3 Involvement of students in conflict management.....	65
2.3.5.4 Involvement of education officials in conflict management	65
2.3.6 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools by education officials and other stakeholders	65
2.3.7 Chapter summary.....	69
METHODOLOGY	71
3.1 Introduction	71
3.2 Research paradigm	71
3.2.1 Positivism.....	73
3.2.2 Post-positivism.....	73
3.2.3 Constructivism	74
3.2.4 Advocacy/participatory world view	75
3.2.5 Pragmatism	75
3.3 Research approach	77
3.3.1 Quantitative approach	77
3.3.2 Qualitative approach.....	77
3.3.3 Mixed approach	78
3.4 Research design.....	79
3.4.1 Sequential mixed design	80
3.4.2 Concurrent mixed design	80

3.4.3 Transformative mixed method design.....	80
3.5 Setting	81
3.6 Population	82
3.7 Sample	83
3.8 Sampling	83
3.8.1 Systematic random sampling	84
3.8.2 Purposive sampling.....	85
3.9 Negotiating entry.....	86
3.10 Data collection	87
3.10.1 Questionnaires	87
3.10.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)	88
3.10.3 Interviews	90
3.10.4 Document analysis.....	91
3.11. Data analysis	91
3.11.1 Analysis of quantitative data	92
3.11.2 Analysis of qualitative data.....	92
3.12 Validity and reliability	93
3.12.1 Validity	93
3.12.2 Reliability	94
3.13 Study credibility and trustworthiness.....	95
3.14 Ethical consideration.....	96
3.14.1 Informed consent	97
3.14.2 Confidentiality	98
3.14.3 Anonymity.....	98
3.14.4 Privacy	99
3.14.5 Honesty and trust.....	99
3.14.6 Protection from harm	99
3.15 Chapter summary.....	100
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	101
4.1 Introduction	101
4.2 Chapter sequence	102
4.3 Biographical Data	102
4.3.1 Information about education system in Malawi	103

4.3.2 Gender information for participants	103
4.3.3 Age and experience of participants	105
4.3.4 Academic qualifications and grades for participants	107
4.3.5 Forms for students	109
4.4 Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi, its effects and why it ended in violence most of the times	110
4.4.1 Causes of conflict in Secondary Schools in Malawi	110
4.4.1.1 Poor diet	111
4.4.1.2 Misunderstanding of human rights	114
4.4.1.3 Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations	116
4.4.1.4 Poor communication	117
4.4.1.5 Unfair treatment of students by staff	118
4.4.1.6 Poor management of school	120
4.4.1.7 Instigation of students by teachers or parents	122
4.4.1.8 Students' indiscipline	124
4.4.1.9 Lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them	125
4.4.1.10 Peer pressure	126
4.4.1.11 Other causes	127
4.4.2 Effects of conflict on secondary schools	128
4.4.2.1 Positive effects of conflict on secondary schools	128
4.4.2.1.1: A learning opportunity for stakeholders	129
4.4.2.1.2 Improvement of infrastructure	131
4.4.2.1.3 An opportunity for students to air out their concerns and be heard	133
4.4.2.1.4 A deterrence to would be offenders	134
4.4.2.2 Negative effects of conflict on secondary schools	134
4.4.2.2.1 A disturbance to teaching and learning	135
4.4.2.2.2 Damage of property	138
4.4.2.2.3 It derailed development	141
4.4.2.2.4 It put lives in danger	142
4.4.3 Why most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence	143
4.4.3.1 Win it all mentality	144
4.4.3.2 Head teachers' lack of conflict management skills	146
4.4.3.3 The only way for students to communicate and be heard	148

4.4.3.4 A means to get rid of a head teacher from a school	149
4.4.3.5 Poor upbringing of students	150
4.5 Processes followed in the management of conflict	150
4.5.1 The general approach to conflict by stakeholders	151
4.5.1.1 Approach A: Students' engagement	151
4.5.1.2 Approach B: Call for police intervention	153
4.5.2 Steps followed in the management of conflict	156
4.5.2.1 Develop expectations for win-win solution.....	157
4.5.2.2 Define issues	160
4.5.2.3 Brainstorm creative options.....	163
4.5.2.4 Combine options into win-win solutions	166
4.6 Stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools	169
4.7 Skills stakeholders Knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict in secondary school	178
4.7.1 Skills stakeholders knew in the management of conflict.....	178
4.7.2 Strategies stakeholders used in the management of conflict.....	180
4.7.3 Strategies participants thought could lead to successful conflict management	184
4.8 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management by education officials and other stakeholders	187
4.8.1 Mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools	187
4.8.1.1 School level mechanism	188
4.8.1.1.1 Teaching of conflict management in secondary schools	188
4.8.1.1.2 Channels of communication	191
4.8.1.1.3 The presence of guidance and counselling structures	195
4.8.1.1.4 Presence of discipline committee	198
4.8.1.2 System level mechanisms	201
4.8.1.2.1 Teaching of conflict management in teacher training institutions	201
4.8.1.2.2 Training of head teachers, teachers and education officials in conflict management	202
4.8.1.2.3 Presence of a legal framework to support conflict management.....	204
4.8.1.2.4 Other forms of support.....	206
4.8.1.3 Other stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools	207

4.8.2 Mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools	210
4.9 Measures for ensuring effective conflict management in secondary schools.....	214
4.9.1 Measures before the conflict	215
4.9.2 Measures during the conflict	219
4.9.3 Measures after the conflict.....	227
4.10 Chapter summary.....	231
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	233
5.1 Introduction	233
5.2. Causes of conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi	233
5.2.1. Poor diet	234
5.2.2 Misunderstanding of human rights by students.....	235
5.2.3 Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations.....	236
5.2.4 Poor communication	237
5.2.5 Unfair treatment of students by staff	238
5.2.6 Poor management of schools by head teachers.....	239
5.2.7 Instigation of students by teachers and parents.....	240
5.2.8 Students' indiscipline	241
5.2.9 Failure to involve students in decisions that concerned them	242
5.2.10 Peer pressures	243
5.2.11 Other causes of conflict in secondary schools	243
5.3 Effects of conflict on secondary schools.....	246
5.3.1 Positive effects of conflict on secondary schools.....	246
5.3.1.1 A learning opportunity for stakeholders.....	246
5.3.1.2 Improvement of infrastructure	247
5.3.1.3 An opportunity for students to air out their concerns	248
5.3.1.4 A deterrence to would be offenders	248
5.3.2. Negative effects of conflict on secondary schools.....	249
5.3.2.1 A disturbance to teaching and learning	249
5.3.2.2 Damage of property.....	250
5.3.2.3 A danger to people's lives	251
5.4 Why most conflicts ended in violence in secondary schools in Malawi	251
5.4.1 Win it all mentality	252

5.4.2 Head teachers' lack of conflict management skills	252
5.4.3 The only way for students to communicate and be heard	253
5.4.4 A means to get rid of a head teacher not want.....	254
5.4.5 Poor upbringing of students.....	255
5.5 Processes followed in the management of conflict	255
5.6 Stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools	257
5.6.1 Head teachers' involvement	257
5.6.2 Teachers' involvement	260
5.6.3 Students' involvement	262
5.6.4 Education officials' involvement.....	263
5.6.5 Parents' involvement	265
5.7 Skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict	266
5.7.1 Skills stakeholders knew	267
5.7.2 Strategies stakeholders used in the management of conflict.....	267
5.7.3 Strategies respondents thought could lead to successful conflict management	269
5.8 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management by education officials and other stakeholders	270
5.8.1 Mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools	271
5.8.1.1 School level mechanisms	271
5.8.1.2 System level mechanisms	275
5.8.1.3 Other stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools	276
5.8.2 Mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools	278
5.8.2.1 Inspection visits to secondary schools	279
5.8.2.2 The requirement that head teachers should always submit reports.....	279
5.9 Proposed measures for ensuring effective conflict management in secondary schools.....	280
5.9.1 Proposed measures to be taken before the conflict	280
5.9.2 Proposed measures to be taken during the conflict	282
5.9.3 Proposed measures to be taken after the conflict	284
5.10 Chapter summary.....	284
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...	286

6.1 Introduction	286
6.2 Summary of the findings.....	286
6.2.1. Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi, their effects and why conflicts mostly ended in violence	286
6.2.1.1 Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi	287
6.2.1.2 Positive effects of conflicts to secondary schools.....	287
6.2.1.3 Negative effects of conflict to secondary schools.....	288
6.2.1.4 Why conflicts between students and staff mostly ended in violence in secondary schools in Malawi.....	288
6.2.2 Processes followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi	289
6.2.3 Stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools	290
6.2.4 Skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict.....	292
6.2.5 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools	293
6.2.6 Implications for theory	294
6.2.6.1 Human needs theory	294
6.2.6.2 The contingency theory of conflict management	295
6.2.6.3 The scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology	296
6.2.6.4 Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004).....	297
6.2.7 Justification of Methodology	297
6.3 Conclusions drawn from the study.....	298
6.4 Recommendations	302
6.5 Proposed alternative framework for conflict management.....	306
6.6 Proposed areas for further studies	321
REFERENCES:	323
APPENDICES.....	336
Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate	336
Appendix B: Introductory letter from University of Fort Hare	338
Appendix C: A letter by researcher to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology requesting for permission to collect data	339
Appendix D: A letter from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology granting permission to collect data.....	341

Appendix E: Informed consent agreement form	342
Appendix F: Editor's declaration	343
Appendix G: Consent form for children's legal parents	344
Appendix H: Assent form for children	347
Appendix I: Interview guide for head teachers	349
Appendix J: Interview guide for teachers	353
Appendix K: Interview guide for education officials	357
Appendix L: Interview guide for parents	361
Appendix I: FGD guide for students	364
Appendix N: Questionnaire for teachers.....	367

List of tables

Table 4-1: Summary of participants and how they are identified.....	101
Table 4-2: Distribution of participants according to gender	104
Table 4-3: Distribution of age ranges	106
Table 4-4: Distribution of academic qualifications for HTs, TRs, EDOs and PTs	107
Table 4-5: Grades for HTs, TRs and EDOs	109
Table 4-6: Students' distribution per form	110
Table 4-7: Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi	111
Table 4-8: Positive effects of conflict on secondary schools	129
Table 4-9: Negative effects of conflict on secondary schools	135
Table 4-10: Why most conflicts ended in violence.....	144
Table 4-11: Conflict management processes followed by secondary schools	151
Table 4-12: Development of expectation for a win-win	157
Table 4-13: Defining of issues.....	161
Table 4-14: Brainstorming of creative options	164
Table 4-15: Combine options into win-win solutions.....	166
Table 4-16: Teachers' involvement in conflict management	170
Table 4-17: Conflict management skills which teachers knew	179
Table 4-18: Most commonly used strategies	181
Table 4-19: Strategies participants thought would lead to successful conflict	184
Table 4-20: Whether conflict management was taught or not.....	188
Table 4-21: Channels of communication in secondary schools	192
Table 4-22: Availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools.....	195
Table 4-23: Availability of discipline committees in secondary schools	198
Table 4-24: Whether conflict was taught in teacher training institutions or not	201
Table 4-25: In-service training in conflict management for teachers	203
Table 4-26: Presence of a legal framework to support conflict management.	205
Table 4-27: Other stakeholders who provided support to secondary schools	208
Table 4-28: Ad hoc mechanism for monitoring conflict management.....	211
Table 4-29: Measures to be taken before a conflict erupts.....	215
Table 4-30: Measures to be taken by head teachers during the conflict.....	220
Table 4-31: Measures to be taken by teachers during the conflict	222
Table 4-32: Measures to be taken by students during the conflict.....	223
Table 4-33: Measures to be taken by parents during the conflict	224
Table 4-34: Measures to be taken by education officials during the conflict .	225
Table 6-1: Proposed alternative framework for the management of conflict in secondary schools.....	307

List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Galtung's triangle of the elements of conflict.....	3
Figure 2-1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs.....	27
Figure 2-2: Conflict typology and levels-of-conflict analysis visualization for Diagnosis	29
Figure2-3: Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A	48
Figure 2-4: Louis R. Pondy's Conflict Process Model.....	49
Figure 2-5: Robbins' and Judge's (2013) Conflict Process.....	50
Figure 2-6: The two dimensional intentions by Robbins and Judge (2013)	52
Figure 2-7: The Dual Concern Model by Rahim and Bonama (1997)	53
Figure 2-8: The five strategies and what they entail.....	58
Figure 2-9: Conflict management techniques and conflict-stimulation techniques ...	60
Figure 3-1 Target population in relation to population and the sample.....	84
Figure 3-2: Distribution of participants according to gender	105
Figure 3-3: Strategies participants thought would lead to successful conflict management	185
Figure 3-4: Ad hoc mechanism for monitoring conflict management.....	212
Figure 4-1: Measures to be taken after a conflict	228

Acronyms

ASDPS:	Albany School District Psychology Service
ASCA:	America School Counsellors Association
AY:	Adventist Youth
BATNA:	Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement
CCAPSO:	Church of Central African Presbyterian students' Organisation
CCROSS:	Centre for Conflict Resolution in Schools
CEO:	Chief Education Officer
CFS:	Child Friendly School
CPD:	Continued Professional Development
CPM:	Conflict Process Model
CR:	Conflict Resolution
CRE:	Conflict Resolution Education
CRM-A:	Conflict Resolution model A
CWED:	Central West Education Division
DHRMD:	Department of Human Resources Management and Development
DSDE:	Directorate of Secondary and Distance Education
EDM:	Education Division Manager
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESIP:	Education Sector Implementation Plan
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
GES:	Ghana Education Service
JCE:	Junior Certificate of Education
MDF:	Malawi Defence Force
MOEST:	Ministry of Education, service and Technology
MOPSE:	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

MPs:	Members of Parliament
MSCE:	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NESP:	National Education Sector Plan
PSLCE:	Primary School Certificate of Education
PTA:	Parent and Teachers Association
SAPS:	South African Police Services
SCOM:	Students' Christian organization of Malawi
SGB:	School Governing Bodies
SMC:	School Management Committee
SPDR:	Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TESCOM:	Teaching service commission
UCE:	University Certificate of Education
USA:	United States of America
YCS:	Young Christian Students

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine how strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi, were implemented. This was after it had been realized that violent conflicts were on the rise despite the presence of different strategies for managing conflict (MoEST, 2014). The study therefore, wanted to establish how the strategies were implemented for violence to keep occurring in the secondary schools which was contrary to the positive face of conflict which is advanced by literature. In this perspective, it is argued that conflict is healthy because it challenges people to think harder, to be more creative, to develop greater understanding, and to search for alternative avenues that are more efficient, more effective and more productive (Scannell, 2010). This proposition is well summarized by Kaiser (2003 in Sarpkaya, 2014) who says the clash of thesis with antithesis can result in synthesis. Consequently, Ghaffar (2009) says conflict is in itself not a problem - it is when it is poorly handled that it becomes a problem. Such a face of conflict faults the violence that had become synonymous with conflict between students and staff in Malawi. Furthermore, the violence might be an indication that conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi was poorly handled. Put simply, this means that conflict management or conflict resolution was a challenge in the secondary schools.

According to Rahim (2002), conflict management involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict while enhancing its constructive functions in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization. In addition, Sarpkaya (2014) says when conflict management is objected, the focus should be leading the conflicting parties, the energy, the attention and the resources towards organizational purposes. This is different from conflict resolution which Rahim (2002) defines as the reduction, elimination, or termination of a conflict. Sarpkaya (2014) adds that when conflict resolution is planned; the focus is generally separating conflicting parties with the aim of preventing them from harming

one another. In addition to conflict management and conflict resolution, other scholars also talk about conflict transformation. Miall (2001) defines conflict transformation as a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict.

This study focused on conflict management in order to find out how schools could benefit from the constructive functions of conflict. However, both conflict management and conflict resolution are referred to from time to time because the way they are presented in literature, is like they imply the same thing. This is in agreement with the observation by Sarpkaya (2014) who says despite the differences which are there between the two terms, when literature is examined closely, it can be said that they are used with the same sense.

Against this background, this chapter, among other things, conceptualizes conflict in order to have a clear understanding of how it can be managed and looks at different causes of conflict in secondary schools in general and the Malawian context in particular. After that, the statement of the problem which gave rise to the study is discussed. This is followed by the purpose of the study, research questions and study objectives. Furthermore, the significance of the study is discussed followed by delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and chapter summary.

1.2 Conceptualising conflict

Everard, Morris and Wilson (2014) define conflict as the difference of opinion resulting from the availability of two or more possible courses of action. On his part, Northouse (2015) defines conflict as a struggle between two or more individuals over perceived differences regarding substantive or relational issues. From the two definitions, it is clear that conflict involves two or more people who have differences in the way they perceive issues. This study therefore, looked at conflict as the difference in opinion between two or more individuals due to perceived differences.

In its effort to conceptualise it well, the study found that conflict is three dimensional occurring at cognitive (perception), emotional (feeling), and behavioural (action) levels (Mayer, 2001). According to Mayer, it is only when conflict is perceived in this

way that we can understand its complexities and hence manage it properly. Mayer further says at the cognitive level, an individual understands that his/her needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with those of the other. This is a very crucial stage such that even if there might be room for agreement, if the concerned parties perceive the conflict as being impossible to resolve, nothing can happen (Swanstrom & Weissmann, 2005).

According to Mayer (2001), at the emotional level, an individual begins to show his or her feelings through reactions to the situation which is incompatible. The emotions might be manifested in the form of sadness, bitterness, anger, frustrations et cetera. This leads to the behavioural level at which the individual translates his/her feelings into actions which may be peaceful or violent thereby making a conflict either functional or dysfunctional. In conclusion, Mayer (2001) says if people have contrary opinions but there are no perceptions, feelings or behaviour in line with such opinions, there is no conflict but there is a potential conflict.

In his conflict paradigm, Galtung (1996 in Gallo, 2012) presents three elements of a conflict using a triangle ABC in which A stands for Attitudes, B for behaviour and C for contradiction. According to him, a conflict is defined by these three elements; the contradiction which is the concrete object of the conflict, the behaviour of the different parties and their deep feelings (attitudes) (Gallo, 2012). In conclusion, it is emphasised that a conflict cannot be solved unless the three components are tackled at the same time. The three elements are shown in Figure 1.1 below.

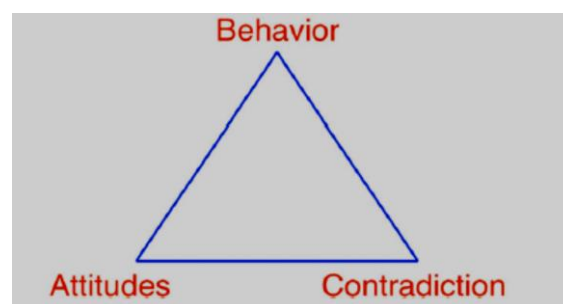


Figure 1-1: Galtung's triangle of the elements of conflict

Source: Gallo (2012)

Mitchell's (1981) paradigm as featured by Swanstrom and Weissmann (2005) presents conflict in a slightly different way from that of Galtung. To Mitchell, conflict structure consists of three parts namely, attitudes, behaviour and situations where situations may be a substitute of contradictions in Galtung's paradigm. Mitchell says the three parts interact amongst themselves in such a way that each one of them influences and gets influenced by the others. In the process of their interaction, these three parts create conflict between actors. From the two paradigms, it can be appreciated that in analysing a conflict, there is need to examine closely not only the behaviour of the parties and the situation (contradictions) in which the conflict is taking place but also the feelings which the parties are harbouring.

1.3 Types of conflicts

According to Zhang and Zhang (2012) and Rahim (2002), there are two types of conflicts namely, affective conflict and substantive conflict. Jodhi and Aptiree (2012) observe that these two types of conflict are caused by personal and structural factors respectively. Affective conflict is also called relational conflict or emotional conflict or psychological conflict (Zhang & Zhang, 2012 and Rahim, 2002) and it pertains to individual oriented or relationship oriented disagreement arising from perceived interpersonal incompatibilities unrelated to tasks but mostly involving issues to do with personality, trust, attitude, power, respect et cetera (Amason & Sapienza, 1997, Jehn & Mannix, 2001, Jehn et al., 2008, and Young & Mossholder, 2004 in Zhang & Zhang, 2012). Putting it simply, Jehn and Mannix (2001 in Shahmohammadi, 2014) say relationship conflict stems from interpersonal incompatibilities.

Passos and Caetano (2005 in Chaudhry & Asif, 2015) observe that affective conflict arises when an incongruity occurs in the emotional experience of two or more employees. Passos and Caetano (2005 in Chaudhry & Asif, 2015) further observe that affective conflict has very negative consequences and that when it occurs alongside task conflict, it can result in decline in the output of employees and work teams. According to Sarpkaya (2014), this is because in such a conflict, friction and hostility between individuals increase personality clashes and decrease mutual understanding.

Substantive conflict, also called task conflict or cognitive conflict or issue conflict (Zhang & Zhang, 2012 and Rahim, 2002), orients from disagreements arising from perceived incompatibilities in views concerning a job task being performed. Passos and Caetano (2005 in Chaudhry & Asif, 2015) add that substantive conflict is related to the organizational processes, where employees may experience disagreement in terms of the ways in which specific organizational tasks can be performed. Leffel, Hallam and Darling (2012) split conflict related to work into task-based conflict and process-based conflict.

Jehn and Mannix (2001 in Shahmohammadi, 2014) say task conflict is related to disagreements in viewpoints and opinion about a particular task, while process conflict refers to disagreement over the group's approach to the task, its methods, and its group process. Put simply, it can be said that task-based conflict relates to disagreements about work being done while process-based conflict relates to how work roles and responsibilities are assigned and accomplished. The general belief is that substantive conflict is beneficial to group performance because it facilitates exchange of information among members (Simons & Peterson, 2000, Yang & Mossholder, 2004 in Zhang & Zhang 2012). In view of this, Passos and Caetano (2005 in Chaudhry & Asif, 2015) emphasise that the presence of some level of task conflict in an organisation may be needed to ensure that the employees maintain interest in the job and use their cognitive skills to handle the job responsibilities.

Johdi and Apitree (2012) observe that in schools, both affective and substantive conflicts occur. The two further note that substantive conflict in the school may be a result of the nature of the school and the way in which work is organised whereas affective conflict may be a result of personal factors which relate to differences between school members. This fact validated the study since it acknowledged that conflict between different school members including the staff and students were likely to be there.

1.4 Classification of conflict

In his classification of organisational conflict, Rahim (2001:23) has come up with two categories namely, intra-organizational conflict and inter-organizational conflict. Rahim observes that intra-organizational conflict is a conflict that takes place within

an organization while inter-organizational conflict is the conflict that takes place between two or more organizations. Rahim says intra-organizational conflict may further be classified on the basis of levels (individual, group, et cetera) at which it occurs. On this basis, Rahim classifies intra-organizational conflict into four different categories. The first one is intra-personal conflict; also called intra-individual or intra-psychic conflict. This type of conflict occurs when an organizational member is required to perform certain tasks and roles that do not match his or her expertise, interests, goals, and values. Shahmohammadi (2014) says intra-personal conflict is a type of conflict that is psychological and involves the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions.

The second category is inter-personal conflict also called dyadic conflict. Rahim (2001) says this is a disagreement between two or more organisational members. The third type is intra-group conflict also called intra-departmental conflict. According to Shahmohammadi (2014), disagreements and incompatibilities among group members lead to intra-group conflict. To Rahim (2002), this is a disagreement among members of a group. The fourth category is inter-group or inter-departmental conflict which involves two or more groups within an organisation (Rahim 2002). In agreement, Shahmohammadi (2014) says this type of conflict takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different teams (groups) within an organization.

Ghaffar (2009) argues that, just like any other human organizations, schools are prone to conflict. In agreement, Henkin and Holliman (2009 in Saiti, 2015) observe that Schools are not an exception because conflict in a 'living' organization is seemingly inevitable and may occur among students, school leaders and/or educators, as well as between the school itself and other social parties of the school such as local authorities or parents. In Malawi, a study which was commissioned in 1996 to find out the causes of indiscipline in secondary schools found that both intra-organisational (intra-school) and inter-organisational (inter-school) conflicts were taking place in secondary schools (Kuthemba Mwale, Hauya &Tizifa, 1996).

Fisher (1997 in Gaffar, 2009) observes that people have undeniable needs for identity, dignity, security, equity and participation in decisions that affect them which if denied of them become a source of social conflict. This is in agreement with the

human needs theory which argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs (Kok, 2007). Thus, if a school denies its stakeholders of these needs, conflict is likely to arise. The relational theory contends that conflict is a result of an interaction of different individuals and groups with different values and interests (Poulson, 2005). In this connection, Balay (2006) observes that education institutions are extremely vulnerable to conflicts due to stresses of the environment, nature of work and diversity of interactions. This might be the reason for the presence of both intra-school and inter-school conflict in Malawi (Kuthemba Mwale et al., 1996).

Hakvoort and Olsson (2014) further classify conflict basing on dimensions. In this classification, conflict can either be symmetric (power balanced) or asymmetric (power imbalanced), constructive (nonviolent) or destructive (physically or psychologically violent), direct (overt) or structural (institutionalized or systemic).

Studies have shown that conflict in schools is usually between management and staff, between students and staff, between the communities and schools, and between schools (Hakvoort & Olsson, 2014, Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003, Kuthemba Mwale et al., 1996). Thus, schools experience both intra-organisational and inter-organisational conflicts. This study will concentrate on conflict between students and staff (administrators and teachers) – an intra-organisational conflict – which happens to be common in Malawi. However, Aja (2013) warns that no meaningful teaching and learning can take place in a conflict ridden environment. In agreement, Balay (2006) says even school administrators spend a lot of their time finding solutions to conflict at the expense of their core business. As such, Aja (2013) emphasises that conflict management is crucial in the running of schools. For this reason, this study intended to propose an alternative framework for conflict management which could assist school management in the handling of conflict with the aim of ensuring that the school environment was a peaceful one in which meaningful teaching and learning could take place.

1.5 Some cases of conflict in secondary schools

A lot of studies have been conducted on school conflict world over. In Thailand, a study conducted by Johdi and Apitree (2012) found four types of conflict in the

schools. These were conflict between principals and teachers, between teachers, between teachers and students and between teachers and students' parents. Among other reasons, the study found that these conflicts were caused by poor communication, anger against punishments by students and students' lies to parents against teachers. To manage these conflicts, the study found that schools mostly used the strategies of compromise and collaboration.

Bagnisky (2004) says in the United Kingdom, school conflict has always been there and that conflict management dates as far back as the 1980s. Bagnisky says to manage conflict between students, schools use peer mediation; a programme through which students get trained to mediate conflict between or among fellow students. This is in line with Wani's (2011) conflict management strategy of mediation. However, Bagnisky is silent on the management of conflict involving teachers or school or students.

Balay (2006) conducted a study on conflict management in Van province of East Anatolia in Turkey. In the study, Balay wanted to find out strategies that administrators and teachers employed in the management of conflicts in both private and public primary schools. The study found that causes of conflict in primary schools in Turkey included low levels of communication, limited problem solving skills by administrators and teachers and lack of trust among different players. The study further observed that on the over all, administrators and teachers in both private and public primary schools employed the strategies of compromise, avoidance and competing.

Saiti (2015) conducted a study on conflict management in primary schools in Greece. The study aimed at finding out the sources of conflict in primary schools in Greece, and the appropriate approaches to conflict management. Among other reasons, the study found that conflicts in primary schools in Greece were a result of (a) bad communication among members of the schools unit, (b) differences in attitudes between members of the school unit, (c) lack of coordination in the school unit and (d) lack of capable school leadership which was the most popular cause of them all. The study found that schools used strategies of compromise, avoidance, problem solving, integration and confrontation in the management of the conflicts.

A study conducted in Osun State in Nigeria by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) identified several types of conflicts in the schools. These were conflicts between management and staff, between staff and students, between the communities and schools, and inter-personal conflicts. The causes of these conflicts included administrative incompetence, and non-involvement of students in school administration. The high rate of conflicts was attributed to lack of knowledge in conflict management by school administrators and the absence of laid down procedures for conflict management in most schools. The study observed that in most cases, the strategy used to manage these conflicts was mediation by either the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) or the Ministry of Education depending on who was involved.

Another study in Nigeria was conducted by Adeyami (2009) in Ondo State. The study found that among other reasons, conflict in schools was due to strict application of rules and regulations, inadequate facilities for students and staff, non-involvement of students in executing school policies and communication gap. The study also found that conflict had a variety of effects such as possible loss of lives and property, arrests of students who perpetrated the conflict and suspension or dismissal of students found guilty. The study made a number of recommendations. First, it was recommended that school principals should allow free flow of information from management to students and vice versa. The second recommendation was that principals should be sensitive to students' grievances and be accommodative to opposing views. The third recommendation was that school management should attack issues and not members involved in the conflict. Finally, it was recommended that schools should establish committees for conflict resolution.

In Uganda, Abaasa (2005) observes that a term hardly passes without a school striking and that in most cases students destroy school property. Abaasa (2005) gives an example of Kisubi High School where students went on rampage destroying property worth millions of shillings all because they were denied an end of term disco. Abaasa further observes that at Nabumali High School, students destroyed school property because food was bad and there was no milk in their porridge. The study attributes the conflicts to poor or lack of communication. Abaasa recommends

that students be given the necessary attention if conflicts are to be managed. This recommendation implies use of the strategy of accommodation so that students' views are considered.

Owusu-Mensah (2007) conducted a study in Ejisu-Juaben District in Ghana on conflict in primary schools and its effects on teaching and Learning. Owusu-Mensah (2007) found that some causes of conflicts in primary schools were teachers' merciless use of corporal punishment as means of instilling discipline in students and use of offensive language by both teachers and students. Owusu-Mensah further reported that conflict between teachers and students was handled by the head teacher. If not managed, the conflict was reported to PTA, SMC or district officials. Another major finding of the study was that if not managed, conflict in schools affects teaching and learning in the sense that students involved redirect their attention to the conflict and in the end, they cannot concentrate on their studies.

In South Africa, studies on conflict in schools have been conducted by among others Mncube and Harber (2013), Majola (2013) and Msila (2012). The studies found that causes of conflict include insufficient resources, cultural differences, and lack of conflict management skills by school principals. For management of the conflicts, the studies recommended the use of the strategy of mediation to be facilitated by the School Governing Bodies (SGB). In addition, the studies recommended that school principals, teachers and SGBs must be trained in conflict management.

1.6 The Malawian context

In Malawi, every citizen has a right to education as stipulated in Chapter IV, Section 25 of the constitution. To make sure that citizens are subjected to quality education, the Education Act (2012) in Part II, Section 4 says the Minister of Education shall set and maintain national education standards. To realize this, one of the pillars in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) (2008-2017), the country's education blue print, is quality. Under this pillar, the state is obliged to offer quality education (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), 2008). However, schools in Malawi have always faced challenges which may compromise the quality of education.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) has always bemoaned the rising number of indiscipline cases that lead to damage and destruction of school property, bodily injury and even death in some cases. In this connection, it was reported that between January, 2013 and March, 2014, a total of 69 indiscipline cases of conflict were processed in secondary schools in Malawi most of which were violent (MoEST, 2014). Such situations had the potential to negatively affect the quality of education. In Nigeria, for instance, failure to manage conflicts like these in schools led to a steady decline in the quality of education (Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003). Similar sentiments were expressed by the Coalition Society for Quality Basic Education, who observed that the increase in strikes by students in Malawi would affect education standards (*The Malawi News* of 14 – 20 December, 2013).

The MoEST has always been concerned with conflicts and indiscipline related issues in schools. Far back in 1996, the MoEST commissioned a study to investigate cases of secondary school indiscipline which in most instances resulted in damage to property and in other instances even to loss of life (Kuthemba Mwale et al., 1996). Among other reasons, the study found that students engaged in riots due to the head teachers' failure to attend to their concerns. This was in agreement with the observation by Etim and Okey (2013) that conflict management in schools requires appropriate leadership style of the school principal. To acquire such styles, the principals may need training of some kind. In view of this, it transpired that the MoEST had been training head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and teachers in school management since the year 2000 (MoEST, 2000). Among other issues, the trainings covered counselling skills with the assumption that the participants would in turn equip students with skills they needed to cope with different situations.

As observed by the Department of Education (2005), people trained as school counsellors have three core functions one of which is preventive planning for complexities and severities. To do this, it is observed that the counsellors should have skills including conflict management skills, mediation skills and collaboration skills. This means that with the training they are said to have gone through (MoEST, 2000), the head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and teachers should have been well equipped with conflict management skills with which they

should have been able to facilitate conflict management in their respective secondary schools. In this regard, the many dysfunctional conflicts which secondary schools registered might imply that the acclaimed training did not achieve its goals.

Mayer (2001) says one of the forces of conflict is structure; the external framework in which interaction takes place. Mayer observes that the structure may either facilitate the escalation or management of a conflict. In this regard, the MoEST put in place structures to assist in managing school conflicts (MoEST, 2014). These included established positions of class teachers, prefects' body, parents and a disciplinary committee. The duties of these stakeholders created room for conflict management. For example, the duties of the class teacher included identifying students' needs and providing counselling and guidance to learners (MoEST, 2014).

According to the human needs theory, conflicts are a result of unmet needs (Kok, 2007). In this case, having identifying students' needs as one of the duties of form teachers was a step towards managing conflicts. Furthermore, the counselling part implied equipping the students with skills necessary for handling challenges (MoEST, 2000). Above all, a counsellor was supposed to have skills for mediation, collaboration and conflict management (Department of Education, 2005).

MoEST (2014) went further to say that prefects had a duty to act as a bridge between the administration and fellow students. This created room for the prefects to use some of Wani's (2011) conflict management strategies namely, negotiation, mediation, communication, persuasion and cooperation. Any grievances between students and staff could be managed constructively as the two parties were supposed to be connected through the intermediary role of the prefects. On their part, parents were obliged to make sure that the school was managed well in all aspects including conflict management (MoEST, 2014). The parents could do this through such strategies as mediation, and communication. In this regard, if all the parties did their work accordingly, conflicts in Malawi schools would be constructively managed.

Another forum for conflict management in secondary schools is a discipline committee. A study by Turay (2001) found that in Sierra Leone, one of the duties of a

discipline committee was to arbitrate students-students conflict, students-teacher conflict and teacher-teacher conflict. In Malawi, a discipline committee was among the requirements for the smooth running of schools and its terms of reference were such that they could facilitate the management of conflict. According to MoEST (2014), the committee was guided by rules and regulations which students and their guardians were supposed to read and understand. After that, they were supposed to sign and counter sign them respectively.

It is further noted that the rules and regulations required that teachers and head teachers (a) win the trust and respect of the learners, (b) set clear boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable conduct (c) keep in contact with parents and (d) issue verbal or written warning where a student misbehaved. Thus, with such a structure available at every secondary school, the general expectation would be that cases of dysfunctional conflict would be reduced. To the contrary, such cases were on the increase and the situation posed a challenge to the schools. This study therefore, aimed at finding out how the different strategies which were there for managing conflict were being implemented.

Another structure for managing school conflicts was the introduction of child friendly schools (CFS) in the year 2008. This was a programme aimed at making sure that children learnt in a free and friendly environment (MoEST, 2008). Unfortunately, the programme made very little impact such that in 2014, the MoEST issued a circular letter (Ref. No. C31/1/1) expressing regret on the rising cases of riots and vandalism in secondary schools which led to damage of school property. The circular called for an end to the behaviour. To peoples' dismay, soon after the circular, students at one of the secondary schools set ablaze school property worth millions of kwachas (*The Nyasa Times* of September 28, 2014).

Incidences like these had been there for some time. For example, *The Nation* of November 17, 2011 carried a story which said at St. John Bosco Secondary School, students damaged property worth K1, 127,100. Earlier in the same year, *The Nation* of Tuesday, 4 January 2011 also carried an article which said a strike at Viphya Secondary School cost the school property worth K2.3 million.

The foregoing shows clear strategies that had been put in place for the management of school conflict in Malawi. It also shows efforts that were made by the MoEST and other institutions to manage school conflict. It was therefore, surprising that despite all these measures, dysfunctional conflicts still occurred at a high rate; an indication that something somewhere was wrong. This study surfaced to find out how the strategies that had been put in place for the management of school conflicts were implemented so that in the end, an alternative framework for conflict management could be recommended.

1.7 Statement of the problem

As pointed out in section 1.6 above, education in Malawi is a constitutional right for every citizen. The Minister of Education, Science and Technology is empowered by the Education act of (2012) to further set and maintain national education standards. In the same vein, one of the pillars in the National Education Sector Plan is quality (MoEST, 2008). However, most schools in Malawi had been marred with conflicts which as observed by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) could lead to a decline in the quality of education. Following a study by Kuthemba Mwale et al. (1996) which established that some conflicts in Malawi schools were a result of poor school management, the MoEST had been training head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and teachers in school management (MoEST, 2000). In the programme, participants were equipped with counselling skills with which to assist students to cope with different situations such as conflict (MoEST, 2000). Despite all these efforts, violent conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi appeared to be on the increase as evidenced by a circular letter (Ref. No. C31/1/1 of 2014) in which the MoEST condemned the behaviour and called for an end to it.

As pointed out earlier, the MoEST had put in place different strategies for managing conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi. These strategies included established positions of class teachers, prefects' body, parents and discipline committees. Such strategies could assist in conflict management if properly used. For example, class teachers were supposed to identify students' needs and provide counselling and guidance to learners while prefects were supposed to act as a bridge between the administration and fellow students (MoEST, 2014). If these duties were performed, conflicts in schools could be managed properly as students' needs could be known

by the school and be addressed accordingly. Furthermore, through counselling, students could be well equipped with skills for handling challenges such as conflicts (MoEST, 2000).

The forgoing shows that despite the many cases of violence in secondary schools in Malawi, strategies and structures for managing conflicts were in place. Literature further showed that most of the strategies which were there in Malawi had assisted in managing conflict in secondary schools elsewhere. For example, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) contend that conflict is best managed if schools embrace guidance and counselling programmes so as to instil in students a spirit of tolerance and coexistence. This is a strategy which was there in secondary schools in Malawi. In this regard, the many violent conflicts which were on the increase in secondary schools in Malawi (MoEST, 2014) might not be due to the absence of strategies but possibly the way they (the strategies) were implemented. This study therefore, sought to examine how the strategies were implemented with the aim of recommending a conflict management framework which could assist secondary schools in the management of conflict.

1.8 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine how strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented

1.9 Research questions and research objectives

The study was guided by both research questions and research objectives.

1.9.1 Main research question

How are strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi implemented?

1.9.2 Sub-research questions

- a. What are the major causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi?
- b. Which processes are followed in the management of conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi?

- c. How are stakeholders involved in the process of managing conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi?
- d. What skills and strategies do stakeholders know and use respectively in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi?
- e. What support and monitoring mechanisms have education officials and other stakeholders put in place for managing conflict in secondary schools in Malawi?
- f. What framework can be recommended to improve conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi?

1.9.3 Research objectives

In line with the research questions, the study sought to:

- a. Identify the major causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi
- b. Analyse processes that were followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi
- c. Assess how stakeholders were involved in the process of managing conflict in secondary schools in Malawi
- d. Examine skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi
- e. Evaluate support and monitoring mechanisms that education officials and other stakeholders had put in place for managing conflict in secondary schools in Malawi
- f. Develop a framework that could be recommended to improve conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi

1.10 Significance of the study

The study is very significant to secondary schools in Malawi in the sense that the alternative framework for conflict management that has been developed will assist them to manage conflict systematically so that it does not always escalate into violence. In turn, school property and lives will be safe while delivery of education services will not be interrupted thereby ensuring that education on offer is of high quality. The study will also assist policy makers to understand the major causes of conflicts in secondary schools. Such understanding will be useful in the formulation of policies that can help managing the conflicts.

The study involved head teachers, teachers, students and parents as well. These are stakeholders in education who may have suggestions on how best to deal with conflicts in schools but may not have a forum for communicating the same to education officials and other policy makers. The study gave them a platform for communicating such suggestions to policy makers which can in turn influence policy decision on conflict management in secondary schools. Lastly, it is observed that very limited studies on conflict management have been conducted in education institutions world over (Saiti, 2015 & Balay, 2006). The situation is even worse in Malawi where the only study conducted was on indiscipline in secondary schools by Kuthemba Mwale et al, (1996) resulting in very little literature on the topic. The study will therefore, enrich literature on conflict management at both local and international levels thereby adding value to knowledge.

1.11 Delimitation of the study

The study was conducted in five secondary schools in the Central West Education Divisions (CWED) in Malawi which comprises six education districts namely; Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe Rural East, Lilongwe Rural West, Lilongwe Urban and Mchinji. The study focused on the implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools. Participants in the study were head teachers, teachers, students, parents and education officials.

1.12 Limitations of the study

The study encountered some minor limitations which were all well cushioned such that the intended objectives were achieved. The first limitation was that data collection coincided with end of year examinations which made holding of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students difficult. Unfortunately, schools were proceeding on summer holidays after the examinations such that postponing the activity would disturb the whole calendar of events. To handle this, the researcher went to the schools early in the morning and remained there until when the students had enough free time to participate in the study without being inconvenienced. In other cases, a school was visited twice or thrice before the FGD was finally conducted and in the end, all the FGDs were held without disturbing school programs.

The other limitation was that some participants were not comfortable to be voice recorded during interviews despite explaining to them in detail the purpose of the study. To address this, the researcher took detailed notes of the interviews with some verbatim where necessary captured. In addition, during data analysis, elaborations were sought from participants when need arose.

1.13 Definition of terms

There are some terms that have been used technically such that to understand them, there may be need to be aware of their operational use. The terms are defined here below.

1.13.1 Conflict management

Moran (2001 in Ghaffar, 2009) defines conflict management as a philosophy and a set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives. Rahim (2002) says in conflict management, efforts are made to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict while enhancing its constructive functions in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization. In this study, conflict management implies the use of different skills to understand a conflict better with the aim of handling it in such a way that its negative consequences are reduced while enhancing the positive consequences.

1.13.2 Conflict Resolution

Rahim (2002) defines conflict resolution as the reduction, elimination, or termination of a conflict while Sweeney and Caruthers (1996 in Ghaffar, 2009) say conflict resolution is the process used by parties in conflict to reach a settlement. Sarpkaya, (2014) observes that the way literature presents conflict resolution and conflict management is as if the two terms mean the same. Consequently, in this study, conflict resolution implies more of conflict management and the terms are used interchangeably.

1.13.3 Strategies

Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, (2008:3) define strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over long term which realizes advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of

fulfilling stakeholder expectations. In the context of conflict management, strategies are patterned responses, or clusters of behaviour, that people use in conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001 in Hong, 2005). In this study, strategies refer to the direction and scope for managing conflicts through patterned responses or clusters of behaviour which stakeholders in a school use or can use.

1.13.4 Stakeholders

Brinkerhoof and Crosby (2002) define stakeholders as the constituencies who are affected by a policy and who have the power to help it or obstruct it. Freeman (1984), Mitroff (1983) and Mitchell et al. (1997 in Brinkerhoof & Crosby, 2002) define a stakeholder as an individual or group that makes a difference or that can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. In this study, the stakeholders are head teachers, teachers, learners, parents and education officials all of whom are affected by the conflicts in secondary schools.

1.14 Chapter outline

The study comprises six chapters as follows:

Chapter one presents the background to the study. Among other things, the chapter introduces the topic; conceptualizes the term conflict, discusses the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and definition of terms. Chapter two reviews related literature in line with the research objectives. However, to put the study in a theoretical perspective, the chapter first discusses the theoretical framework which guided it (the study). Chapter three looks at the research methodology employed by the study. Among other things, the chapter spells out research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling, negotiating entry, data collection instruments and procedures, validity and reliability, credibility and trustworthiness, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations. Chapter four presents and analyses the data which were collected while chapter five discusses the findings of the study. Chapter six, the last one, gives summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Finally, the chapter proposes an alternative framework for managing conflict in secondary schools which is followed by proposed areas for future studies.

1.15 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the background to the study. Among other things, the chapter has introduced the study with the aim of conceptualising conflict and conflict management correctly. In the process, the chapter has discussed types of conflict, classes of conflict; some cases of conflicts in secondary schools and the Malawian context as far as conflicts in secondary schools are concerned. In order to focus the study, the chapter went further to present the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and research objectives, significance of the study and delimitations and limitations of the study. The chapter went further to define terms that have been used technically. These terms are conflict management, conflict resolution, strategies and stakeholders. Finally, the chapter presented an outline of the chapters in the study namely, background to the study, review of related literature which covers the theoretical framework as well, methodology, data presentation and analysis, discussion of the findings and finally summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study plus a proposed alternative framework for managing conflict in secondary schools. The next chapter discusses the related literature to the topic under study. However, to put the study in a theoretical perspective, the chapter also presents theoretical frameworks that guided and informed the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the related literature to the topic under study. However, to put the study into a theoretical perspective, relevant theories to the topic of conflict management have also been discussed. As such, the chapter is presented in two parts. Part 1 discusses the theoretical framework that has informed the study while part 2 discusses relevant literature in line with the research questions. The reviewed literature assisted the researcher to have an insight into what other researchers have written on conflict management in view of the topic under study which aimed at examining how strategies used to manage conflict between staff and students in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented.

PART 1

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Quoting the *Online Encarta World English Dictionary*, Lester (2005) defines a framework as a set of ideas, principles, agreements, or rules that provide the basis or the outline for something that is more fully developed at a later stage. As for a theoretical framework, Grant and Osanloo (2014) say it is a blue print that provides a structure for defining how to approach a study basing on theories relevant to the topic. Lester (2005) further observes that a theoretical framework guides research activities by its reliance on formal theories that have been developed by using an established and coherent explanation of certain sort of phenomena and relationships. Consequently, Sinclair (2007) says at the start of any research study, it is important to consider relevant theories underpinning the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be researched. In summary, Merriam (2001 in Grant & Osanloo, 2014) contends that a theoretical framework is the researcher's lens with which to view the world.

In this study, two theories were used namely; human needs theory and contingency theory. Human needs theory was employed in order to appreciate the existence of conflict in secondary schools while for its management; the study employed contingency theory. To understand conflict from the theoretical perspective even better, the study also recognized the scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology which as advanced by Hakvoort (2010 in Hakvoort et al., 2014), hold two distinguishable perspectives on conflicts; a harmony or consensus perspective, and a conflict perspective.

The theories were understood in the context of the managed conflict view which contends that negative effects of conflict can be minimized by focusing on preparing people for the whole context in which conflict occurs (before, during and after its occurrence), developing resolution strategies, and facilitating open discussion (Robbins & Judge, 2013). To put the theories in perspective, this part first looks at the four views on conflict namely; traditional view, human relations view, interactionist view and the managed conflict view (Meer, 2013 & Robbins & Judge, 2013)). This is followed by a discussion on a conceptual framework which guided the identification of participants whose interaction with the researcher was in view of the theories. Finally, the theories themselves are discussed.

2.2.1 Views on Conflict

Meer (2013) says views on conflict are the different perspectives from which people have looked at conflict over the years while Robbins and Judge (2013) call them schools of thought in the way conflict has been perceived. Meer (2013) discusses three different views on organizational conflict namely; traditional view, human relations view and interactionist view. However, Robbins and Judge (2013) discuss yet a fourth view called managed conflict view. Both Meer (2013) and Robbins and Judge (2013) observe that looking at the different views, it is clear that the research pendulum on the topic has swung from eliminating conflict, to encouraging limited levels of conflict, and now to finding constructive methods for resolving conflict productively so that its disruptive influence can be minimized. The study discusses all the four views in detail with the aim of putting itself in perspective. This is so although at the end of it all, only one of the views; managed conflict view guided the study.

2.2.1.1 The Traditional View

The traditional view of conflict surfaced in the late 1930s and early 1940s and it said any conflict in an organization is outright bad, negative and harmful with dysfunctional and destructive consequences always such that it should be avoided at all cost (Meer, 2013). According to Sarpkaya (2014), the view was also called classical theory. Bolman and Deal (2003 in Sarpkaya, 2014) observe that in classical theory, it is believed that conflict produces inefficiency which may diminish the effectiveness of the organization hence the need to eradicate it. To reinforce the negative connotation of conflict, the view associated it with such terms as violence, destruction and irrationality (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.2.1.2. The Human Relations View

Robbins and Judge (2013) note that the traditional view was short-sighted in assuming that all conflict is bad and should be eliminated such that it fell out of favour as researchers came to realize that some level of conflict was inevitable. As a result of the shortfalls of the traditional view of conflict, the human relations view surfaced and was in force from the late 1940s to 1970s (Meer, 2013). The view advocated that conflict is an important aspect of any organization which cannot be avoided without necessarily indicating how significant it is. Instead of the name human relations view, Sarpkaya (2014) calls it behavioural view and acknowledges that conflict cannot be avoided in any organization.

2.2.1.3 The Interactionist View

The interactionist view surfaced after the human relations view and it states that a minimum level of conflict is actually beneficial for an organization because it maintains a certain level of creativity, self-evaluation and competition among the individuals (Meer, 2013). Meer further observes that these things result in increased group performance, more creative solutions to problems and better outcomes. In agreement, Robbins and Judge (2013) say the interactionist view encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, and cooperative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and unresponsive to needs for change and innovation.

2.2.1.4 The Managed Conflict View

Robbins and Judge (2013) observe that the belief by the interactionist view that conflict can stimulate active discussion without spilling over into negative and disruptive emotions is incomplete. This led to the birth of the managed conflict view which acknowledges the interactionist view but strives to improve it. Therefore, Robbins and Judge (2013) contend that the managed conflict view goes a step further by suggesting that the negative effects of conflict can be minimized by focusing on preparing people for conflicts, developing resolution strategies, and facilitating open discussion. The two authors further suggest that this can be achieved by managing the whole context in which conflicts occur, both before and after its behavioural stage.

As observations by Meer (2013) and Robbins and Judge (2013), the research pendulum has swung from eliminating conflict, to encouraging limited levels of conflict, and now to finding constructive methods for resolving conflict productively as advocated by the managed conflict view. As such, the study was contextualized in the managed conflict view such that conflict in secondary schools in Malawi was looked at as an essential element in the running of the school which should not be avoided but should rather be managed properly. As per the advice by Robbins and Judge (2013), this can be achieved by preparing people for conflicts, developing resolution strategies, and advocating for open discussion. Consequently, the proposed theoretical framework for conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi has been developed with no intention to eliminate conflict but to prepare people to handle it in such a way that the secondary schools benefit from it by reducing the dysfunctions which it brings about.

2.2.2 Conceptual guide for stakeholder identification

According to Brinkerhoof and Crosby (2002), in issues to deal with policy, there are constituencies or stakeholders who are affected by the policy in one way or the other and they have the power to help it or obstruct it. Conflict in secondary schools is an issue of policy such that its management requires the involvement of all stakeholders or constituencies. In view of this, there was need to identify the relevant stakeholders in the study. The researcher therefore, employed a conceptual framework which was used in the analysis of education policy in Pakistan namely; the analysis of existing

situation (Haddad, 1995 in Waheed, Gilani, Shoukat & Saleem, 2015). Only one tool in this framework; the analysis of dynamics of change was used. In this tool, it is contended that an assessment of the present situation cannot be complete without evaluating the forces for or against change which in educational policy are the presence and relative strength of interest groups who include providers of education, consumers of education, and officials who administer education (Haddad, 1995 in Zimpita, 2008).

Using this tool, stakeholders in the managing of conflict in secondary school were identified and they constituted the population for the study. These stakeholders were teachers as providers of education, students and parents as consumers of education, head teachers, officials from the education division, and officials from the MoEST as administrators of education. Upon engaging these stakeholders, the study was able to achieve its objectives one of which was to develop an alternative framework for conflict management to be used by secondary schools.

2.2.3 The theories guiding the study

As mentioned already, the study was guided by two theories; human needs theory and contingency theory. The human needs theory was employed in order to appreciate the existence of conflict in the secondary schools while contingency theory was employed for the purposes of finding ways of managing it. For the contextualisation of conflict, the study also recognized the scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology. The theories are discussed here below.

2.2.3.1 Human needs theory

The human needs theory was propounded by theorists including Abraham Maslow, Marshall Rosenberg, Manfred Max-Neef and John Burton (Danielsen, 2005). The theory argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs (Kok, 2007). In agreement, Mayer (2001) says people engage in conflict because of struggle for needs, and that conflict cannot be transformed or settled unless these needs are addressed in some way. The contingency theory places needs-based approach to conflict management within the contingency framework saying it is only designed to improve the relationship with the aim of de-escalating the conflict and rendering it amenable to peace-making

(Ramani & Zhimin, 2010). However, the proponents of the theory look at it as being independent and the main cause of conflicts.

Kok (2007) outlines what each of the proponents of the theory propounds. He says to Rosenberg, violence is a tragic expression of unmet needs. In support of this assertion, Northrup (1989 in Herrera, 2013) says that an individual or community that cannot meet its basic needs would be inclined to conflict. In his contribution, Doucey (2011) says while the basic needs might be physical such as food, water and shelter, essential needs cover the psychological sphere as well. Looking at conflict from this perspective, Kelman (2009 in Doucey, 2011) advises that conflicts should be considered as a process driven by collective needs and fears.

Doucey adds that collective fears are fuelled by the denial of basic needs and can lead to violent reactions, as an ultimate attempt of a people to secure the necessities of life and rectify the perceived injustice. From this perspective, the human needs theory agrees with the insight theory which says conflicts result from a perception of threat; threat – to – cares. The term cares, in this case, refers to the needs, interests, goals, beliefs and values of a person (Glowacki, 2011). It is argued that if an individual or group perceives threat to these areas, conflict will arise. This assertion makes the issue more complicated as it may imply that even when the physical needs are all met, conflicts are likely to surface if individuals or groups feel that their psychological needs are not met. Worse still, any denial of basic needs worsens the fears. At school level, this might mean that school administration should strive to satisfy both the physical and the psychological needs of the students.

Burton observes that basic needs are ontological and non-negotiable such that if not met, people will become conflictive (Herrera, 2013). Consequently, Doucey (2011) advises that before anything, basic needs should primarily be addressed as a basis for managing conflict. Burton goes further to say that the needs most salient to understanding of destructive social conflicts are those of identity, recognition, security and personal development (Kok, 2007). In his elaboration of these needs, Doucey (2011) says security or safety implies both stability and freedom from fear while identity implies a sense of self in relation to the outside world. Doucey further observes that recognition includes that of one's identity and recognition from the

others such as family and community. Finally, Doucey says personal development includes a dimension of personal fulfilment, or the need to reach one's potential in all areas of life. At school level, Kibui et al. (2014) observe that if non-negotiable needs such as food, accommodation, identity and recreation are not met, conflict is inevitable.

Maslow puts the needs in a systematic hierarchy which must be satisfied gradually starting with basic ones in the following order: physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs and needs for self-actualisation. This hierarchy is determined by the potency of the needs themselves (Kok, 2007). Maslow (1943) says even if all the needs are satisfied, new discontentment and restlessness will develop, unless the individual is doing what he is fitted for. This is to say that there is always a desire to become more and more what one is or to become everything that one is capable of becoming. This means that conflict shall always be there as people shall always be fighting for fresh needs. The hierarchy of Maslow's needs is diagrammatically presented as shown in Figure 2.1 below.

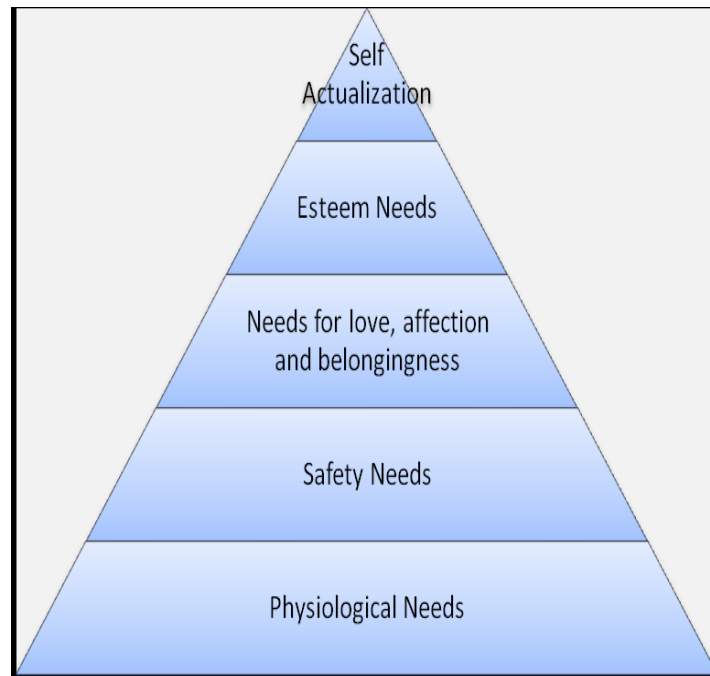


Figure 2-1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Source: Jerome (2013)

With reference to the Turkana-Dassenech conflict along the Kenya-Ethiopia boarder, Zeleza (2008 in Harrera, 2013) observes that applying the human needs theory assisted in removing the stereotyped vision of African conflicts as a result of aggressive nature of conflicting parties. In the same line, the study did not consider conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi to be a result of aggressive nature of any of the two parties but rather the struggle for needs which could be addressed by providing the concerned parties with what they needed. Doucey (2011) says these needs are generally fulfilled through the community, policies, public goods, and services provided by the state. It was for this reason that the study assessed the involvement of different stakeholders in the management of conflict in secondary schools and evaluated the support that education officials and other stakeholder provided in the process.

2.2.3.2 Contingency theory

Having appreciated the existence of conflicts in the secondary schools as a result of a struggle for needs, the study moved a step further to find out how they (conflicts) were managed and recommended a framework for the same. To achieve this, the study employed the contingency theory which was pioneered by Fisher and Keashly (1991). The theory suggests that different types of interventions are useful at different points during a conflict. Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) say basing on the theory, successful management of conflict largely depends on the manager's ability to read the situation, understand the issues and interests behind the conflict and implement an appropriate intervention.

Arguing in support of the contingency theory, Rahim (2001) says effective conflict management involves matching styles with situations. As such, Huan and Yazdanifard (2012) advise that conflict should be managed according to the situation. While there are different models of contingency theory of conflict management, the study used Rothman's (2014) model which propounds that there is need for different conflict intervention methods according to the type and stage of the conflict. The model explicitly divides conflicts into three different types: resource-based, objectives-based and identity-based with each type conducive to a different mode of intervention method.

In an attempt to elaborate the levels of difficulty for the different categories of conflict, Rothman (2014) metaphorically likens a conflict to an iceberg. He observes that identity-based conflicts are the most difficult to resolve and may be conceptualized as residing at the un-saleable, murky bottom while objective-based conflicts are visible, but opaque, just beneath the water surface. The objective-based conflicts are construed to be easier to handle than the identity-based conflicts but more difficult than resource-based conflicts at the very top, above the water which are empirical, tangible and in a plain sight. Figure 2.2 below shows these levels of conflict.

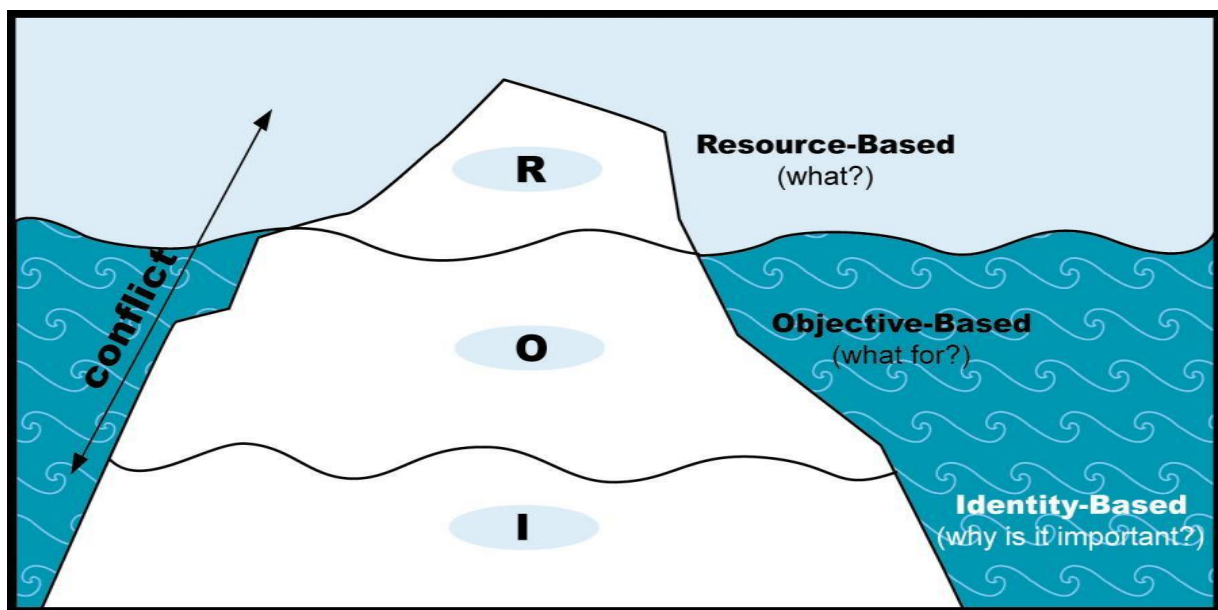


Figure 2-2: Conflict typology and levels-of-conflict analysis visualization for Diagnosis

Source: Rothman (2014)

Rothman says in all the types of conflict, there is need to get the definition and dynamics of a conflict conceptually right, so that disputants and potential third parties come to an agreement about the nature and depth of their disagreement. He further observes that efforts should be made to work with the disputants to determine either separately or interactively, or both, what the conflict is about, why it occurs, how deep it runs, what is functional about it, what is destructive about it, and what might be done to unearth its creative potential and reduce its destructiveness. It is only then that a decision can be made as to which strategy can be used to manage the conflict.

Using this model, the study endeavoured to categorize conflicts into the suggested types; resource based, objective based, identity based. The study engaged stakeholders to get a definition and dynamics of these different types of conflict conceptually right so that they acquire skills for assisting disputants in school conflict while agreeing about the nature and depth of their disagreement. At this juncture, the study learnt from the participants (stakeholders) what the conflicts in schools were about, why they occurred, how deep they ran, what was functional about them, what was destructive about them and what might be done to enhance their creative potential and reduce their destructiveness. Emphasis was made on the fact that from a contingency point of it, each situation would have to be handled using appropriate strategies.

2.2.3.3 The scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology

The study also recognized the scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology which hold two distinguishable perspectives on conflicts; a harmony or consensus perspective, and a conflict perspective. The harmony perspective assumes that social order is established or maintained by uniting human beings, their values, norms, and views on reality. In contrast, the conflict perspective assumes that conflicts may facilitate positive change, development, and modification of the existing social order (Hakvoort, 2010 in Hakvoort et al., 2014). Guided by the managed conflict view on conflict, the study was biased towards the conflict perspective in total appreciation of the significance of conflict but went further to consider how best to prepare people for a successful conflict management. In this regard, the study examined how the conflict management strategies were implemented in secondary schools in Malawi and proposed an alternative framework for conflict management which could assist in preparing people for conflict management.

PART 2

2.3 Review of related literature

Creswell (2012) defines a literature review as a summary of journal articles, books and other documents that describe the past and current state of information on the topic of a research study. Ary et al. (2014) say that researchers should thoroughly review the relevant literature to gain more understanding and insight into the problem under study and to determine what research has already been done. In his elaboration, Bhattacharjee (2012:21) says the purpose of a literature review is three-fold: (1) to survey the current state of knowledge in the area of inquiry, (2) to identify key authors, articles, theories, and findings in that area, and (3) to identify gaps in knowledge in that research area. In this regard, this chapter reviews the related literature on conflict management so as to gain insights into the current state of knowledge in the area, to identify key authors, theories and issues in the area and to establish existing knowledge gaps which the study will strive to fill.

Based on the objectives of the study, the review specifically looks at the causes of conflict in secondary schools, processes that are followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools, how stakeholders are involved in the process of managing conflicts in secondary schools, skills and strategies that stakeholders know and use respectively in the management of conflict in secondary schools and support and monitoring mechanisms that are provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict in secondary schools. A thorough review of the areas assisted the researchers to develop a clear understanding of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi and how it was managed.

2.3.1 Causes of conflict in schools

According to Lussier, (1993 cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003), a conflict is a situation involving people, or a group of people, with incompatible concerns. Conflict is a complicated phenomenon and Bannerman (2012) compares it to an iceberg. In his argument, Bannerman says what people see in a conflict are signs above the water which include fighting, withdraw and low productivity. In the same vein, Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) say violence is just an indicator and an antecedent of conflict. Thus, the violence that was there in secondary schools in Malawi was a testimony

for the existence of conflict. In fact with the large student population, schools may be more prone to violence because as observed by Doucey (2011), violent actions are reinforced by massive mobilization such that the larger the group involved, the more legitimate violence appears to be to the population. For a better understanding of the situation in the secondary schools, the review first examines causes of conflict. This is in accordance with the advice by Bannerman (2012) who contends that to understand conflict, there is need to examine its causes first.

The human needs theory – as propounded by theorists Abraham Maslow, Marshall Rosenberg, Manfred Max-Neef and John Burton (Danielsen, 2005) – argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs (Kok, 2007). It is further observed by Kok (2007) that to Rosenberg, violence is a tragic expression of unmet needs while to Maslow the needs are in a systematic hierarchy and must be satisfied gradually starting with basic ones. According to Burton, the needs most salient to understanding of destructive social conflicts are those of identity, recognition, security and personal development (Kok, 2007). In the final analysis, Burton proposes that if people's basic needs were satisfied, they would be less conflictive and societies would be more stable (Herrera, 2013). This study focused on human needs as the major cause of conflict with a belief that if such needs were met, conflicts in secondary schools would be peacefully managed.

In agreement with the human needs theory, Mayer (2001) observes that needs do not exist in a vacuum, but they are embedded in a constellation of five forces that can generate and define conflict. The first one of these five forces is communication. Mayer (2001) argues that conflicts escalate because people act on assumptions resulting from inaccurate or wrong information that is usually interpreted as an act in bad faith. The second force is emotions which according to Mayer are the energy that fuel conflict and contribute strength, courage and perseverance that allow people to participate forcefully in conflict. Mayer says while there is need to ventilate; to let an emotion out through a direct cathartic expression of it, it is necessary to let emotions out in safe increments, or to express them to a third party rather than directly to the other person. Mayer (2001) says the third force is values; the beliefs that people hold which eventually become part of them. An attack on

people's values then means an attack on them thereby making conflicts related to values very difficult to handle.

The fourth force is structure; the external framework in which interaction takes place. Elements of structure include available resources, decision making procedures, time constraints, communication procedures and setting. Mayer (2001) says even when people's interests are compatible; the structure in which they work may create conflict. The last force is history. The history of the disputants, the history of the system in which the conflict is occurring and the history of issues themselves have great influence on the course of the conflict. Mayer's assertion may be in line with the observations by Doucey (2011) who says essential needs cover the psychological sphere in addition to the physical ones. It can be concluded that people need proper treatment as far as these issues are concerned in line with the human needs theory.

The study reviewed different causes of conflicts as highlighted by different studies. A discussion for those causes is presented here below. The insights gained assisted the researcher to appreciate the causes of conflict in the Malawi scenario. As per the purpose of the study, the insights gained further assisted the researcher to find out how strategies used in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented.

2.3.1.1 Unfair treatment of students by administration and teachers

A study conducted in Uganda by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that one of the causes of dysfunctional conflicts in schools was poor treatment of students by administration and teachers. In the study, students expressed resentments to such treatment which they said at times forced them to strike. The students were quoted as having said: "teachers are very harsh and they treat us as if we do not matter." A study by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) in Kenya identified favouritism as another cause of conflict. As an example, students said there were times when teachers or the administration dismissed some students leaving others at school despite committing the same offence.

A study by Kipyego (2013) in Kenya also established that when head teachers were believed to be favouring some students, conflict usually arose. To manage such conflicts, Gyan and Tandoh-Offin (2014) recommend that school administrators must be fair and firm and they must always assign duties on merit. It was the wish of this study to establish if unfair treatment of students by administration and teachers could be one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. Knowledge about this was very vital in the formulation of the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has proposed for use by secondary schools.

2.3.1.2 Use of dictatorial leadership strategies

A study conducted in secondary schools in Nairobi by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) showed that one of the causes of conflicts between students and teachers was dictatorial tendency by the latter towards the former. Both teachers and students rated this as the major cause of conflicts in schools. The study also found that conflicts arose when administration sought to impose things to students instead of pursuing dialogue. In addition, conflicts also arose when the school administrators set rules and regulations which students found unrealistic.

A study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) in Uganda reported that students whose head teachers were using autocratic styles of management had negative attitudes towards the administration and they threatened to strike. The students indicated that they needed democratic leaders who could listen to them but in most of the schools, the administration was not ready to listen to students' grievances with students' leaders, in other instances, victimised for taking issues to administration. In such cases, students indicated that the only way to communicate to administration was through strikes.

In agreement, a study conducted in Sierra Leone by Turay (2001) reported that teachers who managed their classrooms with inflexible rules and authoritarianism were a source of conflict. In the study, students went further to indicate that most conflicts emanated from teachers' dictatorial tendencies such as imposition of prefects on the school instead of letting the students elect them. It was the wish of this study to establish if use of dictatorial leadership strategies by schools could be one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi.

2.3.1.3 Poor communication

Abaasa (2005) observes that poor communication or failure to communicate leads to violent reactions by students. She gives an example of a routine practice such as end of term disco not being offered without a clear communication. Such an act sends the message of failure to recognise the students. As observed by Barton, recognition is a salient need and denying people of such a need is recipe for conflict (Kok, 2007). A study by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) in Kenya also found that lack of proper channels of communication between students and school administration was a source of conflict between the two parties. In Botswana, Morake, Monobe and Dingwe (2011) found that communication breakdown in schools led to antagonism which finally gave rise to conflict. A study conducted in Islamic Secondary Schools in Thailand by Johdi and Apitree (2012) also found that poor communication contributed a lot to conflicts due to the consequent misunderstandings which allowed barriers to be erected.

A study conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2012) in Zimbabwe, also found that one of the causes of conflict was poor communication. In collaboration, Turay (2001) says in Sierra Leone, poor communication was one of the causes of conflicts. Turay says this usually happened when students were not given a forum to express their feelings, interests, fears and concerns. In collaboration, a study conducted by Adeyami (2009) also found communication gap to be one of the major causes of conflicts in public secondary schools in Ondo State in Nigeria. The foregoing shows clearly that communication is a very important issue in as far as conflict is concerned. It was therefore, the wish of this study to find out if poor communication could be one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. Data to this effect assisted very much in the development of the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has proposed for use by secondary schools.

2.3.1.4 Poor quality or insufficient food

Abaasa (2005) reports that at Nabumali High School in Uganda, students rioted and destroyed school property because food was bad and there was no milk in their porridge. A study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) in Uganda as well also found that at times, students went on rampage destroying school property because of poor quality of food. Some students complained that they were fed posho (maize meal)

and beans throughout a term without a change. In other cases, students complained that they were given beans infested with weevils. Similarly, in Kenya, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) found that conflicts arose when school administration failed to provide sufficient food.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, food is a basic need and denying people of such a need is likely to bring about conflicts. In the same connection, Abaasa (2005) says at times school administration's failure to address students' needs in time provokes the situation. As an example, Abaasa says if water is not there and the school administration is doing nothing, the likelihood of students striking is high. In a study conducted in Ghanaian schools, Afful-Broni (2012) also found that at times conflicts arose due to insufficient food.

This study used the knowledge gained to establish if poor quality or insufficient food could be one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools Malawi. The facts which were unearthed assisted a lot in the development of the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has proposed for use by secondary schools in Malawi.

2.3.1.5 Lack of entertainment

In their study, Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that at times, students went on rampage because of lack of entertainment opportunities and facilities. A good example of entertainment that students mentioned was dance especially with the opposite sex. Abaasa (2005) explains that at Kisubi High School in Uganda students went on rampage destroying property worth millions of shillings including dormitory windows, school bus and stole computers with their accessories a day before the school broke off for a holiday. By the time the police arrived, the students were heading for the school's administration block with petrol to blaze it down. All this was because the students were denied an end of term disco and that sparked off anger. This might be something to do with the psychological gratification which Doucey (2011) says is another sphere of needs.

Using this knowledge, the study endeavoured to establish whether lack of entertainment could be one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi.

The findings were very important as they fed into the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has proposed for use by secondary schools.

2.3.1.6 Poor sanitation

A study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that the issue of sanitation was another cause of strikes by students. In the study, Students cited poor sanitation in the dormitories and toilets as cause of concern which if not handled carefully could trigger strikes by students. This also happened in Malawi where *The Nyasa Times* of 15th November, 2013 reported that Malawi Police Secondary School students destroyed property in reaction to school management's delay in addressing their concerns over poor sanitation. Among other things, the students destroyed classroom windows and demolished 2 pit latrines at their hostels.

Commenting on the significance of sanitation, Jerome (2013) says in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is an issue of security which is a basic need. As such, denying people of such a basic need is a recipe for conflict hence the reaction of the students. While the case of Police Secondary School discussed above was clear evidence that poor sanitation was an issue in secondary schools in Malawi, the study went ahead to establish how much of a problem this was in different secondary schools and the facts found helped a lot in the process of developing the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has proposed for use by secondary schools.

2.3.1.7 Harsh punishments

Students in Uganda indicated that at times schools registered conflicts due to heavy punishments. It was reported that while they were ready to be pushed, students were not comfortable with heavy and unfair punishments (Tumwesigye & Basheka, 2008). From Maslow's hierarchy of needs, heavy punishments might be against love needs of the students. As such, chances of a strike are very high. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) found that in Kenya, hostile punishment subjected to students caused conflicts in most schools.

In Thailand, a study by Johdi and Apitree (2012) also found that students' anger against punishments was one of the major causes of conflict in Islamic Secondary

Schools. Mncube and Harber (2013) reported that in South Africa, violent conflicts have at times occurred due to ill-treatment of students by teachers. A good example of such treatment is the administration of corporal punishment. This is well collaborated by Turay (2001) who says in Sierra Leone, one of the causes of conflicts was teachers' excessive use of corporal punishment. In Malawi, use of corporal punishment is prohibited and the study took this opportunity to establish if schools were indeed not administering such punishments and other related treatment. The findings were very useful in the development of the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has proposed.

2.3.1.8 Sabotage by students withdrawn from school

Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that at times, students who had been withdrawn from school due to poor performance instigated others to strike. In Kenya, students perceived expulsion and suspension from school to be unjustified since they were not given a chance to be heard. As such, conflicts usually arose whenever students were expelled or suspended from school (Ramani & Zhimin 2010). In Malawi, Ntcheu Secondary School students set ablaze school property and damaged some staff houses in protest against the expulsion of fellow students. In the riots, over thirty computers and other property worth millions of kwachas were reported burnt (*The Nyasa Times* of September 28, 2014). However, in the Malawi scenario, there was more of sympathy for the expelled students than instigation. This information assisted very much in shaping the study and finally fed into the alternative framework for conflict management which has been proposed.

2.3.1.9 Administrative incompetence

Saiti (2015) observes that the effectiveness of any conflict management strategy depends on the performance management of school principals. By this, it implies that the many conflicts that schools are experiencing may be a result of principals' failure to do their work properly. Concurring with Saiti, a study conducted in Osun State in Nigeria by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) found that one of the causes of school conflict was administrative incompetence. In this regard, the study attributed the high rate of conflicts in schools to lack of knowledge in conflict management by school administrators and the absence of laid down procedures for conflict management in most schools. Consequently, a study by Gyan and Tandoh-Offin

(2014) in Ghana recommended the establishment of proper guidelines for conflict management so that when a conflict arises, principals should know what steps to take to seek resolution.

Studies conducted in South Africa by Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) found that one cause of conflict in schools was lack of conflict management skills by school principals which resulted in insensitive decisions. Such decisions usually provoked strikes from students. In agreement, a study by Kipyego (2013) in Kenya also found that head teachers with poor leadership qualities were a source of conflict as discontentment with decisions made provoked anger among students which finally led to strikes. A study in Botswana by Morake et al. (2011) also found that lack of management skills by head teachers led to conflicts. The study, therefore, recommended that school managers should be trained in conflict management so that they acquire necessary skills for managing conflicts.

In Malawi, a study commissioned to establish the causes of violence in schools reported that students burnt a head teacher's office and an infirmary because they felt the head teacher never paid attention to their grievances (Kuthemba Mwale et al, 1996). This might be due to incompetence on the part of the head teacher such that he or she may not have known that he was obliged to pay attention to students' grievances. This was something that could be addressed through training in conflict management. Unfortunately, such training may be farfetched as explained by Johnson et al (1993 in Turay, 2001) who observed that in West Africa, conflict education was still a dream and as a result students and teachers believed that physical force was the procedure by which conflicts could be resolved. With this knowledge, the study took the initiative to establish if head teachers and other key stakeholders were trained in conflict management or not.

2.3.1.10 Non-involvement of students in school administration

Different studies have found that failure to involve students in decisions that affect them is also a cause of conflicts in schools. A study conducted in Osun State in Nigeria by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) found that failure to involve student in school affairs caused conflicts in many schools. Fisher (1997 in Ghaffar, 2009) backs this position when he says people have an undeniable need for participation in decisions

that affect them. Thus, students have undeniable need for participation in decisions affecting them.

A study conducted by Gyan and Tandoh-Offin (2014) in Ashanti in Ghana also found that one of the causes of conflicts in schools was failure to involve students in decisions affecting them. The study therefore, recommended that students' representative councils should be involved in the decision making process so that when need arises, they can educate their colleagues on the rationale behind a decision or they can explain in simple terms the policies of the school thereby reducing unnecessary tension between school administrators and students. Studying Principals' management of conflicts in public secondary schools in Ondo State in Nigeria, Adeyami (2009) also found that one of the major causes of conflict was non-involvement of students when executing school policies. Using this knowledge, the study took the initiative to establish whether some of the conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi could be a result of failure to involve students in decisions that affected them or not.

2.3.1.11 Insufficient resources

Studies conducted by Mncube and Harber (2013), Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) in South Africa found that causes of conflict included competition for insufficient resources. The studies observed that at times, when resources were not sufficient, students got discontented and opted for strikes. In Ghana, Afful-Broni (2012) also found that conflicts in schools were mainly caused by competition for scarce resources such as accommodation and teaching and learning facilities. In agreement, Morake et al. (2011) say in Botswana, some conflicts in school resulted from limited or lack of resources. In the same vein, Kipyego (2013) says in some cases, head teachers have landed into problems with the other stakeholders who feel that the situation is due to negligence or misappropriation of the resources by the head teacher.

In Zimbabwe too, the issue of insufficient resources is a problem as observed by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2012) who say that competition for resources is a major cause of conflict in schools. In support of this argument, a study by Adeyami (2009) in Ondo State in Nigeria, also found that inadequate facilities for both students and

staff led to conflicts in public secondary schools. From the perspective of the human needs theory, denying students or other stakeholders at the school of these resources might imply denying them of their needs; a situation likely to create conflicts. Guided by the human needs theory, the study strived to establish how much the issue of resources contributed to conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi. The findings greatly assisted in the development of the alternative framework for conflict management that has been developed for use by secondary schools.

2.3.1.12 Students' indiscipline

Different studies have contended that indiscipline is also a cause of conflict. For example, Ageng'e and Simatwa (2011 in Kipkemboi & Kipruto, 2013) say students' indiscipline was among the many causes of conflict in secondary schools in Kenya. This is also advanced by a study involving church sponsored public secondary schools in Kenya in which Kipkemboi and Kipruto (2013) found that indiscipline on the part of students, teachers and administration was a cause of conflict in schools. Johdi and Apitree (2012) observe that when students are punished by teachers because of indiscipline, they get angry hence conflict surfaces.

Ramani and Zhimin (2010) also observe that conflict in schools at times arises due to students' indiscipline such as when they fail to adhere to school rules and regulations. Adeyami (2009) observes that unruly behaviour by students also causes conflicts. Adeyami contends that when students get punished due to their unruly behaviour, they become rebellious and disrespectful of teachers. In the end, a conflict arises. It may be for this reason that Turay (2001) reported that in Sierra Leone, one of the duties of a discipline committee was to arbitrate conflicts between different stakeholders in the school. From this perspective, the study tried to establish the role of discipline committees in the management of conflict and the findings assisted a lot in the development of the alternative framework for conflict management which the study has developed for use by secondary schools.

2.3.1.13 Other causes

There are other causes of conflicts that have not been discussed above. Adeyami (2009) outlines two of these causes of conflicts. The first one is rivalry between students and teachers over girlfriends. Adeyami says this causes conflict in many cases. The other cause is teachers' negligence of duty. According to Adeyami, in such a situation, students usually make fun of a teacher like when the teacher fails to teach effectively. In the end, the teacher gets angry, and a conflict arises.

A study conducted by Majola (2013) in South Africa, found that in some cases, cultural differences led to conflict. The study observed that some students never complied with rules and regulations highlighted in the code of conduct just because their culture did not accept such conduct. It is noted that such situations led to conflicts between the students and administration or teachers who could not tolerate any conduct against the rules and regulations. Knowing that because of different environments, causes of conflict could differ from one country to the other, the study opened up to different suggestions as to what could be the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. The findings assisted in the development of the alternative framework for conflict management that has been proposed for us by secondary schools.

2.3.2 Conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi

In Malawi, conflicts are numerous in both public and private secondary schools. The many cases of riots and violence in the schools are the main indicator of conflicts. This is in accordance with the observation by Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) who contend that any violence that erupts has conflict as its antecedent. However, very little has been written on the topic (in Malawi). If at all anything, the media reports a lot on school conflicts especially those which involve violence.

In 1996, the MoEST commissioned a study to investigate cases of secondary school indiscipline which in most instances resulted in damage to property and in other instances even to loss of life (Kuthemba Mwale et al. 1996). Among the many cases of indiscipline, the study found that violence and vandalism were common. As observed by Fatile and Adejuwon (2011), violence results from conflict. The study reported two types of conflicts; conflict between students and school management

and conflict between schools. In the first scenario, the study gave a case of a school where students had grievances with the school management and they decided to register their anger by burning the head teacher's office and the infirmary. The study found that the attack on the head teacher's office was because the students felt that the head teacher never paid attention to their grievances. Furthermore, the infirmary was attacked to express anger against management which did not allow students to seek medical help from a bigger hospital; a situation that led to the death of a student in the infirmary.

Kuthemba Mwale et al. (1996) further reported a number of cases where there was conflict between schools. In one case, a conflict arose because one of the schools lost a football match to the other. The losers damaged school property at the winners' school. In retaliation, the winners went to the losers' school and caused even more damage. The study found that the schools were different in status with one of them belonging to the community more than the other. As such, the community accepted "their school" while resenting the other. This made students in the two schools develop resentments towards each other as well.

In another case, Kuthemba Mwale et al. (1996) reports that students from one school were teasing and bullying form ones from the other school. When the form ones reported the issue to their seniors, the latter organised themselves and went to their counterparts' school where they cased a lot of damage. Kuthemba Mwale gives yet another case in which two schools engaged in squabbles after a form one student from one school was badly treated at the other school where he went to see a brother. Upon return to his school, the student reported everything to his seniors who were not amused. Consequently, they planned to revenge by harassing any student they met in town from the other school and that was done.

While there is very little literature on school conflicts in Malawi, the media reports a lot. *The Nation* of Tuesday, 4 January 2011 carried an article which talked about court acquitting Viphya Secondary School pupils who had been arrested on suspicion that they had initiated a strike that cost the school's property worth K2.3 million. Further to this, *The Nation* of November17, 2011 carried a story which said police had arrested 9 students in riots that occurred at St John Bosco Secondary

School in Mzimba. The paper said the cost of the damage caused was at K1, 127,100.

The Nyasa Times of September 28, 2014 reported that students of Ntcheu Secondary School set ablaze school property on Saturday, September 27, 2014 in protest against the expulsion of 20 students allegedly for absconding classes without valid reasons. Over thirty computers and other property worth millions of *kwachas* were reported burnt. *The Nyasa Times* of October 2, 2014 also reported that the MoEST had issued a stern warning to students in secondary schools who went on rampage after registering for examinations. The Ministry stated that students involved in rampage would not be allowed to sit for examinations. The students were reported to have been doing this because they felt assured that come what may, they would still sit for examinations. The warning came after students of Nkhotakota Secondary School had petrol bombed a food store at the school during the night of September 24, 2014.

As mentioned earlier, very little has been written on school conflict in Malawi but the foregoing literature, little though, shows that there is a problem. It was as a result of these conflicts that the MoEST presented a paper at a management meeting in Zomba in 2014 in which they bemoaned the rising number of indiscipline cases that led to damage and destruction of school property, bodily injury and even death of a student in one case. The paper reported that between January, 2013 and March, 2014, a total of 69 indiscipline cases were processed (MoEST, 2014). The current study came against this background and managed to unearth quite a lot which will enrich literature on conflict management thereby adding value to knowledge. Furthermore, the issues highlighted assisted in the development of data collection instruments by offering the scope within which to operationalize the study.

2.3.3 Processes followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools

Different authors have come up with different models for conflict management. Four of these models have been discussed in this review with the aim of giving direction to the study. The first to be discussed is the Conflict Resolution Education Programme Models (Jones & Kmatta, 2001). This has been followed by a discussion on Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A (CRM-A). After that,

Louis R. Pondy's Conflict Process Model has been discussed. Finally, there is a discussion on Robbins' and Judge's (2013) Conflict Process and the corresponding two dimensions models.

2.3.3.1 Conflict Resolution Education Programme Models

Jones & Kmatta (2001) define conflict resolution education (CRE) as a spectrum of processes that utilize communication skills and creative and analytic thinking to prevent, manage, and peacefully resolve conflict through such programmes as peer mediation and inclusion of conflict management content into the curriculum of the school. From the definition, it can be said that CRE is a proactive approach to conflict management in the sense that people get prepared for the conflict before its occurrence. This is in line with the managed conflict view by Robbins and Judge (2013) which states that conflict can best be handled by managing the whole context in which it occurs, both before and after its behavioural stage.

According to Jones & Kmatta (2001), CRE has four components that are intended to help develop critical skills for constructive conflict management. The components are:

- I. An understanding of conflict.
- II. Principles of conflict management (win-win interest-based problem-solving).
- III. Process steps in problem-solving (for example, agreeing to negotiate, establishing ground rules for the negotiation, gathering information about the conflict, exploring possible solution options, selecting solution options, and reaching agreement).
- IV. Skills required to use each of these steps effectively (for example, active listening, reframing, understanding, and consideration of the impact of cultural differences on the dispute).

Bodine and Crawford (1998 in Jones & Kmatta, 2001) discuss four basic models of CRE in schools. The first one is process curriculum approach in which Conflict Resolution (CR) is taught as a separate course. The second one is mediation program approach in which selected individuals are trained in the principle and foundation abilities of CR and in the mediation process in order to provide neutral

third-party facilitation services to help those in conflict reach a resolution. The third approach is the peaceable classroom approach in which the CR is incorporated into the core subjects of the curriculum and into classroom management strategies. The fourth one is peaceable school approach in which there is a comprehensive whole-school methodology that builds on the peaceable classroom approach by using CR as a system of operation for managing the school as well as the classroom.

Etim and Okey (2013) argue that managing conflict towards proactive and constructive action is the best approach. As an example, Jones and Kmatta (2001) say in the United States of America, schools offer CRE through which students learn how to engage with conflicts in constructive, nonviolent, and democratic ways. In Ohio State, the programme has resulted in an increase in students' self-control and constructive conflict resolution.

Zariski and Styles (2004) discuss what happens in Western Australia where there are different programmes aimed at equipping students with conflict management skills right in school. One example of such programmes is the Albany School District Psychology Service (ASDPS) which provides students with specialized training in behaviour and conflict management. In support of the proactive way of managing conflict, Shahmohammedi (2014) says teaching students conflict management and resolution skills may provide them with necessary tools to solve their own conflict in a productive and practical way.

2.3.3.2 Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A (CRM-A)

Davidson and Wood (2004) contend that conflict can be well managed if people use the Conflict Resolution Model which was formulated by a group of Australian Psychologists who integrated literature to create a best practice prescriptive process for conflict resolution (Littlefield, Love, Peck, & Wertheim 1993; Samson & Bretherton, 2001; Wertheim, Love & Littlefield, 1998 in Davidson & Wood 2004). Davidson and Wood call it the Conflict Resolution Model A (CRM-A) with A used to acknowledge that it has an Australian background. In this model, it is argued that optimal solution to conflict can only be found by engaging parties not only at bargaining levels, but also at exploring the underlying needs and concerns with the aim of generating plausible alternatives that adequately address them.

Davidson and Wood (2004) outline four stages of the model which if followed, it is assumed that conflict will be successfully managed. The first stage is developing expectations for a win – win solution with emphasis on the need to reframe the process in terms of cooperative problem solving with a view to arriving at a mutually satisfactory conclusion. The second stage is defining the issues in terms of underlying concerns, needs, or interests. To arrive at a win-win solution, the concerned parties are required to explain concerns and interests clearly without criticising, blaming, or threatening.

The third stage is brainstorming creative options which address the concerns of both parties. At this stage, parties are expected to develop the best alternatives to negotiated agreement (BATNA). Using the BATNA, parties proceed into the final stage in which they combine the options into a win-win solution. To achieve this, best ideas from the brainstormed list are selected and combined in order to address the needs, concerns, and interests of the two conflicting parties. If an agreement is reached, parties are expected to jointly acknowledge it. However, if an agreement is not reached, the area of disagreement is identified and the process begins once again. Figure 2.3 below gives a detailed outline of the CRM-A.

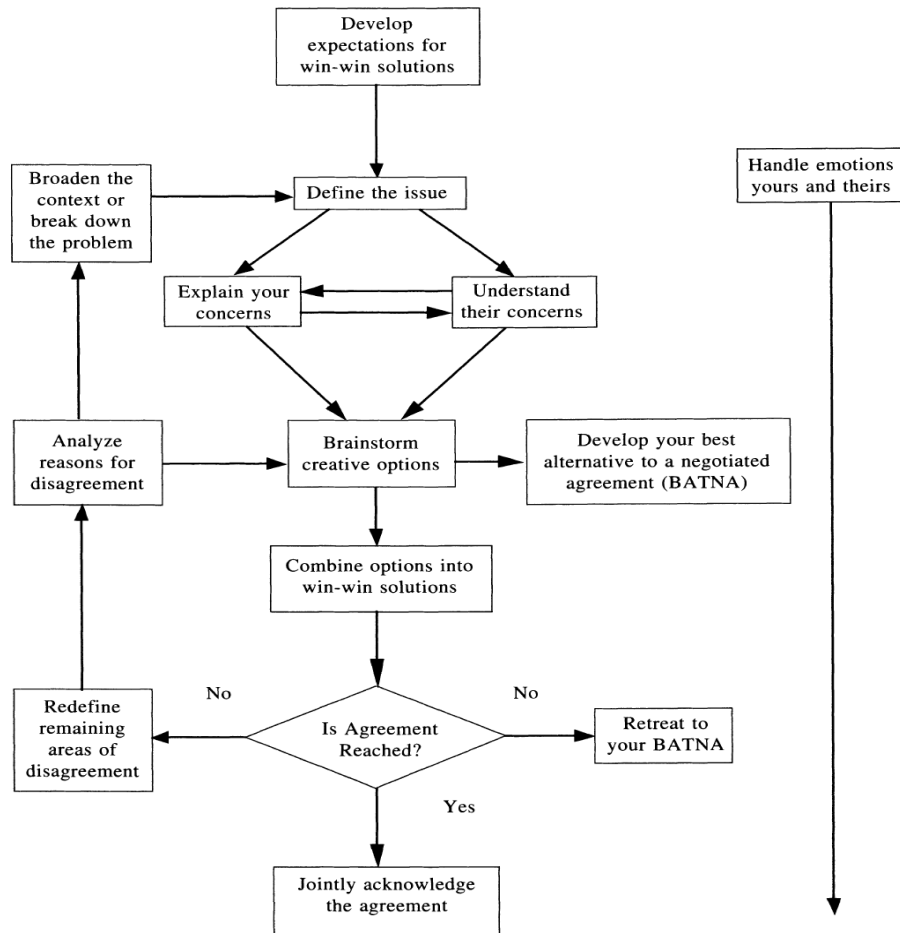


Figure2-3: Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A

Source: Davidson and Wood (2011)

This study took special interest in the four stages advocated by the model and went further to find out if stakeholders in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi were applying them in the process of managing conflict between students and staff.

2.3.3.3 Louis R. Pondy's Conflict Process Model (CPM)

Louis Pondy's conflict process model (CPM) has five stages (Spaho 2013). The first stage is latent conflict stage. At this stage, a conflict remains hidden although conditions for starting it are there. Thus, according to Pondy, even in environments which appear conflict free, there might be unfelt conflicts. The second stage is the perception stage. Here, all parties become aware of the conflict. However, Spaho (2013) warns that at times, people may perceive a conflict which in actual sense

does not exist. This, it is observed, might be a result of misunderstandings. The next stage is the tangible conflict stage. At this stage, the conflict gets personalized with the conflicting parties experiencing tensions, anxiety and other uncomfortable feelings. The fourth stage is manifested conflict stage. At this stage, conflicting parties display behaviours that show discord ranging from complete apathy to open aggression. The final stage is consequence stage. At this stage, either a solution is found or there is no solution. Figure 2.4 below shows the processes involved in Louis R. Pondy's Conflict Process Model.

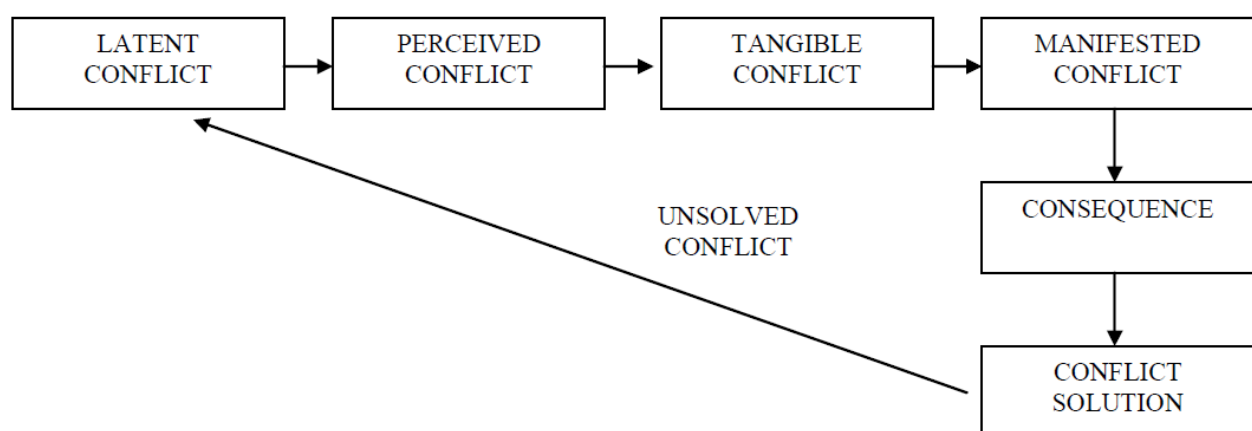


Figure 2-4: Louis R. Pondy's Conflict Process Model

Source: Spaho (2013)

As can be seen in the Figure 2.4 above, if a conflict is not resolved, the process begins all over again until a solution is found. One other thing worth noting from the model is that even when conditions seem to be conflict free, some differences might still be there hence, the need to be alert all the time. Using the understanding that even when there seems to be no conflict, some differences might be there, the study got justified to use the managed conflict view by Robbins and Judge (2013) which says conflict management should involve the whole context in which conflict occurs; before, during and after its occurrence.

2.3.3.4 Robbins' and Judge's (2013) conflict process and the corresponding two dimensions models

According to Robbins and Judge (2013), conflict process has five stages which if followed can yield positive results. These stages are: potential opposition or incompatibility, cognition and personalization, intentions, behaviour, and outcomes. At each stage, there are a number of issues that happen. Figure 2.5 below gives a detailed outline of each of the five stages.

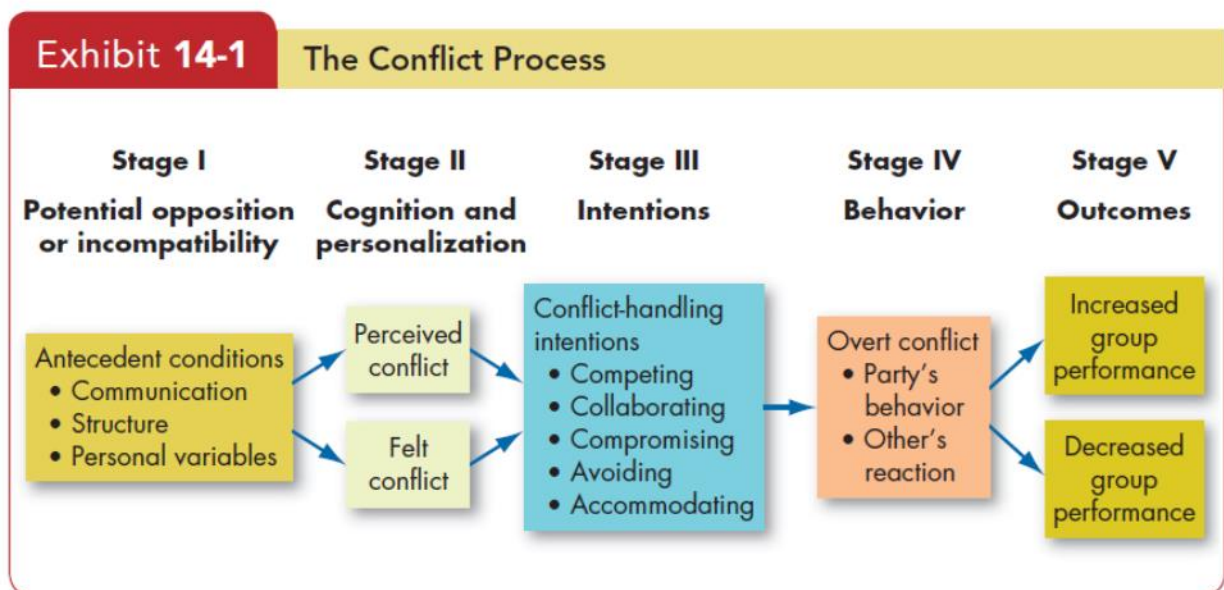


Figure 2-5: Robbins' and Judge's (2013) Conflict Process

Source: Robbins and Judge (2013)

In Figure 2.5 above, stage one highlights three antecedent conditions that create opportunities for conflict to arise. The first one is communication. It is argued that communication breakdown may be a cause of conflict. The second one is structure. It is observed that incompatibility arising from issues like jurisdictional clarity, member–goal compatibility, leadership styles and reward systems may be a source of conflict as well. The final condition is personal variables. It is argued that incompatibility in personal variables such as personality, emotions, and values may also be a source of conflict.

Stage two surfaces if the antecedent conditions cited in Stage one negatively affect something the other party cares about and that anomaly is perceived or felt. It is at

the felt conflict level, when individuals become emotionally involved, that they experience anxiety, tension, frustration, or hostility. Upon perceiving and feeling the incompatibility and getting frustrated in Stage two, conflict moves to Stage three where a party takes a stand; a decision to act in a given way which is called intention. There are different intentions which are identified using two dimensions; cooperativeness and assertiveness. The intentions are competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. These intentions are discussed in detail below.

Using the intention chosen, conflict moves into Stage four; behaviour stage which includes statements, actions and reactions made by conflicting parties as overt attempts to implement their own intentions. The behaviour stage leads conflict into Stage five; outcomes. The stage evaluates conflict to determine whether it is functional or dysfunction. If conflict improves the groups' performance, then it is functional but if it hinders performance, it is dysfunctional. The study used this knowledge to appreciate how secondary schools in Malawi manage conflict; cooperatively or assertively. In addition, using the knowledge, the study enquired from participants whether conflicts in Malawi led to increased group performance or decreased group performance. This was achieved by examining both benefits and effects of conflict to secondary school.

2.3.4 Strategies and skills used in the management of conflict

According to Wilmot and Hocker (2001 in Hong, 2005), in the process of managing conflict, people use different strategies also called intentions by Robbins and Judge (2013). For the strategies or intentions to be operationalized, they are translated into behaviours called techniques or skills (Robbins & Judge, 2013). The review discussed the different strategies and skills which are there in literature in order for the study to get informed so as to be able to assess how prepared stakeholders were in the management conflict. The strategies and skills are reviewed in detail below.

2.3.4.1 Strategies used in the management of conflict

Wilmot and Hocker (2001 in Hong, 2005) define conflict management strategies as patterned responses, or clusters of behaviour, that people use in conflict. A review of

literature indicates that different authors refer to the strategies differently. Instead of calling them conflict management strategies, Robbins and Judge (2013) call them conflict management intentions while Northous (2015) and Rahim and Bonama (1997 in Rahim, 2002) call them conflict management styles. On the overall, different authors agree on five strategies although they use different terminologies to refer to them.

Robbins and Judge (2013) observe that conflict management intentions can be identified using two dimensions; cooperativeness and assertiveness. To the two, cooperativeness indicates the degree to which a party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns while assertiveness indicates the degree to which a party attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns. The five intentions are competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. Figure 2.6 below presents the two dimensional intentions as advanced by Robbins and Judge (2013).

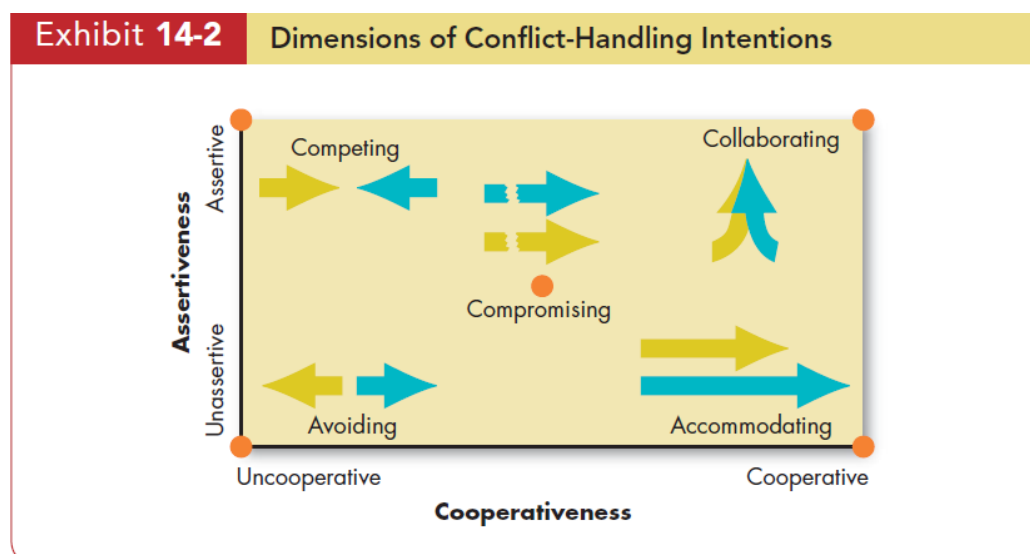


Figure 2-6: The two dimensional intentions by Robbins and Judge (2013)

Source: Robbins & Judge (2013)

According to Pruitt and Rubin (1986) and Wilmot and Hocker (2001 in Hong, 2005), conflict management strategies typically base on a two-dimensional typology, called “dual concern model.” These are concern for self and concern for others. Using this

model, Wilmot and Hocker (2001) classify conflict management strategies into five namely; collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise.

Rahim and Bonama (1997 in Rahim, 2002) share the five intentions but they call them conflict management strategies or styles. Instead of naming the strategies collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise, they name them integrating, obliging, dominating, avoidance and compromise respectively. Just like Pruitt and Rubin (1986) and Wilmot and Hocker (2001 in Hong, 2005), Rahim and Bonama differentiate the strategies basing on concern for self and concern for others. Concern for self explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concern. Concern of others explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy the concern for the other party. Figure 2.7 below presents the dual concern model of conflict management by Rahim & Bonama (1997)

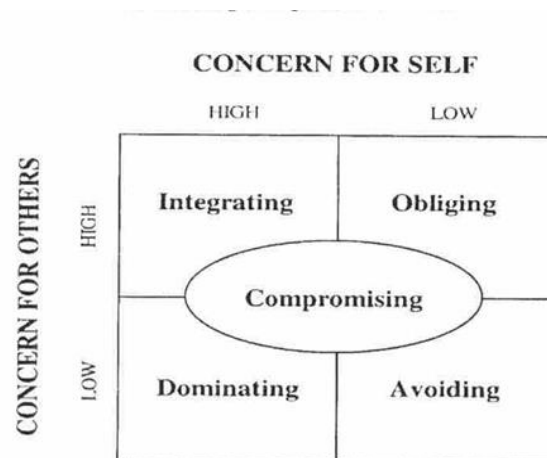


Figure 2-7: The Dual Concern Model by Rahim and Bonama (1997)

Source: Rahim and Bonama (1997 in Rahim, 2002)

Blake and Mouton (1964 in Rahim, 2001) also came up with five styles for handling interpersonal conflicts. Instead of naming them collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromise, they name them problem solving, smoothing, forcing, withdrawing and compromising respectively. The two identify the styles basing on the attitudes of the manager; concern for production and concern

for people. This means that a manager chooses a conflict management style; forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving depending on whether he or she is more concerned with production or people.

Northouse (2015) discusses yet another model of conflict resolution by Kilmann and Thomas called conflict style as well. Just like Rahim and Bonama (1997), Blake and Mouton (1964), Robbins and Judge (2013), Kilmann and Thomas identify the same five conflict styles which people in a conflict can follow. These are avoidance, competition, accommodation, compromise and collaboration.

On his part, Wani (2011) outlines ten strategies of conflict management. The first one is negotiation which involves arguing with and modifying the position of an adversary. The second one is mediation which involves negotiation between affected individuals facilitated by a third party. The third strategy is arbitration. This is a nonviolent conflict management method in which a neutral third person acts as a judge and decides how the parties' problem should be solved (The Colorado School Mediation Project, 1994 in Turay, 2001).

The fourth strategy is adjunction in which courts are involved. Bargaining is the fifth strategy and it involves dialogue that allows each party to put forward its demands. The sixth strategy is persuasion which aims at altering the other person's perception of an issue. The seventh strategy is communication; the process of informing and being informed by the other person. The next is reconciliation which is a commitment to explore and promote the common good and meet individual needs without infringing on the basic rights of others. Cooperation is the ninth strategy and it entails agreeing to come together to discuss and carry out what is agreed. The last strategy is encapsulation in which parties agree on certain rules and parameters while avoiding those that are extreme.

As parties engage in the conflict management process using the strategies, they expect one of the three outcomes; win-lose, lose-lose or win-win (Owens, 1981 and Basaran, 2000 in Sarpkaya, 2014). In win-lose, one of the parties surpasses the other and gains victory. Fisher (2000) adds that win-lose, works on the assumption that what one party gains, the other loses and there is a deliberate effort to force the

other side to capitulate. Fisher further observes that sometimes, this is done through socially acceptable mechanisms such as majority vote, the authority of the leader, or the determination of a judge and at times through secret strategies such as threat or innuendo.

In the second scenario, lose-lose, both parties deprive themselves of something and come to an agreement (Owens 1981 and Basaran, 2000 in Sarpkaya, 2014). Fisher (2000) adds that in this scenario, each party gets some of what it wants but at the same time, resigns itself to partial satisfaction. The last scenario is win-win in which both parties converge on a common point by integrating their claims. This is achieved through collaborative problem solving by the parties who work towards common and superordinate goals that can only be attained by both of them pulling together (Fisher 2000).

Depending on which one is prominent; concern for self or concern for others (Rahim & Bonama, 1997 in Rahim, 2002), cooperativeness or assertiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2013), concern for production or concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964 in Rahim, 2001), stakeholders in conflict management choose a strategy which will lead to one of the three outcomes; win-lose, lose-lose or win-win. Using this knowledge, the study tried to establish which intentions took precedence in the managing of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi; concern for self or concern for others. The study further tried to understand if efforts were made to achieve a win-win out of a conflict. The five strategies are reviewed here below.

2.3.4.1.1 Competing

This strategy is assertive and uncooperative. One party wants to satisfy own interests with no consideration for the other party's interests. Morake et al. (2011) say that people who use this style try hard to get what they want irrespective of whether or not they ruin relationship. In the end, one person wins it all while the other person loses it all. To this effect, The U.S. Department of Interior (2010:32) defines the strategy as "I Win, you Lose" approach to conflict management. Rahim and Bonama (1997 in Rahim, 2002) refer to this strategy as dominating and they observe that it has high concern for self and low concern for others. Blake and Mouton (1964 in Rahim, 2001) call the strategy "forcing" while Everard et al. (2010) call it "fighting."

According to Everard et al. (2010), the strategy can best be used when you know that you are right and the other party is not prepared to listen to reason or take advantage of any attempt to compromise.

2.3.4.1.2 Collaborating

This strategy is both assertive and cooperative. If implemented, there is deliberate effort to satisfy the concerns of both parties. In the end, both parties come out winners. The U.S. Department of the Interior (2010:32) elaborates it as an “I Win, You Win” strategy. Rahim (2001) calls it “integrating” strategy and says it results from high concern for self and high concern for others. Morake et al. (2011) call it “cooperative problem-solving” strategy and that through it, people try to find a solution that will help them meet their interests and help everyone maintain good relationships. In agreement, Everard et al. (2010) call the strategy problem solving and emphasise that it involves a thorough exploring of each other’s interests and concerns and looking for creative alternative courses of action. To these authors, one occasion when the strategy can be used is when issues are too important to be compromised.

2.3.4.1.3 Avoiding

Avoiding means ignoring the conflict and let fate take its course (Morgan, 1986 in Tumwesigye, 2008). This strategy is unassertive and uncooperative. The conflict is ignored and people involved are avoided. According to Rahim (2001), the strategy is also called suppression and it is associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, sidestepping; “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” situation. The strategy is used when there is low concern for self and low concern for others. As a result, an avoiding person fails to satisfy his or her own concern as well as concern for others. The U.S. Department of Interior (2010:32) says the strategy is implemented in an “I Lose, You Lose” approach. To Everard et al (2010), the strategy is best when you know that there are other people who are better equipped to solve the problem than you and you expect that they will step in.

2.3.4.1.4 Accommodating

This is unassertive and cooperative. The other person's interests are placed above own interests with the aim of maintaining relations. Rahim (2001) calls the strategy "obliging" and says it has low concern for self and high concern for others. Efforts are made to play down differences while emphasising on commonalities with the aim of satisfying the concern for the other party. The U.S. Department of Interior (2010:32) says the strategy uses an "I Lose, You Win" type of philosophy. Everard et al (2010) call it smoothing and emphasise that among other occasions, the strategy can be used when you know that you are in the wrong. Morake et al. (2011) observe that people use this style when they believe that keeping a relationship is more important than anything else.

2.3.4.1.5 Compromise

This is a midrange intention on both assertiveness and cooperativeness. Each party is prepared to give up something resulting in no winner and no loser situation. Morake (2011) says people choose this style when it is important to satisfy some of their interests, but not all of them. It is mid-range strategy – neither high nor low on both divides. To Everard et al. (2010) compromise seeks quick solutions that satisfy both parties and that among other situations, the strategy is used when two opponents of equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals. The U.S. Department of the Interior (2010:32) says the stand taken by the parties in this strategy is that "We Both Win, We Both Lose."

Cahn and Abigail (2007 in Ahamefula, 2014) summarises the strategies in a four column table. The first column highlights the five conflict strategies. In the second column, the strategies are defined while the objective column shows why each strategy is used. Finally, the behaviour/tactic column presents the accompanying behaviour for each strategy. Figure 2.8 below outlines the strategies, what they mean, the objectives and the behaviour for each one of them.

Conflict strategy	Definition	Objective	Behaviour/Tactic
Avoidance	Withdrawal	Loss-Loss	Physical absent or silent
Accommodation	Acquiescence	Loss-win	Give in, don't make waves
Competition	Aggression	Win-Loss	Selfish, argumentative
Compromise	Trade-offs	Win and loss	Wheeler-dealer
Collaboration	Mutual satisfaction	Win-win	Supportive of self and others

Figure 2-8: The five strategies and what they entail

Source: Cahn and Abigail (2007 in Ahamefula, 2014)

2.3.4.2 How to use the strategies

Rahim (2002) advises that each style be used when appropriate guided by the situation. He further observe that the integrating and to some extent compromising styles may be appropriate for dealing with strategic issues. The remaining styles, he suggests, can be used to deal with tactical or day to day problems.

Kibui et al. (2014) further observe that depending on the situation, conflict management techniques often focus on changing the structure or changing the process or both. Mayer (2001) defines structure as the external framework in which interaction takes place. This means, a change to structure in the secondary school environment might involve measures like posting staff involved in a conflict away or transferring students while change to process might involve solving the problem while maintaining the structure. However, it is noted that sometimes structural modifications are not very creative, and the response to conflict is simply more rules leading to hardening of the role structure without necessarily solving the problem (Kibui et al. 2014). The study will endeavour to find out which one of the two; changing the structure or changing the process is applied in conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi.

Jhonson and Jhonson (1996 in Ghaffar, 2009) give three indicators of a properly managed conflict. These are: (a) all disputants should be satisfied with the outcome, (b) the relationship between the disputants should be improved, and (c) the ability of disputants to resolve future conflicts in a constructive manner should be improved as well. Bodin & Crawford (1999 in Ghaffar, 2009) warn that since school is an entity which comprises different people with different generational ages, negotiation and mediation must be the best strategies for handling conflicts.

Everard, Morris & Wilson (2007) say that for a conflict to produce a win-win situation, there are three principles which should be followed. The first one is to listen and understand the point of view and needs of the other party. The second one is to look for trade-offs through which one concedes some things to the other party. The last one is to focus on issues and facts and avoid personalizing the conflict. Using these principles, conflicting parties in schools can always listen to each other, be prepared to forego some things for the sake of the other party without personalising the conflict.

Guided by the contingency theory of conflict management, this study agreed with Rahim (2002) who observes that no style is superior to the other. The study therefore, tried to find out which of the styles or strategies were used in secondary schools in Malawi, how they were used and in what situations they were used.

2.3.4.3 Skills used in the management of conflict

While strategies are there for the management of conflict, there is need for people involved to translate them into skills or techniques. Robbins & Judge (2013) present the techniques or skills that people should use in managing conflict. These are problem solving, creating superordinate goals, expansion of resources, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative command, altering the human variable and altering the structural variables. Robbins and Judge also highlight conflict-stimulating techniques. These are techniques that can be used to stimulate a conflict so as to ensure competition and creativity in an institution. Figure 2.9 below outlines both conflict management techniques and the conflict stimulation-techniques.

Exhibit 14-4**Conflict Management Techniques**

Conflict-Resolution Techniques	
<i>Problem solving</i>	Face-to-face meeting of the conflicting parties for the purpose of identifying the problem and resolving it through open discussion.
<i>Superordinate goals</i>	Creating a shared goal that cannot be attained without the cooperation of each of the conflicting parties.
<i>Expansion of resources</i>	When a conflict is caused by the scarcity of a resource (for example, money, promotion, opportunities, office space), expansion of the resource can create a win-win solution.
<i>Avoidance</i>	Withdrawal from or suppression of the conflict.
<i>Smoothing</i>	Playing down differences while emphasizing common interests between the conflicting parties.
<i>Compromise</i>	Each party to the conflict gives up something of value.
<i>Authoritative command</i>	Management uses its formal authority to resolve the conflict and then communicates its desires to the parties involved.
<i>Altering the human variable</i>	Using behavioral change techniques such as human relations training to alter attitudes and behaviors that cause conflict.
<i>Altering the structural variables</i>	Changing the formal organization structure and the interaction patterns of conflicting parties through job redesign, transfers, creation of coordinating positions, and the like.
Conflict-Stimulation Techniques	
<i>Communication</i>	Using ambiguous or threatening messages to increase conflict levels.
<i>Bringing in outsiders</i>	Adding employees to a group whose backgrounds, values, attitudes, or managerial styles differ from those of present members.
<i>Restructuring the organization</i>	Realigning work groups, altering rules and regulations, increasing interdependence, and making similar structural changes to disrupt the status quo.
<i>Appointing a devil's advocate</i>	Designating a critic to purposely argue against the majority positions held by the group.

Source: Based on S. P. Robbins, *Managing Organizational Conflict: A Nontraditional Approach* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974), pp. 59–89.

Figure 2-9: Conflict management techniques and conflict-stimulation techniques

Source: Robbins and Judge (2013)

The first technique is problem solving. Figure 2.9 shows that problem solving requires that stakeholders involved in conflict management should have skills or techniques with which to bring together disputants through face to face discussions in order to find a solution to the problem. The second technique is to create superordinate goals. This requires that people handling a conflict should create a shared goal that cannot be attained without cooperation of each of the conflicting parties. Through this, a common denominator is found which serves as a uniting factor. The third technique is expansion of resources with the aim of creating a win-win situation. In a school setting, this can be realised by extending opportunities to a party such as students who feel marginalised. The fourth technique is avoidance which involves withdraw or suspension of the conflict.

Robbins and Judge give smoothing as the fifth technique which involves playing down differences while emphasising common interests between the conflicting

parties. A study by Kipyego (2013) found that smoothing was one of the most used techniques in conflict management in Nandi County in Kenya. The sixth technique is compromise and it requires that the conflicting parties be convinced to forego something of value which might have been the source of conflict. Kipyego (2013) says schools in Kenya also used compromise to managing conflicts. The seventh technique is use of authoritative command. In this technique, management uses its formal authority to resolve conflict and then communicate its desire to the conflicting parties.

The eighth technique is altering the human variable which involves conducting human relations training with the aim of altering attitudes and behaviours that cause the conflict. In the school setting, this may mean training stakeholders including students in conflict management so that there is change of attitude. The last technique is altering the structural variables. This involves changing the formal organization structure and the interaction patterns of conflicting parties through such measures as job redesigning and transfers. To Robbins and Judge (2013), if these techniques are used properly, conflict will be well managed.

In the Figure 2.9, Robbins and Judge (2013) also present techniques which they say may be used to stimulate conflict deliberately. The first one is communication in which you use ambiguous or threatening messages to increase conflict levels. The second strategy is bringing in outsiders. In this strategy, you add employees to a group whose backgrounds, values, attitudes et cetera differ from those of the present members. The third strategy is restructuring the organisation which involves realigning work groups, altering rules and regulations and making similar other changes to disrupt the status quo. The last strategy is appointing a devil's advocate. This involves designating a critique to purposefully argue against the majority position of the group.

Crawford and Bodine (1997 in Garner, 2008) also outline skills that stakeholders in conflict management should have. In their presentation, they state that any authentic conflict resolution program contains two key elements which should be adhered to. These are the principle of conflict resolution and problem-solving process. In each one of these elements, there are skills. The principal of conflict resolution

encompasses such skills as the ability to separate people from the problem, focus on interests, not positions, invent options for mutual gain, and use of objective criteria as the basis for decision-making. The element of problem-solving requires that one should have negotiation skills, mediation skills and consensus decision making skills.

On his part, Wani (2011) further advises that conflict management strategies can best be used with other skills. Three skills that Wani gives are drawing boundary to avoid conflict proliferation, fractionating the conflict into small components for easy management and maintaining a positive attitude towards the process. Mcconnon and Mcconnon (2008) go further to suggest three skills which can prevent the escalation of a conflict. The first one is listening acceptingly which according to the two provides wider perspectives and more possibilities in conflict management. The second one is talking constructively. This strategy implies being honest in expressing disappointments using skilful ways which will not worsen the situation. The last strategy is problem-solving which requires that conflicting parties identify issues, brain storm solutions, decide on the way forward and agree on a plan of action. The study endeavoured to establish which of the different skills were possessed by stakeholders for use in the management of conflict in secondary schools.

2.3.5 How stakeholders are involved in the management of conflict in secondary schools

Fisher (1997 in Ghaffar, 2009) says people have an undeniable need for participation in decisions that affect them. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) call such people stakeholders – constituencies who are affected by policy and who have the power to help it or obstruct it. In agreement, Haddad (1995 in Zimpita, 2008) observes that such people can originate a force for or against change and in education policy; the forces are the presence and relative strength of interest groups who include providers of education, consumers of education and officials who administer education.

The foregoing shows that conflict management at school level is supposed to involve teachers as providers of education, students and parents as consumers of education, and head teachers and education officials as administrators of education. Realising how important these stakeholders are in conflict management, Snodgrass

and Blunt, (2009) observe that there is need to equip principals, teachers, learners and parents with values, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for managing conflict in a constructive manner.

In accordance with stakeholder involvement in conflict management, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) give three ways through which schools can manage conflict. First, it is observed that conflict can be managed if teachers and school principals strive to treat students in the best way possible. Second, it is argued that conflict can best be managed if schools embrace guidance and counselling programmes so as to instil in students a spirit of tolerance and coexistence. Lastly, it is observed that schools may need to regularly undertake stakeholders' satisfaction surveys to gauge the attitude of teachers and students towards various approaches to governance which if not approached well, may be a source of conflict.

2.3.5.1 Involvement of head teachers and teachers in conflict management

Head teachers get involved in conflict management in different ways. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) observe that to be effective, a school principal needs, among others: drive, energy, vision, and skills for conflict management with which he or she can create a conducive environment for learning. As such, Aja (2013) warns that school principals should look for early warning of conflict in order to address it rather than allowing it to escalate. To do this, the head teacher requires skills and Aja (2013) advises that government should be sponsoring principals to attend conferences on conflict management so as to keep themselves abreast of best practices of conflict management. It is also observed that the principal's role in conflict management is to engage in the conflict process by being an agent of communication, problem solving, a negotiator, a leader, a mediator, a decision maker and a researcher (Kgomo, 2006 in Majola, 2013).

The role of teachers in conflict management is equally crucial. First, if conflict is incorporated in the curriculum as advanced by the conflict resolution programme modals (Jones & Kmatta (2001), it is their duty to teach it. In countries where discipline committee is expected to arbitrate students-students conflict, students-teacher conflict and teacher-teacher conflict as per the observation by Turay (2001), it would be their role to manage conflict through the committee. In the same vein,

teachers could assist in managing conflict through participation in activities of conflict resolution committees where they are there (Garner 2008). A study by Snodgrass and Blunt (2009) found that in South Africa, teachers spent a lot of time and energy managing classroom conflicts that arose with administrators, other teachers and parents. However, Snodgrass and Blunt (2009) expressed concern that the teachers received little practical training in conflict management despite their crucial role thereby subjecting them to a task in which they had no competence.

2.3.5.2 Involvement of parents in conflict management

Parents and the community in the school setting are among significant players in education whose role includes the management of conflict. Kabir and Akter (2014) observe that in Bangladesh, the formulation of School Management Committees (SMCs) created an opportunity for the parents as community members to be involved in managing secondary schools. Likewise, in El Salvador and Nicaragua, decision making powers for schools have been decentralized to school councils thereby empowering parents, teachers, students and local communities to make important decisions (Mulwa, Kimosop & Kasivu, 2015). Such decisions include those concerning conflict as observed by (Majola 2013) that in South Africa, the SGBs are obliged to see to it that conflict in the school is well managed by applying effective conflict resolution strategies. Majola further observes that the SGBs need to develop a school culture within which conflict can be dealt with constructively.

In Malawi, the NESP (2008-2017) says to improve management and governance of secondary schools, government shall endeavour to strengthen Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and management boards. The Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) (2009) further observes that government shall strengthen the capacity of school management through training of school management committees (SMCs). All this implies the involvement of parents and communities in the management of schools which includes conflict management as well. The study will go a step further to find out how they specifically get involved in the managing of conflict in secondary schools.

2.3.5.3 Involvement of students in conflict management

Students also get involved in conflict management. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) say regularly, schools in Kenya conduct consultation with prefects to identify areas of conflict and how best to handle them. This can be best done if students are mature and responsible, something that can be achieved through proper guidance and counselling. Afful-Broni (2012) says that guidance and counselling is very important in conflict management in schools as most people, especially students, get involved in conflict simply out of mischief or fun. Ramani and Zhimin say students can also be involved in conflict management by creating peer educator's movement through which they can work as mediators. Students are also involved in conflict management in the capacity of students' representative councils through which Kipyego (2009) reports that they minimized conflict in secondary schools in Kenya.

2.3.5.4 Involvement of education officials in conflict management

Education officials also get involved in conflict management in schools in different ways. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) say when a conflict arises; schools in Kenya invite provincial education officials to mediate. On their part, Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) say that in Nigeria, the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) or the Ministry of Education get involved in conflict management in schools depending on who is involved. It is reported that TESCOM gets involved in conflict management by sending their officials to the conflict ridden schools to investigate, mediate and resolve the conflict. However, when the conflict involves students, Okotoni and Okotoni say that it is the Ministry of Education that gets involved in its management by sending inspectors of schools to the concerned schools to mediate. Their involvement through mediation is in total agreement with Bodin and Crawford (1999 in Ghaffar, 2009) who warn that since school comprises people with different generational ages, negotiation and mediation are the best strategies for handling conflicts.

2.3.6 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools by education officials and other stakeholders

For schools to manage conflict accordingly; there is need for support from education officials and other stakeholders such as parents, PTAs, SMCs, communities, school governing boards, teaching service commissions and many others. This part

discusses literature related to issues of support that can be rendered to schools in the process of conflict management. Furthermore, ways of monitoring conflict management in secondary schools are reviewed. All this was done to explore how education officials and other stakeholders rendered support to secondary schools in Malawi in the management of conflict and how they monitored the same.

Literature gives different ways through which education officials and other stakeholders in education can support schools in conflict management. According to Aja, 2013, one way of doing this is by facilitating training of head teachers in conflict management so that they keep themselves abreast of the global best practices in the field. A study by Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) observed that in South Africa, one of the causes of school conflict was lack of conflict management skills by school principals. The studies, among other things, recommended that school principals, and teachers must be trained in conflict management. As such, Msila emphasised the need for induction for school principals before assuming office and continued professional development (CPD) for those already serving.

Using a similar understanding, Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) recommended in their study that there was need for seminars, conferences, and symposia on education management in general and conflict management in particular. Afful-Broni (2012) says in Ghana, this is done by the Ghana Education Service (GES) who organise seminars and workshops during which even students are given an opportunity to share their views on conflict management.

The significance of training stakeholder in the management of conflict in secondary schools cannot be over emphasised. As observed by Snodgrass and Blunt (2009), failure to train teachers in conflict management disempowers them when they encounter conflict and consequently they may react defensively, thereby exacerbating the conflict. It is further observed that training can be in the form of pre-service or in-service training. On pre-service, Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) observe that there is need to incorporate courses on conflict management and human relations in the curriculum for teacher training. This would mean that upon graduating, every teacher would be well versed with conflict management skills.

In another study, Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2012) engaged teachers in Zimbabwe to find out their recommendations on how best to manage conflicts in schools. A majority of the teachers recommended that conflict management should be one of the core courses in teacher training colleges and universities in order to equip teachers and head teachers with skills necessary for handling conflict in their schools. It is further noted that in other countries such as the United States of America (USA), conflict resolution education is offered in schools and through it, students learn how to engage with conflicts in constructive, nonviolent, and democratic ways (Jones & Kmatta 2001).

In addition to pre-service mode of training, Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2012) recommend that teachers and administrators should undergo in-service training in conflict management in order to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills in dealing positively with conflicts in the schools. It may be for this reason that in Malawi, the MoEST had been training head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and teachers in school management (MoEST, 2000).

Studies further contend that stakeholders such as SGBs, PTAs or SMCs need training in conflict management as well for effective output. A study by Majola (2013) observed that it was imperative that newly elected SGBs should be trained in conflict management so that they carry out their tasks successfully. Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) also recommended that PTAs should be trained in conflict management if schools are to be run smoothly.

Another form of support from education officials can be a supportive legal framework for the establishment of structures necessary in the management of conflict in schools. As an example, Majola, (2013) says in South Africa, Section 19 of the School's Act, 84 of 1996 recognises the existence of the Provincial Department which is mandated to provide introductory training for newly elected SGBs so that they perform their functions properly. The SGBs are very important in conflict management as observed by Msila (2012) who says schools which engaged them and School Management Teams (SMTs) were successful such that conflict never escalated. This is just one form of legal support that a government can render to schools in the management of conflict otherwise there may be many more.

Education officials' support to schools can also be in the form of mediation between the conflicting parties. A study conducted in Osun State in Nigeria by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) showed that the strategy used to manage conflicts was mostly mediation by either the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) or the Ministry of Education depending on who was involved in the conflict. Intervention by TESCOM involved sending their officials to the conflict ridden schools to investigate, mediate and bring about resolution. However, when the conflict involved students and staff, it is reported that the Ministry of Education usually took the matter at times through inspectors of schools.

In other countries, special institutions have been established specifically to support schools in managing conflict. As an example, Raman and Zhimin (2010) observe that in Kenya, the Center for Conflict Resolution in Schools (CCROSS) was founded in 2003 with the aim of assisting schools to resolve and manage conflict. CCROSS is a non-profit making centre working with school administration to develop and promote effective conflict resolution strategies in Kenyan Schools. It can be assumed that among other things, CCROSS offers training in conflict management to those involved in school administration and mediate conflicts where necessary.

Garner (2008) observes that to manage conflict, schools should have conflict resolution committees which should aim at planning and implementing conflict management programmes. Garner says membership of such committees should include professional school counsellors, teachers, students, administrators, parents and community members. With its wide representation base, the committee can offer a great support to the school as far as conflict management is concerned. In a study conducted in Benue State in Nigeria, Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) recommend that government should ensure that schools have effective disciplinary committees and functional boards of governors for effective conflict management. In addition, Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) recommended that government and principals should establish effective communication network among the educational organs.

Literature indicates that for effective conflict management, there is need to put in place monitoring mechanism. The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPDR) (2001) emphasises that monitoring and evaluation in conflict management

assists in uncovering root causes of conflict, emerging new problems, and problems arising from imperfect policies. In this regard, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) contend that conflict management as a process entails an ensemble of activities of planning and monitoring the performance of a process so as to ensure efficiency.

In some countries, special structures have been put in place to facilitate monitoring of conflict management in secondary schools. For example, Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) observe that in Nigeria, the board of governors is constituted as monitoring agent entrusted with the oversight task of making sure that schools are run effectively with issues including conflict properly managed. As for the American School Counsellors Association (ASCA) (2006 in Garner, 2008), the task of monitoring conflict management in schools is left in the hands of professional school counsellor. ASCA says the professional school counsellor should assume a leading role in different areas of conflict management in schools including monitoring.

One of the objectives of the study was to explore mechanisms that had been put in place by education officials and other stakeholders for supporting and monitoring the management of conflict in secondary schools. As such, the insights gained in this section, went a long way in the operationalization and the consequent achievement of this objective.

2.3.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, literature has been reviewed in two parts; Part 1 and Part 2. In Part 1, the theoretical framework within which the study was conducted has been discussed. Specifically, three issues have been discussed in this part namely; views on conflict, the conceptual guide for stakeholder identification and the theories which guided the study. The theories which have been discussed are human needs theory which assisted in appreciating the existence of conflicts in the secondary schools and the contingency theory which assisted in appreciating the processes of managing conflict. In addition to the two theories, the study has also discussed the scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology which look at conflict from two perspectives; the harmony or consensus perspective and the conflict perspective. In Part 2, relevant literature to the topic has been reviewed with the aim of gaining insights on the implementation of strategies used to manage conflicts in secondary schools. The

review has based on the objectives of the study. Consequently, causes of conflict in secondary schools have been discussed first. To put the study in perspective, this has been followed by a discussion of the Malawian situation in as far as conflict in secondary schools is concerned. After that, the review has examined the processes that are followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools. This has been done by analysing four conflict management models namely; the Conflict Resolution Education Programme Models, Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A, Louis R. Pondy's five stage Conflict Process Model and Robbins' and Judge's (2013) Conflict Process and the corresponding Two Dimensions Models. Then strategies and skills which are used in conflict management have also been discussed followed by a review of how stakeholders are involved in the management of conflict in secondary schools. Finally, mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools by education officials and other stakeholders have been discussed. The next chapter discusses the methodology that was employed in the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Kothari (2004) defines methodology as the study of how research is done scientifically. On her part, Dawson (2002) defines methodology as the philosophy or the general principle which guides research. Kumar (2011) observes that research methodology is formed by the research techniques, procedures and methods. As such, Kothari (2004) observes that through the methodology, a researcher understands the assumptions underlying various techniques and procedures, and the criteria for choosing which one will be applicable in a situation and which one will not. Van Manen (1990 in Creswell, 2006), adds that methodology provides a researcher with the philosophical framework and fundamental assumptions within which to carry out a study. Thus, the researcher specifies very clearly and precisely the decisions he or she makes and why he or she makes them. In this regard, this chapter discusses the different techniques and procedures which were used in the study, their underlying assumptions and the justification for their use. These techniques and procedures are research paradigm, research approach, research design, setting of the study, population, sample and sampling, negotiating entry, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability of the study, study credibility and trustworthiness and ethical consideration.

3.2 Research paradigm

Martens (2005 in Cameron, 2011) defines paradigm as a way of looking at the world based on certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action. As for Filstead (1979, cited in Ponterotto, Mathew & Brigid, 2013), a paradigm is a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organized study of that world. On his part, Creswell (2013) says that paradigm refers to the philosophical assumptions made by a researcher as they undertake a study. Instead of the term paradigm, Creswell (2009) uses the term worldview which according to Guba (1990 in Creswell, 2009) means a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Creswell (1994 in Creswell, 2003) observes that in the paradigm, researchers make claims about what knowledge is

(ontology), how we know it (epistemology), what values go into it (axiology), how we write it (rhetoric), and the process for studying it (methodology). Emphasising the significance of these knowledge claims in research, de Villiers & Fouche (2015) observe that the research paradigm selected by the researcher will depend on these ontological and epistemological components and will affect the methodology that is selected. Using these knowledge claims, this study tried to understand the implementation of strategies used in the management of conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi with the aim of developing a comprehensive framework which secondary schools could be using in managing conflicts.

There are different paradigms from which a researcher may choose the one to employ as he or she undertakes a study. Creswell (2009) discusses four different paradigms namely, post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy, and pragmatism. On their part, Delport et al. (2013) and McKerchar (2008) argue that there are two main research paradigms namely; positivism and interpretivism and that the other less distinct paradigms (critical realism, post-positivism, constructionism, feminism and post-modernism) fall on a continuum between the two. As for Bhattacharjee (2012), there are two main paradigms namely, positivism and post-positivism.

Greener (2008) observes that the different paradigms are inconsistent with each other and that they foster different research methods and focus on different areas of study. As such, Greener concludes that if one holds one paradigm, one cannot hold another. In this regard, the study was located in one paradigm whose tenets were in tandem with the underpinnings of the study. However, to put the study into perspective paradigm wise, five of the paradigms namely, positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy, and pragmatism are discussed below. These are discussed because they appear to be the main ones. As can be seen above, Creswell (2009) presents four of them namely, post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy, and pragmatism. Of these four, different authors mention different ones. The fifth one is positivism which has been mentioned by other authors but not Creswell. There are some paradigms which have not been discussed but they are encompassed in one or the other of the five.

3.2.1 Positivism

Bhattacharjee (2012) says positivism was the dominant scientific paradigm until the mid-20th century and it holds that science or knowledge creation should be restricted to what can be observed and measured. It is further observed that the ontological component of positivism is one of realism or common sense (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988 and Scotland, 2012 in de Villiers & Fouche, 2015). In agreement, Greener (2008) observes that the only phenomena that positivists believe can produce knowledge are those which they can know through their senses of sight, touch, smell, taste and hearing. In this regard, McKerchar (2008) concludes that the attitude of a positivist is based on a realistic foundationalism ontology, in which the world is believed to exist independently of our knowledge.

Bhattacharjee (2012) further notes that positivism – which was typically equated with quantitative research methods such as experiments and surveys – led to empiricism or a blind faith in observed data and a rejection of any attempt to extend or reason beyond observable facts. In view of this, Howitt and Gramer (2011) say positivism is regarded as the basis of the ‘hard’ sciences such as physics and chemistry and that quantitative research is based on it. As a result, in positivism, areas which cannot be directly measured such as human thoughts and emotions are not considered to be legitimate topics for scientific research.

3.2.2 Post-positivism

According to Creswell (2009), post-positivism holds true more for quantitative research than qualitative research since in its reductionistic stance; it strives to reduce data into small and discrete set of ideas such as variables that comprise hypotheses and research questions. Creswell says post-positivism is also called empirical science. Consequently, Cohen et al. (2011) observe that this paradigm is premised on scientific and objectivist ontologies and epistemologies. In his elaboration, Creswell says in post-positivism, a researcher begins with a theory and then collects data that either support or refute the theory after which he or she finally makes necessary revisions before additional tests are made. This means that unlike positivism, post-positivism opens up to new knowledge.

Phillips and Burbules (2000) observe that post-positivism surfaced after positivism and its traditional notion of absolute truth of knowledge was challenged in recognition of the fact that we cannot be “positive” about our claims of knowledge when studying the behaviour and actions of humans. In addition, positivism was challenge in realisation of the fact that human knowledge is conjectural rather than unchallengeable and that our warrants for knowledge can be withdrawn in light of further investigation.

3.2.3 Constructivism

The other paradigm is social constructivism which Creswell (2009) says is often combined with interpretivism and is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. Creswell further notes that as individuals try to understand the world in the realms of this paradigm, they develop subjective meanings of their experiences such that when conducting research, the researcher is supposed to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation under studied. In other words, the researcher’s task is only to interpret the meanings the participants already have about the world. Greener (2008) says interpretivism promotes the idea that subjective thought and ideas are valid such that an interpretivist researcher aims to see the world through the eyes of the participants, allowing them numerous viewpoints of reality and not only the one reality that a positivist researcher aims to achieve.

Manroop, McKenna and Richardson (2011) also comment on the principles of the paradigm. They observe that interpretivists are not concerned with the objective reality that is “out there” but instead, with knowing and investigating specific subjective realities that exist “in here.” Cohen et al. (2011) add that interpretivism is premised on humanistic and existential ontologies and epistemologies in which truth is socially constructed. In conclusion, Creswell (2009) says rather than starting with a theory as is the case in post-positivism; inquirers in social constructivism inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning.

3.2.4 Advocacy/participatory world view

According to Creswell (2009), the other paradigm is the advocacy or participatory worldview which he says aligns itself with qualitative research, but can be a foundation for quantitative research as well. According to Creswell (2009), the paradigm surfaced during the 1980s and 1990s when some individuals felt that the post-positivist assumptions imposed structural laws and theories that did not take into recognition marginalized individuals in the society or issues of social justice that needed to be addressed. Consequently, Creswell stresses that this worldview holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda with the aim of bringing about reforms that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life.

Looked at from this paradigm, research provides a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness to improve their lives. Consequently, the participants may help in designing questions, collecting data, analysing information and reaping the rewards of the research. Creswell says the paradigm covers other perspectives which are mainly aimed at fighting for change and recognition such as feminist perspectives, racialized discourses, critical theory, queer theory, and disability theory. In this regard, Ponterotto (2005 in Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska & Creswell, 2005) call the paradigm a critical or emancipatory paradigm. Denzin (1994 and Ponterotto, 2005 in Ponterotto, 2013) contend that in emancipatory paradigm, research is committed to engaging oppressed groups in the process of theorizing about their perceptions of oppression and privileges.

3.2.5 Pragmatism

The other paradigm, according to Creswell (2009), is pragmatism which arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions as is the case in post-positivism. Creswell further says pragmatism is a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies. In agreement, Johnson and Christensen (2011) say in pragmatism, both quantitative and qualitative research is very important and should be mixed in a single study. Studies show that Rossman and Wilson (1985) were among the first to associate pragmatism with mixed methods

research after they had differentiated between methodological purists, situationalists, and pragmatists (Hanson et al. 2005).

Hanson et al. (2005) observe that the purists believed that quantitative and qualitative methods derived from different, mutually exclusive, epistemological and ontological assumptions about research such that they could not be mixed. The purists advocated the “incompatibility thesis” which posits that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, cannot and should not be mixed (Howe, 1988 in Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). On their part, the situationalists believed that both methods had value but each one of them could be appropriate under certain circumstances. To the contrary, the pragmatists believed that, regardless of circumstances, both methods may be used in a single study. As such, Rossman and Wilson (1985 in Creswell, 2009) emphasise that in pragmatism, instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasize on the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem.

The philosophical underpinnings of pragmatism led to the use of mixed methods research in which a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data in order to understand a research problem better (Creswell, 2009). Thus, in pragmatism, there is not one set of methods that is appropriate and truth is a construct of what serves the purpose best at the time. Consequently, Martens (2012) concludes that such a stance qualifies pragmatic paradigm to be a philosophical framework for mixed methods.

With the understanding that by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data a researcher understands a research problem better (Creswell, 2009); this study was located in pragmatism so as to understand better how strategies used to manage conflict in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented. As such, the researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data with which he successfully assessed the problem of violence in secondary schools in Malawi. In the end, the researcher was able to develop an alternative framework for conflict managing which will likely assist secondary schools in Malawi.

3.3 Research approach

According to Creswell (2013), research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It is observed that there are three common approaches to conducting research namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches (Creswell, 2013). Williams (2007) says a researcher determines which of the three approaches to use basing on the type of data he or she expects to solicit which may be numerical, textural, or both numerical and textural data respectively. These approaches are discussed here below.

3.3.1 Quantitative approach

Creswell (2009) says quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship that exists among variables and in the process numbered data are collected and analysed using statistical procedures. In this regard, Williams (2007) says when research questions solicit numerical data, the approach that is used is quantitative. Giving a historical background to the approach, William (2007) observes that quantitative research emerged around 1250 A.D. and was driven by investigators who had a desire to quantify data using figures or statistics. Leedy and Ormrod (2001 in Williams, 2007) further observe that the intent of quantitative research is to establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory. Bhattacharjee (2012) says quantitative approach has its roots in positivism which is associated with natural science research and empirical testing.

3.3.2 Qualitative approach

Creswell (1994 in Williams, 2007) defines qualitative research as the unfolding model of research that occurs in a natural setting and enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from the social phenomenon being investigated from the participants' viewpoint. In their observation, Bogdan and Taylor (1984 in de Villiers & Fouche, 2015) observe that qualitative research produces descriptive data which consist of people's own spoken and transcribed words and observable behaviour. Consequently, Creswell (2009) observes that qualitative approach has its roots in social constructivism and interpretivism in which the researcher relies much on participants' views of the situation under studied.

3.3.3 Mixed approach

Located in pragmatism, the study employed a mixed method approach as advised by Creswell (2003) who says pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different world views, and different assumptions as well as different forms of data collection and analysis. Defining mixed methods research, Jonson et al. (2007) say it is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. Similarly, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as the class of research where the researcher combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language in a single study.

Johnson et al. (2007) contend that mixed methods research can be categorised into three; qualitative dominant, pure mixed, and quantitative dominant. Elaborating the terms, Johnson et al. (2007) say qualitative dominant mixed methods research is the type of mixed research in which one relies on a qualitative research processes while concurrently recognizing the significance of additional quantitative data and approaches. It is also contended that quantitative dominant mixed methods research is the type of mixed research in which one relies on a quantitative, post-positivist view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing the significance of additional qualitative data and approaches. However, a pure mixed researcher balances the two; qualitative and quantitative data and come up with an equal status mixing. This study employed a pure mixed methods research with the aim of developing a balanced complementarity of the two.

According to Flick (2006 in Gray, 2009), the advantage of using mixed methods is that it allows one method to compensate the weaknesses or blind spot of the other while maintaining the autonomy of each of the methods. Jick (1979 in Creswell, 2003) observes that since mixed methods approach draws on and integrates both numerical and narrative data, the two types of data complement each other thereby overcoming the weaknesses of either method. Creswell (2009) further notes that biases inherent in a single method could neutralise or cancel the biases of the other method. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007 in Creswell, 2009) add that when merged, qualitative data and quantitative data reinforce each other. As an example, the

authors say in such a situation, qualitative quotes support statistical (quantitative) results.

In agreement with the other authors, Hanson et al. (2005) say mixed methods approach allows for complementarity; a process in which one method elaborates on the results of the other by among other ways, converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data. In this study, the issue of complementarity was achieved by combining descriptive data from the qualitative perspective and numerical data from the quantitative perspective thereby gaining enough insights into the issue under study. To achieve this, some of the samples were subjected to quantitative approach while others were subjected to qualitative approach but concurrently. This allowed the researcher to interact with the participants holistically (quantitatively and qualitatively as well) thereby creating an opportunity for understanding the strategies used in managing conflicts, how they are used, who implements them, the support they get from stakeholders and how successful or unsuccessful the strategies have been.

3.4 Research design

According to Kumar, (2011), a research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. On his part, Kothari (2004) defines research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Kothari further says a research design provides an advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in mind the objective of the research and the availability of staff, time and money. Consequently, Kothari (2004) says a research design facilitates the smooth sailing of the various research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money.

Creswell (2009) outlines different designs for different research methods. He observes that in quantitative research, the designs used are surveys and experiments while in qualitative research, they use phenomenology, ethnography,

grounded theory, case studies, and narrative research. Finally, Creswell says in mixed research, there are basically three designs which are used namely; sequential mixed design, concurrent mixed design and transformative mixed methods design. Located in mixed research, the study had special interest in the three designs and they are discussed here below.

3.4.1 Sequential mixed design

According to Creswell (2009), the first design in mixed research is sequential mixed design in which the researcher seeks to elaborate or expand on the findings of one method with another. Creswell (2013) says sequential mixed design is of two types namely; explanatory sequential mixed methods and exploratory sequential mixed methods. Creswell contends that if the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyses the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research; that is explanatory sequential mixed methods. However, if the researcher begins with a qualitative research phase, does data analysis and the information is used to build into quantitative phase; that is exploratory sequential mixed design.

3.4.2 Concurrent mixed design

The second design is concurrent mixed design in which a researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2003) says in this design, the investigator collects both forms of data at the same time (concurrently) and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

3.4.3 Transformative mixed method design

Creswell (2009) says the last mixed research design is transformative mixed method design in which the researcher uses theoretical lenses as an overarching perspective within a design that contains both quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell adds that within this lens could be a data collection method that involves either of the other approaches; sequential or concurrent approach.

The study employed a concurrent triangulation mixed method design in which Creswell (2009) says the investigator collects both qualitative and quantitative data

at the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results in order to understand a phenomenon of interest. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative forms of data were collected concurrently. The choice for the design was to ensure study reliability and validity as advised by Holtzhauser (2001) who says by not relying on a single method, concurrent triangulation increases reliability and validity of a study.

The study integrated data from the two methods so as to make sense of them and draw insights from them thereby informing the study even better. Another advantage of the design is discussed by Jick (1979 in Johnson et al., 2007) who says such triangulation uncovers contradictions and yields thicker and richer data thereby allowing researchers to be more confident of their results. Thus, the results of the study cannot be doubted in any way having undergone a rigorous concurrent triangulation process.

3.5 Setting

Bhattachary (2008) defines setting as the physical, social, and cultural site in which the researcher conducts the study. As for Kumar (2011), setting consists of a description of the organisation or community in which one plans to conduct a study. While conflicts occur at all levels of education; primary, secondary and tertiary, the study was confined to secondary schools because that is where there were more cases as observed by the MoEST (2014). In addition, if students understood conflict management at secondary school level, they would proceed to tertiary level well equipped with the necessary skills.

The study was conducted in CWED; one of the 6 education divisions in Malawi which was also registering a lot of violent conflicts. With its head office in Lilongwe, the division has 7 education districts namely, Ntcheu, Dedza, Lilongwe Rural East, Lilongwe Rural West, Lilongwe Urban and Mchinji. A total of 5 secondary schools from within the Division were involved in the study. All the five secondary schools were located in semi-urban settings and they were all public.

3.6 Population

According to Yount (2006), population comprises all the possible cases (persons, objects, events) that are available for a study. To Kothari (2004), the term population is the same as “universe” and is defined as all the items under consideration in any field of inquiry. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), this is the total group that a researcher is interested in learning more about. Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Walker (2014) divide population into two namely, target population and accessible population. They say target population is the larger group to which the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the study while accessible population comprises the subjects accessible to the researcher for drawing a sample. Kothari (2004) says population or universe can be finite or infinite. Elaborating the point, Kothari says population is said to be finite if it consists of a fixed number of elements which can be enumerated in its totality while in an infinite population, the number of items is infinite and it is not easy to have any idea about the total number of items.

In accordance with the observation that an assessment of the present situation cannot be complete without evaluating the presence and relative strength of the interest groups (Haddad 1995 in Zimpita, 2008), the population of the study comprised students, parents, teachers, head teachers and education officials. While the target population comprised all secondary school students, their parents, teachers and head teachers in CWED, and education officials at the division and MoEST, the accessible population comprised those (students, parents, teachers and head teachers) from the schools under study and officials involved in the management of secondary schools.

The population in this study was finite and according to records at the MoEST, the targeted Education Division had a total of 178 secondary schools. The 5 secondary schools under the study had a total student enrolment of 2907, 142 teachers and of course 5 head teachers. At the division office and the MoEST head office, there were 35 professionals who were involved in the management of secondary schools and could provide information on secondary school conflicts.

3.7 Sample

Cohen et al. (2011) observe that factors like expenses, time and accessibility make it difficult for researchers to study the whole population. In this regard, Kothari (2004) says quite often researchers select a few items from the universe for study purposes and the selected items constitute a sample. Yount (2006) defines a sample as a representative portion of a population. In their contribution, Johnson and Christensen (2004) define a sample as a set of elements taken from a larger population. The two go further to define an element as a basic unit selected from the population such as individuals, objects et cetera. Put simply, a researcher studies a sample but the results there of apply to the larger population.

For the purpose of this study, a sample of 5 secondary schools was involved and these were secondary schools that had been involved in conflict in the past two years. All the 5 head teachers of the sampled secondary schools were involved in the study. In addition, a total of, 42 teachers, 42 students, 6 education officials and 8 parents were involved in the study. This gave a total sample of 103. From this sample, the study collected the necessary data for the achievement of its objectives.

3.8 Sampling

Mugo (2002) defines sampling as the technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Kumar (2011) says the underlying premise in sampling is that a relatively small number of units, if selected in a manner that they genuinely represent the study population, can provide – with a sufficiently high degree of probability – a fairly true reflection of the population that is being studied. Consequently, Yount (2006) says the sample should be a “microcosm” — a miniature model — of the population from which it was drawn.

Jonson and Christensen (2004) advise that when drawing samples, a researcher should begin by locating a sampling frame which Kothari (2004) defines as a list of items from the population from which a sample is drawn. Creswell (2012) calls it the target population and presents it diagrammatically in relation to the population and the sample as shown in the figure below. Figure 3.1 below presents the target population in relationship to the population and sample.

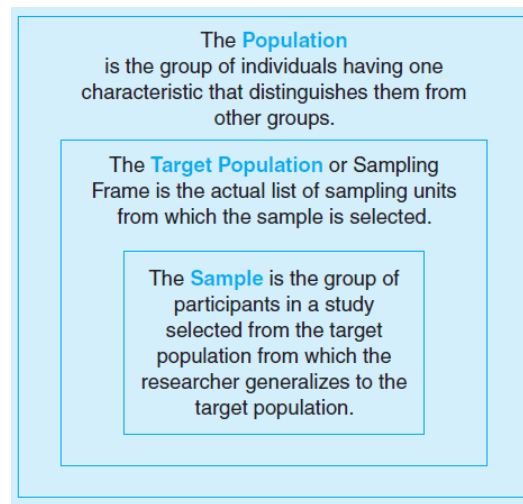


Figure 3-1 Target population in relation to population and the sample

Source: Creswell (2012)

There are two types of sampling namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Cohen et al., 2011 and Walliman, 2011). In probability sampling, samples are drawn randomly from the population while in no-probability sampling; the researcher gets targeted samples (Cohen et al 2011). Walliman (2011) adds that in probability sampling, each element (and even each possible combination of the elements) has an equal chance of being selected where as in non-probability sampling; a researcher decides which samples should be selected. Since the study was located in mixed methods approach, both probability and non-probability sampling were employed and the techniques used were systematic random sampling and purposive sampling (Yount, 2006 and Cohen et al. 2011) respectively. These two techniques are discussed below.

3.8.1 Systematic random sampling

Systematic random sampling is a probability sampling technique which is employed in quantitative research to ensure that a selected sample is representative of the population from where it was selected (Onwuengbuzie & Collins, 2007). Yount (2006) defines a systematic sample as one in which every Kth subject on a list is selected for inclusion in the sample where "K" refers to the sampling interval. This is well collaborated by Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) who say in systematic random sampling, the researcher chooses individuals from a list by selecting every kth sampling frame member, where k typifies the population divided by the preferred

sample size. In their elaboration of the point, Ary et al. (2014) observe that to determine the sampling interval, you simply divide the total number of elements in the population by the number you want in the sample. Kothari (2004) advises that in this type of sampling, a sampling frame in the form of a list is very necessary.

Teachers in the secondary schools were sampled using this technique (systematic random sampling) and as per the advice by Kothari (2004), the first thing to be done was to develop a sampling frame; a list of all the elements in the population. In this regard, at every school, a sampling frame for all teachers was drawn and the 8 teachers were selected using the k interval which was found by dividing the total number of elements by 8. However, there was a challenge in the sense that not all teachers were readily available for the study as most of them were busy administering examinations at the time of the study. In such cases, those available, made up for the shortage.

3.8.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in qualitative research (Cohen et al. 2011). Creswell (2012) calls the technic “purposeful sampling,” and to him, this is a research term for qualitative sampling. Johnson and Christensen (2004) call purposive sampling criterion-based selection. In this strategy, researchers hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of the judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sort (Cohen et al., 2011).

Kumar (2011) further observes that in purposive sampling, researchers purposely select ‘information-rich’ participants who will provide them with the information they need. To achieve this, a researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest and then tries to locate individuals who have those characteristics (Johnson, 1995 in Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Patton (2002 in Suri, 2011:65) sheds more light on information rich cases as follows:

Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations

Using purposive sampling, the five secondary schools which were involved in the study were those that had experienced dysfunctional conflicts in the past two years. They were all purposefully sampled from records at the Divisional Office. Students were also purposefully sampled and they were those students who could articulate issues. Parents too were purposefully sampled and they were members of PTA who followed school issues closely while head teachers were sampled by virtue of heading the sampled secondary school. As for education officials, 3 from the Directorate of Secondary and Distance Education (DSDE) and 3 from the CWED were purposefully sample and they were those officials who were involved in the management of secondary schools. 7 teachers were sampled purposively in addition to those who were sampled randomly.

3.9 Negotiating entry

To access the participants, the study went through gatekeepers. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, in Creswell, 2012) define a gatekeeper as an individual who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study. In this study, the gatekeepers were the Secretary for Education, Science and Technology (SEST) at national level, the Education Divisional Manager (EDM) at divisional level and the head teachers at school level. The study therefore, first asked for permission from the SEST who is the proprietor of the schools (Appendix C). For the SEST to appreciate the authenticity of the study, he was served with a written request from University of Fort Hare (Appendix B) seeking his permission for the study to be conducted in the schools under his charge.

In turn, the MoEST issued a letter (Appendix D) requesting the other gatekeepers to allow the study to be conducted at the division and in the five secondary schools. Before interacting with the participants, the researcher first met the EDM and the head teachers and served them with the clearance letter from the MoEST. The

researcher then politely explained the purpose of the study to these gatekeepers and sought their permission to administer a questionnaire and conduct interview, FGDs and document analysis. With such an approach, entry was not a problem.

3.10 Data collection

Creswell (2012) says collecting data involves identifying and selecting individuals for a study, obtaining their permission to study them, and gathering information by asking them questions or observing their behaviours. Since the study used a mixed research approach, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Ary et al. (2014) say quantitative researchers use a variety of instruments to gather data including tests, questionnaires, ratings and attitude scales. As for qualitative researchers, Ary et al. observe that they use such instruments as in-depth interviews, participant observation and content analysis.

Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers while interviews were used to collect qualitative data from head teachers, parents, education officials and a few other teachers. Focus Group Discussions were conducted to collect qualitative data from students. Additional qualitative data were collected through document analysis.

3.10.1 Questionnaires

Data from teachers were collected using questionnaires (Appendix N). Kumar (2011) defines a questionnaire as a written list of questions to which answers are recorded by participants. Questionnaires were preferred because of their advantages some of which are that they are less expensive and they save time, human and financial resources since the researcher does not have to interview the participants (Kumar, 2011). However, Kumar gives some challenges of using questionnaires. The first one is that questionnaires only work with a population that can read and write. The other challenge is that at times the response rate may be low. In this study, both challenges were taken care of. For the first challenge all the participants to whom the questionnaires were administered were teachers; people who could read and write. As for the second challenge, the response rate was quite high. Follow up visits were made to those who did not return the questionnaires first time as was agreed.

Kumar (2011) says questionnaires are of two types; open ended and closed questionnaires. Kumar defines open ended questions as those questions which do not carry possible answers such that participants are expected to come up with their own answers and in their own words. Bhattacharjee (2012) calls them unstructured questions. One advantage of unstructured questions according to Creswell (2012) is that participants assist the researcher to explore more response options. As for closed questions, Kumar (2011) says are those questions which carry with them possible answers such that participants just tick the category that meets their answer. Bhattacharjee (2012) calls them structured questions. One advantage of these questions according to Creswell (2012) is that they provide means for coding responses and statistically analysing data.

In addition to the two types of questions, Creswell (2012) discusses a third type which he calls semi-closed-ended questions or semi-structured questions. This type falls midway between open ended and closed questions. Creswell (2012) says the technique in this type of questions is to ask closed questions and then provide for additional responses in an open ended form. Creswell says this type of questions offers an opportunity to the researcher to probe a little deeper and explore many more possibilities that may not have been included in the options. In summary, Creswell (2012) observes that semi-structured questions have all advantages of both open ended and closed questions. The study employed semi-structured questions by giving optional answers from which participants would choose while providing room for additional answers which may not have been included on the list. The study benefitted quite a lot as participants brought in some insights which were never thought about.

3.10.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

According to Harrell and Bradley (2009), FGDs are dynamic group discussions used to collect information. Kumar (2011) defines FGDs as a form of strategy in qualitative research in which attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards an issue, product, service or programme are explored through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher. Johnson and Christensen (2004) say FGDs are used to collect qualitative data that are in the words of the participants. Kumar

(2011) adds that in FGDs, a researcher raises issues or asks questions that stimulate discussion among members of the group.

Johnson and Christensen advise that an FDG should have between 6 and 12 people. To Creswell (2009), an ideal FGD should comprise 6 to 8 participants while to Kumar, it should comprise between 8 and 10 people. From these recommendations, Nembhard & Bradley (2009) advise that the guiding criterion is just to ensure that the group composition does not inhibit members from speaking, so that the discussion generates comprehensive information that reflects the full spectrum of opinions and experiences.

Kumar (2011) advises researchers to be on the lookout when conducting FDGs because if the discussion is not carefully directed, it may reflect the opinion of those who have a tendency to dominate a group. Johnson and Christensen (2004) also advise that the focus group moderator (researcher) should get everyone involved in discussing the researcher's question and not allow one or two people to dominate the discussion. Since the researcher collected data alone, this advice was taken heed of such that even members who were reserved were given an opportunity to contribute.

Highlighting advantages of using FGDs, Cohen et al. (2011) say much as they are unnatural settings, FGDs are very focused on a particular issue and, therefore, yield insights that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview; they are economical with time as they produce a large amount of data in a short period of time. The insights gained assisted much in organising effective FGDs.

In this study, FGDs were used to collect data from students. This was in accordance with the advice by Curry et al. (2009) who observe that FGDs are appropriate when the goal is to understand differences in perspectives between groups or categories of people or to uncover factors that influence opinions or behaviour. The study benefitted a lot as students freely presented their views on the numerous dysfunctional conflicts that had interlocked secondary schools in Malawi. As discussions were going on, a record of the proceedings was taken which according

to Kumar (2011) would form the basis of analysis for findings and conclusions. In order to be focused, an FDG guide was used in all the discussions (Appendix M).

3.10.3 Interviews

An interview is defined as a purposeful discussion between two or more people (Kahn & Cannell, 1957 in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). According to Burns (1997 in Kumar, 2011), an interview is a verbal interchange and often face to face (though telephone may be used) in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person. Interviews are categorized in accordance with how flexible or inflexible the interviewer is in asking the questions (Kumar, 2011). Dawson (2002) says while there are many types of interviews, the most common are unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews.

Saunders et al. (2007) say in structured interviews, you use predetermined questions which are standardized while in semi-structured interviews you have a list of themes and questions to be covered which may vary from interview to interview. Sanders et al. (2007) finally conclude that in unstructured interviews, there is no predetermined list of questions to work through although you need to have a clear idea about the aspect or aspects that you want to explore. Consequently, Sanders et al (2007) observe that unstructured interviews are informal.

The study employed semi structured interviews to collect data from head teachers, education officials, parents and a few teachers. As per plan, data from parents were supposed to be collected using FGDs. However, during pilot study, it was learnt that bringing parents to an FGD was not that simple because the schools targeted were boarding schools which implied that parents were from different districts. As such, interviews were employed and in some cases, 2 parents were interviewed together. The switching from FGD to interviews was done in accordance with the advice by Arthur and Hancock (2007) who observe that if problems are detected during the pilot phase of the study, the researcher is at liberty to make revisions before undertaking the main study so as to ensure its success. As for the education officials, head teachers and the few teachers, it was very easy since they were found at their work places. In order to be focused, the interviews with head teachers,

teachers, education officials and parents were all guided by interview guides (Appendices I, J, K and L respectively).

3.10.4 Document analysis

In addition to using interviews and FDGs to collect qualitative data, the study also employed document analysis as a tool for collecting such data at all the three levels; secondary school, division and MoEST. Kumar (2011) says when you undertake a research study, and you collect the required information using such instruments like observation, interviews and questionnaires, you collect primary data. However, when the information required is already available and need only be extracted, you collect secondary data. Since the documents were already there, the analysis of the records yielded secondary data. In order to be focused, only documents relevant to the study were analysed.

Documents which were analysed included reports and other records related to conflict management in secondary schools, syllabi for the teaching of conflict in secondary schools. The documents were sampled purposefully depending on what had transpired during interviews. The data from document analysis complemented the data from questionnaires, interviews and FDGs.

3.11. Data analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008) define analysis as the process of examining something in order to find out what it is and how it works. Corbin and Strauss further say that in research, analysis involves interpretation of data; a process through which a researcher understands events around the participant as depicted in the data. Creswell (2003) observes that in mixed research approach, you collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. This study collected and analysed both quantitative and qualitative data since it was located in mixed approach. As observed by Creswell (2012), the advantage of combining quantitative and qualitative data is that it provides a better understanding of a research problem than when either of the two is used independently.

3.11.1 Analysis of quantitative data

According to Ary et al. (2014), quantitative data are usually in the form of numbers and researchers analyse them using various statistical procedures. Creswell (2012) observes that such data are usually in the form of closed-ended information collected using closed-ended instruments and that their analysis is usually statistical. Ary (2014) observes that verbal data can be analysed statistically by being converted into a numerical form through a scoring process. Creswell (2012) adds that the process of analysing such data consists of breaking them (the data) down into parts to answer research questions or to test hypotheses.

To answer research questions or test hypotheses, a researcher interprets the results in light of initial predictions or prior studies. In this study, quantitative data were collected using questionnaires administered to teachers and were analysed using simple statistics with the aim of answering the research questions. First, the data were coded and then analysed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). The analysis included frequencies, percentages, and where possible cross tabulations.

3.11.2 Analysis of qualitative data

Creswell (2003) says qualitative data are always in the form of open-ended information provided by participants in their own words. Ary et al. (2014) observe that qualitative data take the form of words – descriptions, observations, impressions, recordings et cetera. To analyse such data, this study used thick description which Ponterotto (2006) says refers to the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action (or behaviour) within its particular context. Greertz (1973 in Cohen et al., 2011) says data in thick description do not only describe events in context but also participants' intentions, strategies and agency. Greertz further observes that thick descriptions include reflections on meanings attributed to situations and phenomena.

In thick description, the analysis is done according to themes, general ideas and other related features from interviewees' responses. However, Burns & Grove (1999 in Ahamfula, 2014) advise that in qualitative data analysis, there should be three phases: description, analysis and interpretation. In order to be systematic in the

analysis, the study employed the seven steps of Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological data analysis procedure as presented by Ahametula (2014). Accordingly, the following was done:

- I. Each transcript was read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content.
- II. For each transcript, significant statements that pertained to the phenomenon under study were extracted. The statements were recorded on a separate sheet noting their page and line numbers.
- III. Meanings were formulated from these significant statements.
- IV. The formulated meanings were sorted into categories, and themes.
- V. The findings of the study were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study.
- VI. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was described.
- VII. Finally, validation of the findings was sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experience.

3.12 Validity and reliability

The researcher took different measures to ensure the validity and reliability of the study as discussed here below.

3.12.1 Validity

Smith (1991 in Kumar, 2011) defines validity as the degree to which a researcher measures what he or she set out to measure. Golafshani (2003) says validity is concerned with whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they are actually measuring what they are intended to measure. In their clarification of the term, Creswell and Miller (2000 in Creswell, 2009) observe that validity is concerned with determining whether the findings of a study are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. This argument implies that a study which has validity will be accepted by all the concerned parties; the researcher, the participants and the reader. Different measures were taken to ensure the validity of the findings of the study.

The first one is triangulation of sources of information. Creswell (2009) observes that when information from different sources is in agreement, a researcher can be sure that the information is valid. The study achieved this by using mixed methods with data collected and analysed concurrently. The other strategy that Creswell (2009) suggests is use of member checking which he says involves taking the study findings to the participants for their comments. The study engaged some of the participants for their input on the findings and where necessary, panel beating was done. Creswell (2009) further suggests that to ensure validity, a researcher can also use peer debriefing through which the accuracy of the account is enhanced. Creswell says this involves presenting the study findings to an independent person for a review. The study did this and received very positive comments.

The study also ensured validity by piloting the instruments before they were finally used. Blaxter, et al. (2001) observe that piloting serves as a try-out, through which you can judge the feasibility of research plans, and then make modifications where necessary. Ary et al. (2014) observe that pilot study provides an opportunity to assess the appropriateness of data-collection methods and other procedures and to make changes if necessary. Kumar (2011) says pilot study assists in identifying problems which potential participants may have in understanding and interpreting the instruments. These sentiments are also echoed by Ross (2005) who says one of the purposes of piloting is to assess whether a questionnaire has been designed in a manner that will elicit the required information from the participants or not. After conducting the pilot study, the researcher corrected and perfected the instruments so that they were able to collect data as planned.

3.12.2 Reliability

According to Joppe (2000 in Golafshani, 2003), reliability is the extent to which results of a study are consistent over time. Ary et al. (2014) say reliability of an instrument is the degree of consistency with which it measures what it is purported to measure. Kumar (2011) observes that when a researcher collects the same set of information more than once using the same instrument under the same or similar conditions, the instrument in use is reliable.

Kumar (2011) warns that the reliability of an instrument may be affected by factors such as the wording of questions. It is observed that a slight ambiguity in the wording of questions or statements can affect the reliability of a research instrument as participants may interpret the questions differently at different times, resulting in different responses. Kumar further observes that the mood of the participants or the interviewer may affect results if it changes in the measurement times.

In this study, reliability was ensured in different ways. First, instruments were piloted in order to rid them of any ambiguities. As observed by Kumar (2011), piloting assists in identifying problems which potential participants may have in understanding the instruments. Thus, through piloting, the instruments become clear such that if administered more than once, there would be consistency in results thereby ensuring reliability. Second, by using mixed approach, data were collected from multiple sources, thereby creating room for triangulation which Holtzhauser (2001) says increases reliability and validity of a study. Lastly, the study employed member checking; a process which according to Loh (2013) allows participants to access the report for possible alternative interpretation. In this regard, the final interpretation should be the true response to the instruments such that if administered more than once, the results would be the same; an indication of reliability.

3.13 Study credibility and trustworthiness

Lincoln & Guba (1985 in Loh, 2013) outline criteria for ensuring study trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. According to Merriam (1998 in Shenton, 2004), credibility aims at establishing how congruent the findings of a study are with the reality. Kumar (2011) says credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. The study ensured credibility first, by using different data collection methods namely; questionnaires, interviews, FGDs, and document analysis. This provided for triangulation which allowed for a deeper and clearer understanding of issues. Credibility was also ensured through frequent debriefing sessions with the supervisors and peer scrutiny of the findings by colleagues and academics. The two processes enable the researcher to widen his perspective and to rid his mind of any preconceptions (Shenton, 2004). The study also employed

member checking; a process which according to Loh (2013) allows participants to access the report for possible alternative interpretation. All these contributed to the credibility of the study.

The other measure that can be taken to ensure trustworthiness is transferability. This is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007 in Kumar, 2011). The study addressed this by making sure that the results were discussed in view of similar other studies. The study also addressed the issue of dependability. Trochim and Donnelly (2007: in Kumar, 2011) say that dependability is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice. This was addressed by piloting the instruments in order to make sure that they collect the desired data. The final measure that was taken to ensure trustworthiness was confirmability. Trochim and Donnelly (2007: in Kumar, 2011) say confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be corroborated by others. The study enhanced confirmability by interpreting the results in line with other studies of similar nature.

3.14 Ethical consideration

Johnson and Christensen (2004) define ethics as the principles and guidelines that help us to uphold the things we value while Howitt and Cramer (2011) define the term as the moral principles by which we conduct ourselves. Williman (2011) says working with human participants in a research always raises ethical issues which are twofold – the researcher's values relating to honesty and personal integrity and the researcher's treatment of the participants relating to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and courtesy. This is well corroborated by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) who say that the major ethical issues in conducting research are informed consent, beneficence – do not harm, respect for anonymity, confidentiality and respect for privacy. O'leary (2005 in Kumar, 2011) emphasizes the need for protection of participants from harm as a very crucial ethical consideration to be followed in research. These ethical considerations are discussed here below.

3.14.1 Informed consent

Diener and Crandall (1978 cited in Cohen et al. 2011) define informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely influence their decisions. Informed consent is a corner stone of ethical behaviour as it respects the right of individuals to exert control over their lives and to take decisions for themselves (Howe & Moses, 1999 in Cohen et al. 2011). The Centre of Bioethics (2003) says in informed consent, there are three things that should be ensured. First, people must know what they are getting involved with before they commit themselves. The second thing is that people must not be coerced or manipulated in any way to participate in the study and lastly, people must consent to participate in the study as subjects.

Halai (2006) says informed consent can be sought through formal procedures such as use of consent forms and through informal procedures such as conversation. Creswell (2012) defines a consent form as a statement that participants sign before they participate in research which indicates that they will be guaranteed certain rights and that upon signing the form, they are agreeing to be involved in the study and they acknowledge the protection of their rights.

Halai (2006) discusses elements of consent which he says include prior information on key elements of research such as purpose, procedures, time period, risks, benefits, and a clause stipulating that participation is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from the study. In his contribution, Bhattacharjee (2012) says a consent form must specify any possible risks to the participants and that for participants under the age of 18; the form must be signed by their parents or legal guardians.

The researcher followed different procedures to ensure informed consent. First, participants were informed about the study and the freedom they had to participate in the study or not through an oral conversation. When this was done, those participants who were ready to participate in the study signed (informed) consent forms (Appendix E). For students who were under the age of 18, first, head teachers had to consent by signing consent forms for legal guardians (Appendix G). Then, consent was also sought from the students themselves by explaining to them orally

what the study was all about after which they signed assent forms (Appendix H). For all this to happen, the researcher first sought clearance from University of Fort Hare from where an ethical clearance certificate was issued (Appendix A)

3.14.2 Confidentiality

Cohen et al. (2011) say confidentiality means not disclosing information from a participant in any way that might identify the individual. Kumar (2011) stresses that it is unethical to identify an individual participant and the information he or she provided. As such, Kumar adds that a researcher should ensure that after the information has been collected, its source should not be identified. Consequently, Connolly (2003) puts it clearly that researchers should make every effort to protect the confidentiality of research participants. This study ensured confidentiality by not disclosing any information from a participant in any way that might identify them. Confidentiality was further realized through the observation of other ethical considerations namely; anonymity and privacy of participants which are discussed here below.

3.14.3 Anonymity

Bhattacharjee (2012) says anonymity implies that the researcher or readers of the final research report or paper cannot identify a given response with a specific participant. In line with the definition, Fouka and Mantzourou (2011) say to address anonymity; the researcher should make sure that the subject's identity cannot be linked with personal responses. To achieve this, Halai (2006) says researchers should make sure they use pseudonyms for both participants and places. Bhattacharjee discusses two advantages of anonymity to participants. First, it is observed that anonymity enables participants to provide even negative information about themselves or others as they are assured that they will not be identified. The other advantage is when granted total anonymity, participants get insulated from any legal consequences of the information they provide to the researcher no matter how sensitive it might be. The study ensured anonymity by using pseudonyms for both participants and secondary schools.

3.14.4 Privacy

Connolly (2003) advises that researchers have a special responsibility to protect the privacy of participants. Fouka and Mantzourou (2011) define privacy as the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent, and general circumstances under which his or her private information will be shared with or withheld from others. To achieve privacy, Creswell (2009) advises that there is need to use pseudonyms for individuals and places so as to protect identities. With this understanding, the study took it as an obligation not to identify participants and secondary schools by their names but by pseudonyms so as to ensure their privacy.

3.14.5 Honesty and trust

Isreal and Hay (2006 in Creswell, 2009) observe that a researcher should develop trust in participants by being honest. This was achieved by making sure that participants are fully aware of the study and that any question is answered. Furthermore, with permission sought from the MoEST, there were no doubts at all in the participants thereby generating even more trust. The calibre of the researcher who is a Chief Education Officer (CEO) in the MoEST was yet another source of trust as the post is a senior one and commands a lot of respect.

3.14.6 Protection from harm

Kumar (2011) says it is an ethical requirement that a researcher should always make sure that participants in a study are protected from harm in the process of research. Instead of protection from harm, Fouka and Mantzourou (2011) use the term beneficence – do not harm. This means that a researcher has an obligation to protect participants in a study from any form of harm. Kumar (2011) expounds that harm includes not only hazardous experiments but also such results of social research that might involve things like discomfort, anxiety, harassment, invasion of privacy, or demeaning or dehumanizing procedures (Bailey, 1978 in Kumar, 2011). Burns and Grove (2005 in Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011) add that discomfort and harm can be physiological, emotional, social and economic in nature.

Halai (2006) concludes that researchers are obliged to provide participants with detailed information on risks and benefits of participating in the study so that their involvement should be a result of a well informed decision. In the process of seeking

consent, participants were fully told how safe they were as they participated in the study. In addition, the participant information leaflet and assent form which they signed, clearly explained how protected they were from harm.

3.15 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the methodology that was used in the study. The different research procedures that were employed in the methodology and the justification for choosing them have been discussed. Specifically, the chapter has indicated that the research paradigm which guided the study was pragmatism while the research approach employed was mixed approach. Using this approach, the chapter has gone further to elaborate that both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized. The chapter has further indicated that the research design employed in the study was concurrent triangulation. In discussing the setting, the chapter has indicated that the study was conducted in CWED. The chapter has also discussed the population of the study, the sample and sampling. It has been shown that both purposive and systematic sampling was used. For data collection, the chapter has indicated that four techniques were used namely; questionnaires, interviews, FGDs and document analysis. The study has also discussed validity and reliability of the study, study credibility and trustworthiness and ethical consideration. Under ethical consideration, the study has discussed informed consent, confidentiality, and honesty and trustworthiness. The next chapter presents and analyses the data that were collected.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data that were collected in the study. Basically, the study aimed at examining how strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented. The study was guided by research questions and in order to answer them, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. To collect quantitative data, the researcher used semi structured questionnaires which were administered to teachers in the five secondary schools involved in the study. A total of 35 teachers participated in the study by responding to the questionnaires. Qualitative data were collected using face to face interviews, FGDs and document analysis. The interviews and FGDs were guided by an interview guide and an FGD guide respectively. Through the interviews, the researcher engaged the 5 head teachers, 8 parents, 6 education officials and additional 7 teachers with the aim of soliciting their views on conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi. FGDs were used to collect data from 42 students broken down as follows: FGD 1; 9, FGD 2; 8, FGD 3; 8, FGD 4; 10 and FGD 5; 7. Document analysis was used to complement data from interviews and FGDs. Both types of data; quantitative and qualitative were collected in line with the research questions. Similarly, the data are presented and analysed in line with the research questions. Table 4.1 below gives a summary of the participants and how they are identified in the study.

Category of participants	Total	Identification
Head teachers	5	HT – 1 to 5
Teachers (Interviewees)	7	TR – 1 to 7
Teachers (questionnaires)	35	
Parents	8	PT – 1 to 8
Education officials	6	EDO – 1 to 6
Students – five FGDs	42	FGD – 1 to 5
Total	103	

Table 4-1: Summary of participants and how they are identified

4.2 Chapter sequence

The chapter has six parts. The first part presents and analyses biographical data of the participants highlighting issues of gender, age range, experience at the current position, highest academic qualification and the grade at which participants were. For the study to appreciate the conditions in which the stakeholders with the different biographical details were working, information about the education system in Malawi is presented and analysed first. The second part presents and analyses data on the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. To appreciate the place of conflict in the secondary schools, the part further presents and analyses its effects highlighting both positive and negative effects. The third part presents and analyses the processes which stakeholders followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi.

The fourth part presents and analyses data on stakeholder involvement in conflict management. In the same part, strategies that stakeholders used in the management of conflict and conflict management skills that they knew are presented. The fifth part presents and analyses data on the mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools by education officials and other stakeholders. The sixth and last part presents and analyses views of participants on what they thought could be done by the schools to make sure that conflict in secondary schools was not dysfunctional. This is the part that has informed and guided the development of the alternative framework for conflict management for secondary schools in Malawi which the study is proposing.

4.3 Biographical Data

Biographical data help to understand some positions that are taken by participants on an issue. For example, the age of participants may affect the way they perceive certain things. Likewise, the education of participants may affect the way they understand certain things. The researcher therefore, found it necessary to collect biographical data of the participants before anything else. As such, this part presents and analyses the biographical data of the participants which were collected. However, before doing so, a little bit of background to the education system in Malawi is provided with the aim of putting the study into a clear perspective.

4.3.1 Information about education system in Malawi

The education system in Malawi has eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four or five years of university education. In the four years of secondary school, students go through forms one, two, three and four. For administrative purposes, Malawi is divided into 6 Education Divisions; each one headed by an Education Division Manager (EDM) who reports to the Director of Secondary and Distance Education (DSDE) at the MoEST head office.

Secondary schools in Malawi are of two types; public and private. The study involved only public secondary schools because documents indicated that they were the most hit in as far as violent conflicts were concerned. In total, there were 742 government secondary schools in Malawi while in CWED, where the study took place, there were a total of 178 government secondary schools. Of these secondary schools, 5 were involved in the study and they were all purposefully sampled basing on their being involved in dysfunctional conflict in the recent past. Of the 5 secondary schools, 4 were co-education secondary schools while 1 was a girls' secondary school. Socio-economically, students in the five secondary schools were mostly from low to medium income families as high income families usually sent their children to elite secondary schools which were mostly private.

In the running of secondary schools in Malawi, parents had a very crucial role to play as observed by the NESP (2008-2017) which says to improve management and governance of secondary schools, government shall endeavour to strengthen Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and management boards. In collaboration, the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) (2009) observes that government shall strengthen the capacity of school management through training of SMCs. This makes parents very central stakeholders in the management of secondary schools which includes conflict management. Consequently, in addition to teachers, head teachers, education officials and students themselves, the study took parents on board.

4.3.2 Gender information for participants

The study solicited gender information for participants in order to establish if their views were representative of the different gender divides. A total of 5 head teachers,

42 teachers, 6 education officials, 42 students and 8 parents were involved in the study. This means a total of 103 participants were involved in the study. Table 4.2 below presents the distribution of participants according to gender.

Participants' category	Female		Male		Total		Percentage of all participants
Head teachers – HT	1	20%	4	80%	5	100%	4.85
Teachers – TR	9	21%	33	79%	42	100%	40.77
Education Officials – EDO	2	33%	4	67%	6	100%	5.8
Students – FGDs	24	57%	18	43%	42	100%	40.85
Parents – PT	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8	100%	7.76
Total	39	38%	64	62%	103	100%	100

Table 4-2: Distribution of participants according to gender

Table 4.2 above shows that 80% (4) of the head teachers involved in the study were males while 20% (1) was a female who was heading a girls' secondary school. For teachers, 79% (33) were males while 21% (9) were females. This might be due to the fact that in Malawi, there are more male teachers than female teachers. Data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) show that in 2016, out of 7,985 qualified teachers, only 2,222 were females (MoEST, 2016). This represents 27.8% of the qualified teachers. The trend was the same for education officials. 67% (4) were males while 33% (2) were females. As for parents, 62.5% (5) were males while 37.5% (3) were females.

Coming to students, 57% (24) were females while 43% (18) were males. The number of female students was higher because one of the schools was a girls' secondary school. Thus, while in the other schools the ratio was almost 50/50, the girls' secondary school made it favour females. This showed that conflict did not spare any category of secondary schools gender wise. In total, the study involved

103 participants. As can be seen in Figure 3.2 below, 38% of the participants were females whereas 62% were males.

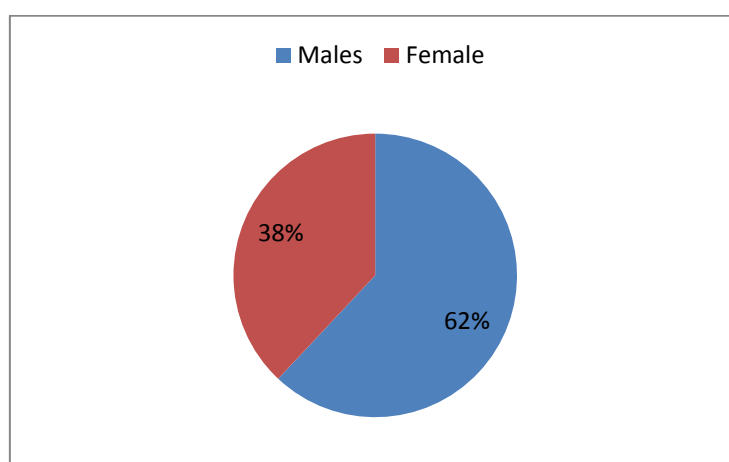


Figure 3-2: Distribution of participants according to gender

4.3.3 Age and experience of participants

The study sought to understand the ages of the participants and their experience in the work they were doing. Such information was very important as it could assist to assess if positions taken on different issues could in a way be influenced by these variables. The study found that all the 5 head teachers were in the age range of 50+. Of the 42 teachers, 19% were in the age range 20 to 29, 24% were in the age range 30 to 39, 38% were in the age range 40 to 49 while 19% were in the age range 50+. As for education officials, 3 were in the age range 40 to 49 while the other 3 were in the age range 50+.

On the part of parents, 3 (37.5%) were in the age range 30 to 39, 2 were in the age range 40 to 49 while 3 (37.5%) were in the age range 50+. Students had their own age range. Two of them (5%), were in the age range 9 to 13, 37 (88%) were in the age range 14 to 18. The remaining 3 students (7%) were in the age range 19+. It may have to be borne in mind that the age bracket for secondary school students in Malawi is 14 to 18 years, hence the 88% majority. This means that age wise, the students were mostly within the normal range. Table 4.3 below shows the distribution of ages for the head teachers, teachers, education officials and parents.

	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
1. HTs	0	0	0	5 100%	5 100%
2. TRs	8 19%	10 23.8%	16 38%	8 19%	42 100%
3. EDOs	0	0	3 50%	3 50%	6 100%
4. PTs	0	3 37.5%	2 25%	3 37.5%	8 100%
Total	8 13.1%	13 21.3%	21 34.4%	19 31.1%	61 100%

Table 4-3: Distribution of age ranges

For participants' experience, the study asked for different time lengths. The experience range for head teachers was 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years and 11+ years. This was done deliberately because in Malawi, headship befalls one after one has served for some time. It transpired that out of the 5 head teachers, 4 (80%) had an experience of between 6 and 10 years while the remaining 1 (20%) had been a head teacher for 11+ years. For teachers, their experience range was 1 to 9 years, 10 to 19 years and 20+. After analysing the data, it was found that 9 (21.4%) had an experience of 1 to 9 years, 11 (26.19%) had an experience of 10 to 19 years while the remaining 22 (52.4%) had an experience of 20+ years.

There was no time range for parents' experience because their positions were elected ones with a short term mandate – a two year term with a chance for a reelection one more time. As such, they were asked to give the actual number of years they had been in office. Data showed that 2 (25%) had been in office for 1 year, 1 (12.5%) had been in office for 2 years, 2 (25%) had been in office for 3 years, 1 (12.5%) had been in office for 4 years and the remaining 2 (25%) had been in office for 5 years. It was observed that in other schools, if the PTA was doing a good job, they could be in office for a much longer period than the two years. This could account for the 5 year experience by the 2 parents.

4.3.4 Academic qualifications and grades for participants

The study also solicited information about academic qualifications for the head teachers, teachers, education officials and parents. The study went further to find out the current grades for head teachers, teachers and education officials. Table 4.4 below shows the distribution of academic qualifications for 61 participants (head teachers, teachers, education officials and parents – minus students).

	HTs % of 5	TRs % of 42	EDO % of 6	PTs % of 8	Total % of 61
PhD			1 17%		1 2%
Master of Education			1 17%		1 2%
Bachelor of Education	2 40%	25 59.5%	2 33%		29 48%
Non-Edu Degree with UCE		1 2.4%	2 33%		3 5%
Non-Education Degree		1 2.4%			1 2%
Diploma in Education	3 60%	15 35.7%		1 12.5%	19 31%
Non Education Diploma				1 12.5%	1 2%
MSCE				5 62.5%	5 9%
PSLCE				1 12.5%	1 2%
Total	5 100%	42 100%	6 100%	8 100%	61 100%

Table 4-4: Distribution of academic qualifications for HTs, TRs, EDOs and PTs

Table 4.4 above shows that of the 5 head teachers, 3 (60%) were holders of a diploma in education while 2 (40%) were holders of bachelor of education degree. Of the 42 teachers, 25 (59.5%) were holders of a bachelor of education, 1 (2.4%) was a holder of a non-education degree with a university certificate of education (UCE). Another one (2.4%) was a holder of a non-education degree without UCE. The remaining 15 (35.7%) were holders of a diploma in education. Of the 6 education officials, 1 (17%) had a PhD, 1 (17%) had a master's degree, 2 (33%) had bachelor of education degrees while the remaining 2 (33%) were holders of non-education degrees with UCE.

Looking at the academic qualifications of parents, the study found that 5 (62.5%) were holders of Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), 1 (12.5%) had a

diploma in education, 1 (12.5) had a non-education diploma while the last one (12.5) was a holder of primary schools leaving certificate of education (PSLCE).

The analysis shows that only 6 (11 %) of the participants (head teachers, teachers, education officials and parents) did not have post-secondary school qualification and these were all parents. This meant that the level of thinking for most of the participants was high.

Upon looking at the academic qualifications for the participants, the study went further to look at the grades at which the participants were. This was necessary as it would assist to establish if they were in acting positions or substantive positions. It was found that 4 (80%) of the head teachers were at Grade F which is a substantive grade for a head teacher. The remaining head teacher (20%) was at Grade G which is a post for a deputy head teacher. This implies that he/she was in an acting position. For teachers, 17 (40.5%) were at grade J, 21 (50%) were at Grade I, 3 (7.1%) were at Grade H while 1 (2.4%) was at Grade G. This means that all the teachers were secondary school teachers substantively and the one at Grade G must have been a head of department since this is grade for heads of department.

The study further found that 2 (33.3%) of the education officials were at Grade J, 1 (16.7) was at Grade H, 2 (33.3) were at Grade G while 1 (16.7%) was at Grade E. This implies that the education officials were holding their positions substantively. Table 4.5 below presents grades for head teachers, teachers and education officials.

	HTs % of 5	TRs % of 42	EDOs % of 6	Total % of 53
Grade E			1 16.7%	1 1.88%
Grade F	4 80%			4 7.55%
Grade G	1 20%	1 2.4%	2 33.3%	4 7.55%
Grade H		3 7.1%	1 16.7%	4 7.55%
Grade I		21 50%		21 39.62%
Grade J		17 40.5%	2 33.3%	19 35.84%
Total	5 100%	42 100%	6 100%	53 100%

Table 4-5: Grades for HTs, TRs and EDOs

Table 4.5 shows that there were 17 teachers at Grade J. These were supposed to be holders of a diploma in education. However, a look at the academic qualifications for the teachers shows that only 15 were holders of a diploma in education. The discrepancy might imply that two teachers who had diplomas had upgraded to bachelor's degree but they had not yet been promoted to grade I which is a post for those with a bachelor's degree.

4.3.5 Forms for students

The researcher also found out the forms (class levels at secondary school) in which students who participated in the study were. It transpired that out of the 42 students, 8 (19%) were in form one, 7 (17%) were in form two, 13 (31%) were in form three while 14 (33%) were in form four. There were fewer form ones and form twos because at one of the schools, these forms were tied up to end of term examinations on the day when FGDs were conducted. However, their positions were filled by form threes and form fours who were available for the FGDs. To the success of the study, the students available gave the required information such that everything went on very well. Table 4.6 below presents the forms for students who participated in the study.

Form	Number of students
One	8
Two	7
Three	13
Four	14
Total	42

Table 4-6: Students' distribution per form

4.4 Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi, its effects and why it ended in violence most of the times

The study aimed at understanding how strategies used to manage conflict in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented. To achieve this, the first objective of the study was to identify causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. This was in accordance with Bannerman (2012) who observes that to understand conflict, there is need to examine its causes first. In this regard, views of participants were sought on what they thought were the causes of conflict. To put the study in context, participants were also asked what they thought were the effects of conflict on secondary schools and why most conflicts in Malawi ended in violence. As such, this section is presented in three parts namely; causes of conflict, effects of conflict and why conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence most of the times.

4.4.1 Causes of conflict in Secondary Schools in Malawi

A number of causes were given by the participants. Major ones included poor diet, misunderstanding of human rights by students, misunderstanding of school rules and regulations by students, poor communication, unfair treatment of students by staff, poor management of schools by head teachers, instigation of students by teachers or parents, students' indiscipline, lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them and peer pressure. A detailed presentation and analysis of these causes of conflict is given here below one by one. Some other causes of conflict which were mentioned by few participants are also presented one by one. These causes are lack of teaching resources, poor teaching, influence of lazy prefects and failure to maintain social distance by teachers.

Since the study employed concurrent mixed design, both quantitative and qualitative data are handled together so as to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Thus, both types of data are presented and analysed simultaneously. Table 4.7 below gives a statistical presentation of the causes of conflict as captured from questionnaires after which data collected from interviews and FGDs on each cause are also presented and analysed.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Poor communication	7	20.0	20.0	20.0
2. Misunderstanding of human rights	10	28.6	28.6	48.6
3. Poor diet	2	5.7	5.7	54.3
4. Poor school management	2	5.7	5.7	60.0
5. Poor teaching	1	2.9	2.9	62.9
6. Students indiscipline	3	8.6	8.6	71.4
7. Unfair treatment of students by staff	4	11.4	11.4	82.9
8. Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations	6	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-7: Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi

4.4.1.1 Poor diet

Table 4.7 shows that 2 teachers mentioned poor diet as the major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi representing 5.7% of all the teachers who responded to questionnaires. However, data from interviews and FGDs featured poor diet highly. Head teachers observed that due to financial challenges faced by secondary schools, the food that students were given was generally not enough and of low quality. They further noted that such scenarios usually portrayed head teachers as if they were abusing school resources such that in most cases, when violence erupted, head teachers were targeted.

The teachers who were interviewed also observed that poor diet was a major cause of conflict in secondary schools. They noted that because some children came from well to do families where they eat very nice food, in school, they were not happy to be given such food as beans and cabbage. It was observed that such students usually resorted to violence which in most cases results into damage of school property.

On the part of students, almost all the FGDs mentioned poor diet as one of the major causes of conflict. They observed that when the diet was poor for so long, at times they got fed up and they became ungovernable more especially if the school was not doing anything about it. In such cases, it was mentioned that students usually went on rampage and the consequences were generally bad. Presented here below are comments by a head teacher, a teacher and some students.

HT 1: *The issue of diet is very sensitive and schools need to pay close attention to it otherwise, students do not hesitate to go on rampage if the type and quality of food are not of the expected standards. Unfortunately, the fees which students pay are far too low for schools to provide descent meals. This is a very big burden to head teachers because students take it that we abuse finances. That is why most of the time when there is a conflict, head teachers are targeted.*

TR 1: *One of the major causes of conflict in our secondary schools is the challenge of food. Some children come from well to do families where they eat very nice food and when in school, they are not amused with the sort of food which they are given such as beans, cabbage and similar other food. As a result, they resort to violence which usually results into damage to school property.*

FGD 1: *When the food is bad and prefects communicate to them the need to improve it but they do not do anything, we become tired. In the end, we break the school so that they do something about it. And indeed, when violence has taken place, things improve*

Education officials and parents too observed that poor diet was indeed one of the major causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. The education officials observed that diet was a challenge because schools did not have capacity to offer good meals due to limited financial resources. The officials further observed that when such a thing happened, students felt like they were being exploited and consequently, they became ungovernable.

On their part, parents observed that most conflicts which schools registered started as a result of students' discontentment with the diet. They noted that due to limited resources, schools could not provide up to date diet and in the end conflicts ensued between the students and the staff with the former thinking that the latter were misusing money meant for their food. However, the parents were quick to mention that the problem of diet was in most cases compounded by schools' lack of transparency in the sense that schools could not tell students how money was used there by creating an impression that finances were being mismanaged.

The parents further observed that the problem was compounded by schools' failure to communicate changes in the menu necessitated by some unforeseeable circumstances. Expounding the point, it was mentioned that if the supplier of meat failed and students were not told and found that meat was not there right in the café, the situation usually became uncontrollable. This is what an education official and a parent said on the issue of poor diet being a cause of conflict.

EDO 3: *The issue of diet is very sensitive and if a school does not handle it tactfully, it becomes a time bomb. Students just wait for something to go wrong so that they show their suppressed anger. Unfortunately, schools do not have the capacity to improve meal because the fees students pay are far too little.*

PT 4: *The most common cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi is poor diet or failure to maintain menu. Most of the schools have been vandalized by students due to issues related diet. When students are fed up with beans or cabbage, they usually revolt and vandalise the school. At times, it may not necessarily be because of poor diet, but because of failure to*

maintain the menu. If they are not told that they will not have meat and they discover it on their own, it becomes an issue.

4.4.1.2 Misunderstanding of human rights

The other major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi which was mentioned by almost all participants was misunderstanding of human rights by students. Data in Table 4.7 show that 28.6% of the teachers (10) who completed questionnaires mentioned misunderstanding of human rights as the major cause of conflict.

Head teachers too noted that students always talked about their rights to do things without any mention of their responsibilities. In the process, they did a lot of harm to schools and even to the communities. It was further pointed out that due to their emphasis on rights, they could cause damage to school property without any feeling of remorse. Teachers made similar observations as the head teachers. They observed that some conflicts were a result of students' misunderstanding of human rights. The teachers noted that students considered human rights as a tool for misbehaving. Therefore, they emphasised the need for students to be taught that human rights go together with responsibilities.

Students too collaborated with the head teachers and the teachers on the issue of misunderstanding of human rights. They noted that in most cases, they paid so much attention to their rights that they could do everything possible to realize them. The students acknowledged that in most cases, they abused the rights. This is what a head teacher, a teacher and a student said on the issue.

HT 4: *Most conflicts are a result of students' misunderstanding of human rights. In their view, it is only them who have rights and no other person. To them, rights imply a license to do whatever they want. It is for this reason that they can vandalise school property without any feeling of remorse.*

TR 4: *Some of these conflicts are a result of students' misunderstanding of human rights. In anything that they do, they will talk about their rights. There is*

need that they learn about responsibilities as well otherwise, they create hell in the name of human rights.

FGD 5: *You know we (students) always talk of rights and we don't mind whether the thing is for our good or not. For example, if we want disco, even if it is time to prepare for exams, we will insist that we should have it because it is our right. If management does not listen, we strike and we can even damage the school.*

Education officials and parents also commented on the issue of misunderstanding of human rights. The officials observed that students valued rights more than responsibilities and in the end; they usually crossed paths with staff. Related to the issue of misunderstanding of human rights was an observation by parents who said some conflicts were due to drug and substance abuse by students. The parents observed that most times when students were involved in conflicts, they were under the influence of drugs and substance and that when in such a state, they could not take any advice. It was observed that drug and substance abuse were on the increase because students took it as a right. The parents said that was why conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were numerous with most of them emanating from very trivial issue. This is what education officials and parents had to say.

EDO 2: *Misunderstanding of human rights by students is one of the major causes of conflict. To students, rights are more important than responsibilities such that they do anything they feel is a right without consideration for responsibilities.*

PT 5: *A lot of these conflicts in our secondary schools are due to drug and substance abuse by students. At times you wonder why a very small issue should result in students damaging school property. This is all because they act under the influence of drugs and substance. This time around cases of drug and substance abuse are on the increase because students mistake it for issue of human rights.*

4.4.1.3 Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations

Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations also featured as one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. 17.1% of the teachers (6) who responded to questionnaires mentioned it as the major causes of conflict in secondary schools. From FGDs, students indicated that misunderstanding of school rules and regulations was also a cause of conflict in secondary schools. They mentioned that because of emphasising on their rights, students looked at school rules and regulations as instruments for oppression. Thus, head teachers who enforced school rules and regulations were seen to be harsh and in most cases, students rose against them.

From interviews, parents said some conflicts were a result of students not accepting schools rules and regulations. Elaborating more on the point, the parents said this usually happened where the rules were not being enforced and when a new head teacher did so; he was seen as being oppressive. Teachers too observed that misunderstanding of school rules and regulations caused problems in most schools. They noted that although students were made aware of rules and regulations, they were usually resentful in following them such that seriousness in enforcing them result in riots aimed at getting rid of the head. This is what some students, a parent and a teacher said on the point.

FGD 3: *Some conflicts are a result of misunderstanding of school rules and regulations. Usually, due to the feeling that we have rights, rules and regulations are seen as an infringement on rights. For example, rules such as those that ban the possession of cell phones or food items are not fully accepted and if a school enforces total adherence to such rules, usually we protest and cause havoc to the school.*

PT 4: *Some conflicts are a result of students' unwillingness to accept rules and regulations. This usually happens when the rules are not enforced and a new head teacher tries to do so. Such a head teacher is considered to be oppressive and if he insists on students' adherence to the rules, hell is created.*

TR1: *Students hate head teachers who seriously enforce school rules and regulations. In most cases, they will riot so that the head teacher is posted away in the hope that the one to come will not be as serious.*

4.4.1.4 Poor communication

Table 4.7 above shows that 20% of the participants (7) indicated that the major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi was poor or lack of communication. Their stance on the issue was well collaborated by findings from interviews and FGDs. Head teachers indicated that poor or lack of communication on issues of concern to students was a recipe for conflict. To the head teachers, this was because in such a situation, students worked on speculation and in the end, they reacted in a very negative manner.

The view was also supported by students who said there were times when they were kept in the dark on issues which they were supposed to know. An example given was schools' failure to inform them of change in the menu. So instead of preparing them in advance for change, schools remained silent and students got shocked while in the cafeteria. In the end, they went on rampage. The following is what a head teacher and some students said.

HT 5: *Some of these conflicts are caused by our own failure to communicate issues to students. Usually, we, head teachers like to do things in secret forgetting that in the days of democracy, students know that they have the right to know what is going on. In the end they become violent.*

FGD 4: *Another cause of conflict in secondary schools is poor communication. For example, as a school, we know that on Wednesday we eat meat but because of other reasons meat is not there. We get shocked to go to the cafeteria expecting to find meat just to find beans or vegetables. In the end, the school gets vandalized. If communication is made before hand with a clear justification, we cannot go on rampage.*

Education officials also added their voice on the issue of poor or lack of communication being one of the major causes of conflict in secondary schools in

Malawi. They observed that some very simple issues had at times gone out of hand just because of poor or lack of communication. To the officials, this was very critical as students translated the silence as a deliberate effort to hide facts with the aim of exploiting them more especially if the issue concerned money.

Parents too said poor or lack of communication was a major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. They observed that on so many occasions, students became unruly just because they were not communicated to on issues concerning them. In their conclusion, the parents said if proper communication was ensured, some of the violent conflicts that marred secondary schools in Malawi would be avoided.

Making their contribution, teachers also emphasized that failure to communicate issues to students led to violence in most schools. The teachers therefore, observed that there was need for schools to improve on communication if violence in secondary schools in Malawi were to be reduced. This is what an education official, a parent and a teacher said on the need to improve communication.

EDO 3: *Most heads do not realize that the world is dynamic and that this time around, students have to be recognized. This calls for effective communication between the two parties. Failure to do so is a recipe for trouble and schools have been damaged because of that.*

PT 4: *The other cause of conflict is failure to communicate issues of significance to students. For example, there times when students encounter changes in program including change of menu without prior warning.*

TR 2: *Failure to communicate issues to students has caused a lot of trouble to schools. It is very necessary therefore, that schools should improve on communication with students.*

4.4.1.5 Unfair treatment of students by staff

Another major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi was unfair treatment of students by staff. Table 4.7 above shows that 11.4% of the teachers (4) who

completed questionnaires were of the view that unfair treatment was the major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. By way of elaboration, participants who were engaged through interviews and FGDs indicated that unfair treatment could take the form of inconsistency in the administration of punishments, favouritism or harshness. Supporting the argument, head teachers observed that conflict between students and staff at times surfaced due to inconsistencies in the way punishments were administered. They indicated that there were times when different students were punished differently for the same offence. Such a practice usually led into discontentment and riot by students.

Students also observed that unfair treatment or favouritism was another major cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. They said there were times when some students were given preferential treatment at the expense of others. To them, such a disparity was a recipe for conflict. In addition, the students observed that at times, teachers gave very harsh punishments to students and in the end; there was a revolt. Further to this, the students noted that teachers at times exaggerated the way they reacted to issues. An example was given of a situation where a school suspends over 20 students at a time for no apparent reasons. To the students, this was an overreaction which they could not tolerate.

Parents also mentioned harsh punishments meted on students by schools as one of the causes of conflict which could be classified as unfair treatment of students. They observed that harsh punishment given to students usually attracted sympathy from the others who in turn revolt against staff in order to show solidarity with their counterparts. They concluded that conflicts resulting from harsh punishments could be avoided if only schools were treating students fairly all the times. Here are some of the sentiments which were expressed by a head teacher, some students and a parent.

HT 1: *At times teachers punish students differently for the same offence; something which is not fair. Rumours have it that certain teachers give lighter punishments to students with whom they come from the same district while punishing the others severely. Such behaviour angers students and results in conflict most times.*

FGD 1: *Some teachers torture students by treating them just like slaves. They administer very harsh punishments and they make sure you get tortured. Unfortunately, students are human beings and they get tired. It is when they are tired that violence ensues.*

FGD 4: *At times teachers overreact, something that students cannot tolerate. For example, you may hear that students set this school on fire. The reason was very simple; we were not happy with the suspension of 20 students at a time. We thought that was bad and it could not be tolerated. Teachers must act in a sober manner.*

PT 2: *One of the major causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi is harsh punishment given to students by teachers. Such punishments provoke anger in the other students who look at it as unfair treatment and end up revolting against school management. For example, at a certain school, students were suspended for six weeks and the other students were not amused as they looked at the punishment as harsh. As a result, the students became violent and destroyed a lot of school property.*

4.4.1.6 Poor management of school

The study also established that some conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were a result of poor management of schools by head teachers which was manifested through things like delay in addressing students concerns or even failure to address students concerns. In other cases, it was manifested through failure to enforce school rules and regulations. Table 4.7 above shows that 2 teachers supported the sentiments representing 5.7% of the teachers who responded to questionnaires.

Elaborating the point, head teachers observed that at times conflicts were caused by their own delays in addressing students concerns. They said there were times when students brought issues forward for the attention of the head teacher but nothing was done. To the students, this meant that the head teacher did not care about their concerns and in the end, they became violent. The head teachers observed that such a situation could easily be avoided if only students' concerns were attended in time.

Making their contribution, students observed that there were times when they took issues to management for their action but instead of addressing them, they just sat on them. In other cases, instead of addressing students concerns, the school would refer them to prefects. Such conduct by management gave the students the impression that they could not listen unless pushed. To the students, the only way to push was to go on rampage.

Parents too shared the same sentiments. They observed that the way some head teachers managed schools was a cause of problems. As an example, the parents said some schools were run without any rules and regulations with teachers and students granted all the freedom to do what they wanted. In such cases, students were usually unruly and they could do anything. Here is what a head teacher, some students and a parent said.

HT 2: *One of the major causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi is head teachers' failure or delays to address students' concerns. Sometimes, students raise issues to the head teacher but no response is given and the students conclude that the head teacher does not care about them. For example, if students complain about poor diet and the head teacher knows that there is nothing he can do because the school does not have enough money due to the low school fees but he/she chooses to remain silent, students get angered and in the end they riot. But if you explain to them, they will understand.*

FGD 3: *Some of the conflicts are infuriated by the schools failure to address our concerns. There are times when we present concerns but the school does nothing. To show that we really need their attention, we just go on rampage and usually, they act following the strike. At times, when we present an issue to management, we are told it is the duty of prefects. But what they forget is that by taking issues to them it means prefects have failed. In the end we just act violently.*

PT 2: *Some of the conflicts are due to poor school management. There are schools which are not guided by any rules and regulations with students and teachers given all the freedom to do what they want. In such schools, decisions are made without any consideration for students' or teachers' input. In such cases, students become volatile when the school tries to enforce rules and regulations and they end up vandalizing school property.*

Education officials also observed that some conflicts were due to head teachers' lack of conflict management skills. They indicated that in some cases, head teachers angered students by not attending to their grievances or attending to them late; a thing that to students was a sign of negligence or a sign that the students did not matter. This was also supported by teachers who said if schools were addressing students' issues on time; some of the conflicts would be avoided. This is what two education officials and a teacher said.

EDO 6: *Some head teachers lack conflict management skills. In the end, they just worsen the situation because they do not know how to handle it. There is need to train them in conflict management so that they manage conflicts professionally.*

EDO 5: *When students have presented their grievances to the head teacher or teachers and there is no feedback, they take it that the school does not care about their wellbeing and they get furious. In the end, they riot and a lot of schools have been vandalized in this way.*

HT 7: *Delay to address students' concerns is a cause of conflict. Students take it like a deliberate move to undermine them. As a result, they remind schools for answers to their concerns through violence.*

4.4.1.7 Instigation of students by teachers or parents

It was also observed that some conflicts were a result of instigation of students by either teachers or parents. Head teachers observed that there were instances when students revolted against school management after being instigated by either teachers or parents. A mention was made that most times, teachers who had

overstayed at a school, did not like change such that when a (new) head teacher introduced an innovation, they could instigate students to rise against him/her with the aim of suffocating the innovation. As for parents, it was mentioned that they at times told students that the school was exploiting them and that if it was during their time, they could rise for improvement.

Education officials concurred with the head teachers that some conflicts were a result of instigation by teachers and in other cases by communities. Just like the head teachers, the education officials said after staying for so long at a school, some teachers resisted change and in the end, they instigated students to riot against new head teachers who initiated the change. Instigation was said to be a serious problem because it justified any wrong doing the students could embark on. Consequently, with instigation, students got energized such that they acted in very violent manner and uncontrollable manner.

Education officials also mentioned that in other instances; communities instigated students to revolt against a head teacher just to get rid of him/her. The officials observed that at times, communities wanted to be micromanaging schools by manipulating head teachers. In such cases, if a head teacher was too strong to be manipulated, they could instigate students to riot against him/her so that the MoEST should remove him/her from the school. It was further observed that since the MoEST indeed removed head teachers whose schools were vandalized, such riots were becoming numerous in secondary schools in Malawi.

The sentiments were also shared by parents who observed that some teachers, more especially those who overstayed in schools usually instigated students to revolt against the head teacher. The parents observed that such teachers were most of the times against new ideas by new head teachers and to them, a revolt by students was the easiest way to have the head teacher removed from the school by the MoEST. Here are comments on the issue as presented by a head teacher, some education officials and a parent.

HT 2: *What would you expect students to do if parents make statements like – the school is wrong. Issues are not supposed to be like that. Policy does not say so. They are taking advantage of the type of students you are otherwise during our time this could not happen.*

EDO 4: *There are times when teachers instigate students to go on rampage so that the head teacher is seen as a failure. Usually, when a new head teacher wants to change things, teachers who have overstayed at a school instigate students to go against him/her so that in the end, he/she is seen as a failure and consequently is removed from the school.*

EDO 6: *When the community wishes to take total control of the school, they do everything possible to get rid of a strong head teacher who is seen as an obstacle to their aspirations. In such cases, they instigate students to riot against him/her. Unfortunately, when such a thing happens, we (EDOs) usually post the head teacher away thereby rewarding their moves.*

PT 4: *In some schools, conflict is a result of instigation by teachers. Usually, teachers who have over stayed at a school and are used to the status quo, resist new policies by new head teachers. As a result, they instigate students to go on rampage so that the head teacher fails and gets posted away.*

4.4.1.8 Students' indiscipline

Another major cause of conflict that came out was students' indiscipline. Table 4.7 shows that 3 teachers were of this view. This represents 8.6% of the students who responded to questionnaires. Head teachers too observed that there were times when students engaged in violence just because of lack of discipline. In the explanation, it was learnt that discipline in secondary schools was on the decline because of misunderstanding of human rights. Teachers who were interviewed also noted that students' discipline was a cause for a lot of violence in secondary schools in Malawi. In their observation, they noted that enforcing discipline met a lot of resistance from students and in most cases, riots broke in secondary schools. This is what a head teacher and a teacher said on the issue.

HT 4: *Lack of discipline by students contributes a lot to violence. There are cases of schools vandalized because students are not happy that some of their colleagues have been suspended after getting involved in discipline related issues such as beer drinking. In other cases, students go on rampage because the school is not tolerating boy-girl relationships.*

TR 2: *A lot of conflicts in our secondary schools are due to indiscipline. Because discipline has gone down, students behave in the way they want. So to them, vandalizing school property is just one of those things.*

4.4.1.9 Lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them

Data collected showed that some conflicts were a result of lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them. Education officials observed that this was mainly due to lack of transparency which they said resulted in students being completely ignorant of school affairs. It was emphasized that in such cases, students ended up acting irrationally. Teachers collaborated with the education officials, saying involving students in decisions affecting them would ensure peaceful implementation of the same. Different examples were cited on how lack of students' involvement in decisions affecting them or lack of transparency in general led to conflict. This is what some education officials and a teacher said on the issue.

EDO 5: *Most conflicts in our secondary schools are due to lack of transparency. For example, while the issue of diet is critical, if students were involved in preparing the menu, they would appreciate the economic challenges that contribute towards the poor diet. By so doing, conflicts would be managed and violence would have no room.*

EDO 2: *Most conflicts in schools are a result of lack of transparency by school management more especially on issues of money. You hear of students rioting because of poor diet. Usually, such a thing happens when the school is not transparent in the way it handles the finances. The students cannot appreciate that the fees they pay is very low and cannot afford them a decent meal. If there is no transparency, students take it that the head teacher is misusing their money and they revolt.*

TR 6: *Some times, we provoke students' anger by not involving them in decisions made. A good example is the issue of diet. After experiencing different challenges, this school asked students, parents and some teachers to sit down and draw a menu using the fess which they were paying. After the meeting, they advised the school to remove some food items on the menu and recommended fees hike. Today things have improved.*

4.4.1.10 Peer pressure

It was also learnt from the information gathered that in other instances, students engaged in violence just because of peer pressure. Supporting the idea, one head teacher observed that sometimes students engaged in violence not because there was anything wrong but because their colleagues elsewhere had gone on rampage. Thus, because school A had done it, school B would follow suit. Education officials too observed that at times students became violent just to show their friends that they were strong or because their friends elsewhere had vandalized their school. It came out clear that because of acting on peer pressure, schools experienced violence in a sequence; one school after the other.

In their contribution, parents noted that peer pressure was sometimes mounted by students who had been expelled from another school and were admitted in a new one. It was observed that such students were usually rejects and had nothing to do with school. They were very influential such that they could introduce a foreign culture at the new school within a short time. In the end, they could organize and lead violence for very petty reasons.

Head teachers concurred with parents on the issue. They blamed the admission policy which they said led to the admission of vandals; students who had been dismissed from another school due to vandalism. This is what a head teacher, an education official and a parent said on the issue.

HT 4: *At times students vandalise schools not because there is anything wrong but because their colleagues elsewhere have done so. That is why most of the times; schools are vandalised in a succession; one after the other.*

EDO 1: *There are times when students go on rampage just because elsewhere, their friends have done so. That is why you hear of cases of students' riots one after the other. They just want to show that they too are strong characters and they can cause chaos at a school.*

PT 4: *Some of these conflicts are a result of influence by students who are transferred from other schools due to bad behaviour. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has a tendency of transferring rejects from one school to the other. Such students are usually expelled from one school for leading others in vandalising the school and upon joining a new school, they do exactly that.*

4.4.1.11 Other causes

Different groups gave different other causes. The first one was lack of teaching resources which students said angered them more especially if management showed no interest to improve the situation. In such instances, conflict ensued. In the same line of thought, one of the teachers who responded to questionnaires, representing 2.9% indicated that the major cause of conflict was poor teaching which could be attributed to lack of teaching resources or other factors like unpreparedness of teachers. Students further observed that lazy prefects were also a cause of conflicts as they incited riots so that learning should be disturbed. They observed that with the respect that prefects commanded, when they called for mass action against the school, it usually happened like that. This is what the students said to elaborate the point.

FGD 3: *Students get dismayed when they come to school to learn but there are no teaching resources or there are no teachers. It is like wasting our time. So to show that we are not happy, we riot and fortunately, when that happens, usually the problem gets solved. If it was a problem of teachers, some teachers get posted to the school immediately.*

FGD 5: *When prefects are lazy, they incite violence so that learning is disturbed. When there is a very small issue, they will move around telling students that the school is no longer what it used to be saying in the past,*

problems could not be tolerated. Upon hearing such sentiments, students get incited and go on rampage.

Parents further observed that teachers' failure to maintain social distance with girls was yet another cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. The parents observed that in such cases, boys considered teachers as competitors. Since students were socioeconomically weaker than the teachers, they considered violence as an additional weapon with which to defeat the competitors. As such, the boys resorted to violence. This is what was said on the point.

PT 1: *There are times when students resort to violence because of competition for girls with teachers. Usually, there are some unprofessional teachers who fall in love with girls; something that does not please boys. Since the teachers have a socioeconomic advantage over the boys, the latter resort to conflict as the only weapon with which to defeat the opponent. The competition worsens with the boys' wish to show the girls that they are courageous and they can do anything.*

4.4.2 Effects of conflict on secondary schools

Literature indicates that conflict has both positive and negative effects. In this case, it could be construed that the many conflicts that secondary schools in Malawi registered had both positive and negative effects on them (the secondary schools). The study therefore, wanted to find out what participants felt were these effects. The findings are presented here below starting with positive effects.

4.4.2.1 Positive effects of conflict on secondary schools

Participants gave three main ways in which conflict positively affected secondary schools. Their responses were as follows: (a) it was an opportunity for stakeholders to learn and improve the running of schools (b) it led to improvement of infrastructure (c) it was an opportunity for students to air out their concerns. In addition to the three points, some education officials mentioned that it also deterred would be offenders. These views are discussed here below starting with a statistical presentation of the data from questionnaires as presented in Table 4.8 below.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. It is a learning point	29	82.9	82.9	82.9
2. Students air out their concerns	1	2.9	2.9	85.7
3. Improvement of infrastructure	5	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-8: Positive effects of conflict on secondary schools

4.4.2.1.1: A learning opportunity for stakeholders

Almost all participants mentioned that conflict was a learning opportunity for stakeholders in the running of secondary schools such that by the end of the day, things improved. Table 4.8 shows that 29 of the teachers who responded to questionnaires representing 82.9%, were of the view that conflict benefitted schools as it offered stakeholders an opportunity to learn. In agreement, head teachers said although conflict in secondary schools in Malawi usually ended in violence and damage to school property, it offered schools an opportunity for reflection and consequent improvement in the way schools were run. They observed that at times head teachers and teachers did not realize their own bad practices such that conflict brought them to their senses and in the end, things improved.

On their part, students observed that on the over all, conflict was bad to the school and that the only benefit if at all anything, was that it offered an opportunity for change and improvement in the way schools were run. They said this was because upon managing the conflict, parties came to their senses and began to recognise and respect each other. As a result, the parties always engaged each other where need arose and in the end, school management improved. This is what some head teachers and some students said on the issue.

HT 2: *Conflicts provide a moment for reflection to both staff and students. Through conflicts, people come to realize that there is diversity in views; something which shall always be there. Upon realizing this, they reflect on it and come up with ways of normalizing the situation thereby improving things.*

HT 3: *Conflict creates an opportunity to change. Usually when a school has found itself in a conflict, the administration knows its weaknesses and addresses them. Furthermore, conflict allows parties to know each other better than before and in the end, they handle each other with caution.*

HT 4: *Conflict offers stakeholders an opportunity to solve problems. After its occurrence, schools assess its causes and do everything possible to address them. For example, a school may be forced to supply resources if the cause of the conflict was scarcity of resources.*

FGD 3: *Conflict teaches both students and staff the need to respect each other. As a result, relationships improve. The school begins to pay attention to students concerns and students too recognise the place of teachers.*

FGD 4: *Conflict serves as turning point in the running of the school as students and teachers learn more about each other. In the end, school management improves.*

FGD 5: *Conflict is usually a turning point and it offers an opportunity for improving relationship between students and staff. If well managed, it brings about change. For example, if students complained about diet, the school does everything possible to improve it.*

Education officials observed that the benefits of conflict were usually overshadowed by the many effects that conflict had in secondary schools in Malawi. The benefit they mentioned was that it served as a learning point thereby offering head teachers an opportunity for improving school management. They observed that when a conflict occurred, everyone went through a moment of reflection – examining what went wrong and how best to transact business to avoid a repeat of the ugly scenes resulting from the conflict. Through such a process, when a conflict had been managed, students' concerns were always addressed and transparency was observed. To the education officials, this was the major benefit of conflict to the schools.

Parents too observed that conflict offered an opportunity for re-correction to both the staff and students. It was observed that when a conflict arose and it was resolved, generally, the parties would examine themselves and reconcile thereby improving their relationships. Thus, conflict provided an opportunity for the parties to start afresh and work in harmony. The teachers who were interviewed shared the sentiment that conflict offered an opportunity to improve things in a school. They observed that after a conflict, parties did some soul searching and in the end, things improved. This is what some education officials, a parent and a teacher said.

EDO 4: *Conflict is a learning point and an opportunity for correction. When something similar happens again, chances of handling it well are very high as people act from experience. So there is an improvement in the way situations are managed.*

EDO 5: *Conflict offers an opportunity to understand how to handle issues. This is the case more especially when the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology gets involved because we sit down with the parties to see what went wrong and how best things should have been handled. However, the positives of conflict are generally over shadowed by the negatives.*

PT 5: *Conflict is in most cases, a learning point for both teachers and students. Usually, after sometime of disagreements, the parties evaluate themselves and finally work in harmony*

TR 1: *One advantage of conflict to the school is that it leads to improvement in the way the school is run. For example, if there was no transparency in the way business of the school was transacted, things change and students get involved in the day to day business of the school. Even the students themselves tend to be responsible after the conflict.*

4.4.2.1.2 Improvement of infrastructure

On an instrumental note, data gathered showed that another benefit of conflict was that it resulted in the improvement of infrastructure. Table 4.8 shows that 5 of the teachers who responded to questionnaires were of the view that conflict benefited

schools through improvement of infrastructure. This represented 14% of the teachers who answered questionnaires. In their contribution, head teachers said after conflict, infrastructure in schools improved because students involved in the damaging of school property were forced to pay for the damages. It further transpired that the costing of the damages, in most cases, included even things which were already damaged and in the end schools benefitted a lot.

Similarly, education officials said that violent conflict assisted in the maintenance of school infrastructure. They observed that when a school had been vandalized, the damage caused was assessed, costed and paid for by students for the purpose of maintaining the school. In the process, things improved because the damaged facilities were replaced with new ones. The officials further observed that in most cases, facilities which might have been damaged before the violence were included in the costing and students paid for them as well. As such, schools changed their faces for the better.

Parents too made a similar observation that conflict had the advantage of improving infrastructure and other facilities. This was because damage of school property was always paid for by students. The parents said in all cases, when damages had been assessed, students would be asked to meet the costs. As such, things usually improved at the school as infrastructure got maintained and lost equipment replaced. This is what a head teacher, an education official and a parent said to support the point.

HT 1: *Conflict offers a window for infrastructural improvement at the school. When students damage school property during violence, they are asked to pay for the damages. In most cases, they pay more than the amount required for repairing the damages and in the end, things improve.*

EDO 1: *When assessing damages caused by students during a conflict, schools usually include facilities which were already in bad shape. As such, rehabilitation includes such facilities and in the end, the condition of schools improves making them conducive to learning.*

PT 2: *Generally speaking, conflict has a negative impact on the school. If at all anything, the only advantage may be the repairing of facilities which happens after students have paid for the damages.*

4.4.2.1.3 An opportunity for students to air out their concerns and be heard

Head teachers and education officials observed that conflict offered students an opportunity to have their concerns heard and acted upon. This view was also made by the students themselves. It was observed that in most schools, students' concerns were not given much attention until when they had become violent. Some head teachers observed that while schools were supposed to accommodate contrary views from students, on the ground, very little was done. Consequently, conflict was an opportunity for students' concerns to be heard and acted upon.

Similarly, some education officials observed that it was only when students had become violent that schools paid attention to their concerns. On their part, the students said it was unfortunate that schools rarely treated their concerns seriously but when they turned violent, issues were usually addressed. The sentiments were also mentioned by the teachers who completed questionnaires. Of the 35 teachers, 1 indicated that conflict helped students to have their concerns heard. This represented 2.9 % of the 35 teachers. This is what one head teacher, two education officials and some students said on the issue.

HT 2: *Objectivity has limits and as such, head teachers and teachers need to open up to contrary views by students. Such views are usually heard when there is a conflict*

EDO 3: *Conflict is the only effective way for students to present their views to staff and other officials and be heard. Otherwise, their views are not heard if presented anyhow.*

EDO 5: *Conflict is the only opportunity through which students' grievances are acted upon. Most times, schools get grievances from students but they do not act. But when they become volatile, their concerns are given the necessary attention.*

FGD 3: *From time to time, students raise concerns for school to address. Unfortunately, schools pay a blind eye on such concerns but when students have become violent, they do everything possible to address the issues*

4.4.2.1.4 A deterrence to would be offenders

Education officials further observed that conflict assisted in deterring would be offenders from doing the same. It was observed that when a conflict occurred and some students were rusticated or suspended or expelled from school, the message sent was that any violence would not be tolerated. As a result, students who wanted to be violent would think twice before acting knowing that they too could face a similar fate.

Education officials considered this to be a positive consequence of conflict. To them, peace and order would prevail at a school if some students had been rusticated or suspended or expelled after a conflict. The education officials observed this would be the case because such hard-line measures sent signals of warning to would be offenders thereby deterring them from doing the same. Consequently, learning would proceed without interruptions. This is what one of the education officials said to qualify the point.

EDO 1: *Conflict benefits the school in the sense that it deters would be offenders. When a conflict occurs and some students are expelled or suspended, would be offenders wake up and they are deterred from doing the same thereby allowing teaching and learning to take place in a peaceful environment.*

4.4.2.2 Negative effects of conflict on secondary schools

Information collected revealed three main ways through which conflict affected secondary schools and they were: (a) it disturbed teaching and learning, (b) it caused damage to school property and (c) it derailed development. The fourth way which was mention by some participants was that conflict put people's lives in danger. These ways are discussed here below starting with a statistical presentation of the data that were collected from participants who responded to questionnaires as presented in Table 4.9 below.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. It disturbs learning	22	62.9	62.9	62.9
2. Leads to damage of school property	11	31.4	31.4	94.3
3. It derails development	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-9: Negative effects of conflict on secondary schools

4.4.2.2.1 A disturbance to teaching and learning

Table 4.9 above shows that 22 teachers were of the view that conflict affected schools in the sense that it disturbed teaching and learning. This represents 62.9% of all the participants who completed questionnaires. In agreement with this observation, head teachers said that conflict disturbed teaching and learning and consequently affected the performance of schools in general and students in particular. They observed that when a conflict occurred, schools usually got closed thereby disturbing teaching and learning. In addition, they observed that even if the school did not close, both teachers and students could not perform to the best of their ability.

Teachers too noted that conflict disturbed teaching and learning as it affected the performance of both teachers and students. The teachers noted that when there was a conflict, both teachers and students could not give out the best of themselves because of the strained relationship which was created. It was noted that in the end, time was lost.

Students agreed with the head teachers that conflict disturbed teaching and learning. All, the FGDs observed that conflict in most cases created tension between students and teachers and that in such situations, teaching and learning were not as effective as they should have been. It was also mentioned that in other cases, conflict resulted in some students being rusticated or suspended or expelled from school. This meant that such students missed classes. This is what some head teachers, a teacher and some students said to justify that conflict disturbed teaching and learning.

HT 2: *Conflicts affect schools in the sense that they disturb teaching and learning. A lot of time passes without lessons taking place due to conflict. Unfortunately, students sit for the same examinations with those from schools which are not disturbed. As a result, students from schools which are disturbed do not perform well.*

HT 5: *When there is a conflict, it becomes difficult to cover the syllabus. I remember in 2013, this school was closed for almost three months. It was not easy in that case to cover the syllabus.*

TR 5: *Conflict affects the performance of both teachers and students. When there is a conflict, teachers cannot give out the best of themselves and students too cannot give out the best of themselves because their relationship is strained and their energy is directed towards the conflict and not teaching and learning. In the end, time is wasted.*

FGD 2: *Conflict disturbs learning because teachers are not free to teach as they always do. Not only that, there are times when conflict has led to closure of school thereby disturbing learning. In other cases, some students have ended up marrying when school has been closed.*

FGD 1: *Conflict breeds hatred between the students and teachers. Such a situation affects teaching and learning as teachers fear students while students fear teachers. In some instances it leads to closure of schools and in the process some students more especially girls drop out of school due to marriages. Worse still, there are times when teachers choose not to attend to classes due to conflicts.*

Explaining why teachers and students alike could not give out the best of themselves when a conflict had arisen, one of the head teachers stated that conflict made relationships between students and staff sour. As a result, both teachers and students could not perform to the best of their abilities. This could possibly be due to

the negative attitude that each party developed towards the other. In the end, the performance of the school got compromised. This is what one of the head teachers said.

HT 5: *Conflict makes relationships between the parties sour and in the process; staff and students cannot trust each other. As a result, both teachers and students cannot give out the best of their abilities thereby impacting on students' performance.*

Education officials too supported the observation that conflict disturbed teaching and learning. It was noted that when there was a conflict, parties did not trust each other such that teachers could not teach to the best of their potential while learners too could not learn comfortably because they were suspicious of the teachers. This implied that teaching and learning were disturbed. Furthermore, students found to be ring leaders usually got rusticated or suspended or expelled from school. All this was a disturbance to the process of teaching and learning.

Similar sentiments were made by parents. In their contribution, the parents observed that conflict disturbed teaching and learning through closure of schools or through change of focus from teaching and learning to the conflict. The parents concluded that in the long run, conflict affected students' performance. This is what some education officials and some parents said.

EDO 4: *Conflict disturbs teaching and learning as schools get closed or if they are not closed, they spend a lot of time and energy carrying out disciplinary measures against those students who were deemed to be in the wrong. In the end, time for teaching and learning is wasted.*

EDO 1: *Conflict does a lot of harm to students as it disturbs learning and in the process, students' performance is affected. There have been cases when very brilliant students have not performed as expected because the school was rocked in a conflict.*

PT 1: *Conflict disturbs learning as schools end up being closed. In the end, students' performance is affected. As such, parents do not realize their dream of having an educated child*

PT 3: *Conflict disturbs teaching and learning because instead of focusing on their working, teachers and students concentrate on solving the conflict. As such, performance goes down and the school's reputation gets compromised*

Summing up on the fact that conflict disturbed teaching and learning, education officials indicated that in the final analysis, the reputation of both the school and the head teacher were affected. Elaborating the point, it was said that people lost trust in schools involved in conflict to the extent that some parents ended up withdrawing their children from such schools in preference for better schools. Likewise, it was observed that a head teacher whose school was involved in conflict was considered to be a failure. Such a feeling implied that the head teacher's respect got compromised. This is what some of the education officials said.

EDO 5 *When a conflict occurs, the community at large loses trust in the school and some parents may even withdraw their children. Worse still, even the head teacher gets labelled as a failure such that wherever he or she goes, people look at him as a failure. This is because people do not look at the causes of the conflict but instead, they heap all the blame on the head teacher*

EDO 3: *Conflict damages the reputation of the school. People do not say anything good about a school which is always involved in conflict. Even the concerned head teacher loses respect.*

4.4.2.2.2 Damage of property

Table 4.9 above shows that 11 teachers indicated that conflict resulted in damage to school property. This represents 31.4% of all the participants who completed questionnaires. In agreement with the observation, head teachers said conflict resulted in damage of school property. They further noted that conflict in secondary schools in Malawi was always associated with vandalism and damage to school property including teachers' houses, classrooms, offices, laboratories and other

facilities. The head teachers further observed that there were times when schools had been set on fire with assorted property burnt to ashes. One school put it on record that students burnt almost 30 computers when violence ensued.

Students too said one effect of conflict was that it led to damage of school property. They observed that in most cases, conflict left schools devastated. However, they were quick to observe that when damage had been caused to school property, parents were left with the burden to pay for the damage. Those who failed to pay for the damage ended up being withdrawn from school. This is what some head teachers and some students said on the issue.

HT4: *Conflict results in damage of school property. At this school, for example, students burnt computers and damaged teachers' houses. The situation was bad and you could not like it. It was a big a loss not only to the school but also to the students because the computers were used by them.*

HT 5: *Conflict results in loss of property or structures. You hear that students have broken the window panes or they have broken the structures or they have burnt the office of the head teacher.*

FGD 2: *Conflict leads to damage of school property. When a conflict arises, students damage anything that they come across regardless of how valuable it may be.*

FGD 3: *During conflict, school property is damaged and when such a thing happens, parents are given a burden to pay for the damages. If parents fail to pay for the damages, students are withdrawn from school. A lot of students have dropped out of school because parents cannot pay for damages.*

Education officials too agreed with the others that because conflict in secondary schools in Malawi usually ended in violence, the consequence was damage of school property. This was mentioned by almost all the officials and it was presented as an issue of great concern to them. They bemoaned the tendency of vandalizing school property which they observed was on the increase. In the same connection, it

was mentioned that the money which students paid for damages could be used for other developmental services which could enhance learning and teaching in the schools. Similarly, they noted that some parents were put in an awkward position as they were supposed to pay for the damages in addition to fees which they struggled to pay.

Teachers also shared the sentiments that conflict caused a lot of damage to secondary schools. The teachers noted that the major challenge was that most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence and in the process; a lot of property was damaged. They observed that when students turned violent, they became wild and they could do anything. They could break classrooms, laboratories, teachers' houses and anything at their disposals at will and without any feelings of regrets. This is what some education officials and a teacher said.

EDO 5: *It is very unfortunate that cases of vandalism are on the increase. From time to time, you hear of a school having been vandalized. A lot of property gets damaged in the process.*

EDO 2: *When a school gets vandalized, some students are forced out of school because they can't pay for damages. Unfortunately, most students are just influenced by others and they forget their plight. In the end, they cannot continue with their education. Even for those who are able to for the damages, the money could have been put to better use if they did not get involved in the violence.*

TR 4: *Conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi cause a lot of damage. The major challenge was that almost all conflicts ended in violence and in the process; a lot of property gets damaged. Students become wild and they can do anything.*

As for parents, their main concern was that because conflict resulted in damage to school property, they had the burden of meeting costs for the damages as they supposed to be borne by the students who depended on them. Thus, they had to dip even deeper into their pockets just to pay for damages. The parents complained that

such payments were a big blow to them as they already struggled to pay school fees for their children. Head teachers too collaborated with the parents. They observed that the requirement for students to meet costs for damages made school very expensive despite being heavily subsidized. Consequently, those parents who could not manage to pay for the damages would have their children withdrawn from school. This is what a parent and a head teacher said on the point.

PT 2: *When a conflict has occurred, students are forced to pay for damages. This puts parents in an awkward situation more especially those who already struggle to raise monies for fess. Because of this, some students end up withdrawing from the school because their parents have failed to raise the money for damages*

HT 2: *Conflict results in the rise of the cost of education as parents are forced to pay for the damages in addition to the fees which they struggle to pay. As a result, in most cases, students' from poor families withdraw from school because their parents cannot pay for the damages.*

4.4.2.2.3 It derailed development

Another effect of conflict was that it derailed development in the sense that a lot of money was spent on maintenance of damaged property instead of new development. Students observed that when a conflict arose, energy, time, finances and even attention all got redirected to the maintenance of the damage caused. To the students, that was retrogressive and a big blow to development. The students gave an example of computers being burnt during conflicts after which the school had to procure new ones instead of purchasing other things which were not there. To the students, it was the double spending on one thing which made conflict retrogressive.

Teachers too complained that violence in schools was costly and affected developed. They observed that even when students paid for damages, there were cases of structures which remained unrepaired well after the payments had been made. In Table 4.9, 2 teachers shared the view that conflict derailed development.

This represented 5.7% of the teachers who responded to questionnaires. This is what some students and a teacher said on this issue.

FGD 3: *Conflict slows down development. When there is a conflict, students rush at breaking property for the school. However, when that happens, the school spends a lot of money on repairs. Such money could have been used for new development.*

TR 2: *Violence in schools derails development. There are schools which were damaged, students paid for the damages but no repairs have been done. Thus, government will have to provide for finances for the repairs to be made. This is retrogressive.*

4.4.2.2.4 It put lives in danger

Another effect of conflict that was mentioned was that it put lives of both teachers and students in danger. Head teachers pointed out that when charged, students could do anything including causing harm to the other. To this effect, it was mentioned that there were times when conflict in schools resulted in people getting injured and in other cases, losing lives. The sentiments were shared by students who observed that at times, conflict resulted in injuries on teachers and/or students. They noted that whenever a conflict turned violent, it became a hit and run affair and anything could be done. The students said some friends lost lives during conflicts. This is what a head teacher and some students said on the point.

HT 5: *Conflict puts lives of both members of staff and students in danger. When students are charged, they can do anything. For example, at this school, a student was killed when there was a fight with the neighbouring school. It is not a long time ago and this was over and above the many injuries that were sustained.*

FGD 5: *Conflicts are very dangerous because they usually end into violence and when it happens that way, there are a lot of injuries sustained by students or staff. Worse still, students have ever been killed during conflict. At this school, a student was killed.*

FGD 3: *Conflicts put students' lives in danger. You can easily get injured or even killed if you are not careful because it becomes a hit and run affair such that anything can happen. There are stories of students killed during conflicts and they are gone.*

4.4.3 Why most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence

Literature stipulates that conflict is a health situation and that what matters is how it is managed (Ghaffar, 2009)). However, the situation in Malawi was different in the sense that most conflicts ended into violence which led to damage of school property, injury to students and teachers or even loss of lives in some cases (MoEST, 2014). The researcher sought views of participants on why most conflicts ended in violence and damage to property in secondary schools in Malawi.

Teachers who responded to questionnaires gave different answers as to why most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence. As can be seen from Table 4.10 below, six different reasons were given. Of the 35 teachers, 19 indicated that most conflicts ended in violence because of head teachers' lack of conflict management skills. This represented 54.3%. 6 teachers, representing 17.1% indicated that it was because of a win it all mentality among students and staff while 4 teachers, representing 11.4% were of the view that it was because of lack of interest in school by students. 2 teachers, representing 5.7% indicated that it was because of too much bureaucracy in the management of schools which resulted in delayed decision making. 1 teacher, representing 2.9% was of the view that conflict ended in violence most of the times because students took it (violence) as a way to communicate and be heard. Finally, another teacher, representing 2.9% again indicated that it was because of violent nature of students. Table 4.10 below gives the data on why most conflicts between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Win it all mentality	6	17.1	17.1	17.1
2. Head teachers lack of conflict management skills	19	54.3	54.3	71.4
3. A way for students to communicate and be heard	1	2.9	2.9	74.3
4. Lack of interest in school by students	4	11.4	11.4	85.7
5. Violent culture among students	1	2.9	2.9	88.6
6. Too much bureaucracy in school management	2	5.7	5.7	94.3
7. No answer	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-10: Why most conflicts ended in violence

Data from interviews and FGDs yielded different reasons for conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi to be ending in violence most of the times. They were win it all mentality in students and staff, head teachers' lack of conflict management skills, violence was the only way for students to communicate and be heard, it was a means to get rid of a head teacher from a school and poor upbringing of students. These reasons are discussed in detail here below.

4.4.3.1 Win it all mentality

Just as it was observed by the teachers who responded to questionnaires, different participants were of the view that most conflicts ended in violence because of "win it all mentality". Head teachers observed that "win it all mentality" was there in both students and staff and was a big challenge. They noted that due to such a mentality, parties could not accommodate contrary views and in such a situation, violence became the most viable option. Concurring with the head teachers, students said conflict in secondary schools in Malawi usually ended in violence because of failure to give in by the two parties. The students observed that both parties were not accommodative to contrary views such that a very simple issue which should have ended peacefully if one party recognized the position of the other ended in violence.

Making their contribution, parents observed that conflict in secondary schools in Malawi mostly ended in violence due to failure to accommodate opposing views in preference for a take it all approach. It was observed that in most cases, head teachers and teachers were not ready for a win-win settlement of conflict with the students even when they knew they were in the wrong. Similarly, it was observed that students were also not very ready for a win-win settlement of conflict such that in most cases, they would do what they felt was appropriate for them to win it all. In this case, resistance to their wishes usually made them wild and led to the damage of property.

Teachers too indicated that the desire to win it all was costly to schools. They observed that staff could hardly bow to demands of students possibly because traditionally, students were supposed to be subordinates while students could not easily submit to staff because they had their own rights which had to be respected. So to the students, violence was there as tool for fighting for their rights. This is what a head teacher, some students, some parents and a teacher said on the issue.

HT 2: *Most conflicts end into violence because of failure to accommodate contrary views. This happens because of the win it all mentality which is there in both teachers and students. Usually, when their contrary views are not given room, students become violent such that an issue which should have ended peacefully generates into chaos. In other instances students become violent just because they want their views to take precedent and nothing else.*

FGD 2: *Most of the violence is a result of failure to accommodate contrary views of the other party. Teachers always stand by what they think even if they may be in the wrong. To assist them accommodate our views, we become violent because that is the best way to tell them that they are wrong and they should consider our views. On our part, there times when we want things to be done the way we want without considering contrary views.*

PT 1: *Conflict in secondary schools in Malawi usually ends into violence due to lack of tolerance between students and staff. Generally, head teachers and teachers are not ready for a win-win settlement of conflict with the students.*

Likewise, students do not open up to win-win settlement of difference with the head teacher and teachers. As a result, students go wild and cause havoc to schools whether they are in the wrong or not

PT 3: *Violent conflict is usually a result of lack of tolerance between students and staff. If staff was listening to students and students were listening to staff, there wouldn't be vandalism in schools. Differences would be resolved out amicably.*

TR 4: *Conflicts in secondary schools will continue to end in violence because of failure to take contrary views. Usually, staff can hardly bow to demands of students because traditionally, students are supposed to be subordinates. Equally, students cannot easily submit to staff because they feel they have rights which staff should respect. So to the students, violence becomes a tool for fighting for their rights*

4.4.3.2 Head teachers' lack of conflict management skills

Information gathered also showed that in other cases, conflict ended in violence due to head teachers' lack of conflict management skills. The head teachers themselves observed that students at times got angered because of the way they (the head teachers) handled students' concerns and in the end, they became violent. Thus, because lack of conflict management skills, the way head teachers handled situation served as a catalyst for violence.

The views of the head teachers were in agreement with those of the education officials who said the main reason for conflict in secondary schools to be ending in violence was lack of conflict management skills by the staff and the students alike. They observed that if the head teacher and teachers on the one hand and the students on the other hand had the skills, conflict would be managed with no spill over to violence. Since head teachers are chief executives for the schools, the education officials summarily said conflict usually ended in violence because of head teachers' failure to manage the schools. It was noted that due to lack of conflict management skills, head teachers' way of running schools made it easy for conflict to escalate into violence.

According to parents, failure by head teachers to address students' concerns in time was reason enough to make them uncompromising as they lost patience. The parents observed that students were objective but because of poor school management, they usually lost their cool and turned violent, something that could be avoided if their concerns were timely addressed. As can be seen in Table 4.10 above, 19 of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires made a similar observation. This is what a head teacher, some education officials and a parent said on this.

HT 4: *Conflict mostly ends in violence due to lack of conflict management skills by both students and staff. A very simple issue which should have ended amicably if handled professionally gets complicated due to the way it is handled. Generally, both students and management do not know how to handle conflict. As a result, there is always chaos in schools.*

EDO 2: *Most conflicts end in violence and damage to school property due to lack of knowledge of conflict management procedures. Most head teachers do not know how to manage conflict. Students too do not know how to manage conflict. As a result, any conflict turns violent.*

EDO 6: *Most violent conflicts are a result of failure to sort out issues by school management. For example, at school B, there was discontentment by students because they were being given rotten meat. They launched a complaint and the situation appeared to have stabilized as students were waiting for an intervention from management. Unfortunately, the school kept giving them the rotten meat until students finally went on rampage. If the school had sorted out the issue, the students would not have gone on rampage.*

PT 4: *There are times when students become violent because of schools' failure to address their concerns. If schools were able to address their concerns in good time, there couldn't be anything of the sort.*

4.4.3.3 The only way for students to communicate and be heard

Data from FGDs and interviews further showed that most conflicts ended in violence because to students, violence was the most effective way to communicate to staff and be heard. Students themselves observed that if they raised an issue to school management, in most cases nothing could be done. On the contrary, if they acted violently, action could be taken spontaneously. As such, precedence had been set that violence was an effective way of communicating if a response was to be received. Consequently, schools registered violent conflicts for the sole reason of effectively communicating to school management so that a response was forthcoming.

In agreement, education officials mentioned that most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi usually ended in violence because the system did not provide students with alternative structures when head teachers were not attending to their concerns. Elaborating the point, the education officials observed that there were times when students were not satisfied with the way head teacher handled their issues. In such cases, the only alternative was to vandalise the school because by so doing, their concerns would be heard and attended to. As can be seen from Table 4.10, 1 teacher was of the same view that students considered violence as the most effective way to communicate and be heard. This is what some of the students and one education official said.

FGD 4: *Violence is the easiest way to communicate and be heard by school management. This is because most times management does not listen to our concerns but in an event of violence, there is a lot of attention given. Even the Ministry of Education will come in if we act violently.*

EDO 4: *Some of the violence is due to failure by the system to provide alternative routes which students can take when head teachers are not attending to their concerns. This is because when students become violent, everyone including the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology will step in to address their concerns.*

4.4.3.4 A means to get rid of a head teacher from a school

Data from interviews showed that most conflicts ended in violence because it (violence) had become the easiest way to get rid of a head teacher from a school. In their contribution, education officials observed that conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi usually turned violent because of the precedence that had been set to the effect that to get rid of a head teacher, students should become violent. It was mentioned that in most instances, when student became violent, the MoEST usually posted the head teacher away. In this regard, whenever students or the community did not want a head teacher, the readily available tool was violence. As a result, students could become violent even when the issue under contention was very minor as long as in the end, the head teacher would be posted away.

Teachers who were interviewed made similar observations. They indicated that because students and teachers knew that if a school was involved in violence the head teacher would be posted away, even when a conflict was manageable, chances of it becoming violent were high if some students or teachers did not want the head teacher. The teachers observed that schools had had very good head teachers posted away just because some students or teachers sabotaged them through violence. This is what some education officials and a teacher had to say.

EDO 4: *Violence is generally seen as a way of getting rid of a head teacher who is not wanted. This is because in most cases, when a school gets damaged, the Ministry posts the head teacher away. As a result, if students or the community do not want a head teacher, they go on rampage so that the Ministry posts him away from the school. This is indeed done and violence has become the easiest way to get rid of a head teacher.*

EDO 2: *As a Ministry, we have set bad precedence because when a school is vandalised, we post the head teacher away. As a result, if students do not want a head teacher, they will vandalise the school and they are sure to have the head teacher posted away.*

TR 7: *It is unfortunate that when violence occurs at a school, the Ministry rushes at posting the head teacher away. With such a practice, when a*

conflict arises, students quickly turn it into violence so that the head teacher is posted away. Likewise, teachers who do not want a head teacher may connive with students to become violent so that the head teacher is posted away. Schools have lost very good head teachers through such postings.

4.4.3.5 Poor upbringing of students

Data from interviews further showed that most conflicts ended in violence because of poor upbringing of students. This view came from parents who emphasised that students who got involved in violence did so due to the sort of upbringing they went through. The parents observed that due to poor upbringing, students lacked morals and values. As such, they become very unruly and conflictive such that even where efforts were there to have conflict peacefully managed, they could resort to violence. This is what one of the parents said.

PT 1: *Most of these conflicts are due to poor upbringing of students. Most students lack morals and they tend to be bullies. Otherwise if they were properly brought up, they could be feeling remorseful to do that and conflicts would be peacefully resolved.*

The data that have been presented and analysed in this part have shown that in most cases, participants shared common views on issues. For example, on causes of conflict, participants agreed on almost all the points apart from the last one; “teachers’ failure to maintain social distance” which was advanced by parents only. Similarly, on why conflicts ended in violence most of the time, participants shared the same views apart from the one which talked about poor upbringing of students. This one was mentioned by parents only. The other one which was mentioned by students and education officials only was the one which stated that conflicts ended in violence most of the times because it was the only way for students to communicate be heard.

4.5 Processes followed in the management of conflict

One of the objectives of the study was to find out processes that were followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. The study therefore, engaged participants to solicit data on what schools actually did when a conflict

arose. This was looked at from two perspectives. First, the study wanted to find out from the different participants the general approach that schools used when a conflict arose. Then the study went further to find out if participants followed the four prescribed steps in conflict resolution model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) namely; (1) develop expectations for a win-win solution (2) define issues in terms of underlying concerns, needs, or interests (3) brainstorm creative options which address the concerns of both parties and (4) combine options into a win-win solution.

4.5.1 The general approach to conflict by stakeholders

As can be seen in Table 4.11 below, there were different processes in the management of conflict which secondary schools followed. The processes have been summarised into two approaches which are termed approach A and approach B. Approach A is where staff engaged students to manage conflict while Approach B is where schools called for police intervention. From the table, processes 1 to 4 have constituted approach A while process 5 has constituted approach B.

Process	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Engagement of students by discipline committee	11	31.4	31.4	31.4
2. Engagement of students by school management	11	31.4	31.4	62.9
3. Analyse issue to find the cause of the conflict	9	25.7	25.7	88.6
4. Brain storm options for managing the conflict together with students	3	8.6	8.6	97.1
5. Engage police	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-11: Conflict management processes followed by secondary schools

4.5.1.1 Approach A: Students' engagement

In Approach A, secondary schools engaged students in order to manage conflict together and arrive at an amicable solution. Participants observed that under the approach, there were two scenarios in the way students were engaged in order to

manage conflict in secondary schools. In the first scenarios, conflict was viewed as an issue of indiscipline not just a difference in opinion resulting from the availability of different possible courses of action as advocated by Everard et al. (2014). In Table 4.10 above, 11 teachers, representing 31.4% of all the teachers who responded to questionnaires said when a conflict arose in their schools; it was managed through engagement of the students by discipline committees.

Elaboration of the point from interviews and FGDs showed that in such cases, conflict was left in the hands of discipline committees and students who were involved in a conflict were considered to be undisciplined. Such students were liable to disciplinary procedures which included being served with a charge sheet, being given an opportunity to be held and being requested to produce a report on the conflict. In the end, those students who were found guilty were subjected to punishment. This was the first scenario of Approach A.

Participants further observed that in the second scenario, when a conflict arose, it was looked at as a difference in opinion which needed to be managed and not an issue of indiscipline. As such, engagement with students would be done by management team who would meet to discuss the issue and come up with a decision to be communicated to students. From the table; 11 participants indicated that students' engagement was done by school management. This represented 31.4% of the participants who completed questionnaires. Nine other participants, representing 25.7% indicated that when a conflict arose, staff sat to analyse issues and come up with a decision while 3 participants, representing 8.6% indicated that schools brainstormed options for managing the conflict together with students. It can be seen that a total of 23 participants, representing 65.7% indicated that conflict was treated as a management issue.

From the interviews, it transpired that in the process, management team would analyse the issue by among other things finding out the cause of the conflict. Alternatively, it was observed that teachers would meet and source information from well-wishers or they could engage prefects who would in turn address their colleagues or staff could meet all the students. It was also learnt that in other cases,

class teachers would engage their respective classes to try to find a way of managing the conflict. This was the second scenario of Approach A.

4.5.1.2 Approach B: Call for police intervention

In approach B, conflict was considered to be bad and harmful and it was always associated with violence. Looked at from this angle, conflict could only be managed through police intervention. As such, some participants indicated that when a conflict arose; violent or nonviolent, schools called for police intervention without engaging the students in any way. From the table above, the view was supported by 1 participant representing 2.9% who indicated that when conflict arose, schools sought police intervention. From interviews and FGDs, the study learnt that police intervention was sought with the aim of protecting life and property. It was further learnt that upon reaching the school, police did everything possible to instil fear in students so that the conflict does not continue.

A mention was also made that in approach A, if conflict could not be managed through engagement as anticipated and students became violent, or there were indications that they would become violent, schools always called for police intervention. However, an observation was made that the presence of police at times infuriated anger in students such that they could become more violent than should have been the case. It was also mentioned that at times police intervention was sought late when damage had already been done.

It also came out clear that in both approaches, schools could engage PTA for assistance. Not only that, schools could also invite the EDM for assistance depending on the situation. However, students expressed displeasure at the EDM's approach when it came to meeting conflicting parties separately. In addition, students observed that the EDM usually rushed into closing the school. Parents added that if violence resulted in damages, students would be asked to meet the accompanying costs and that in most cases; ring leaders would be dismissed from school while some teachers and/or the head teacher would be posted away from the school. This is what some head teachers, some students, some education officials, some parents and some teachers said on this.

HT 5: *When a conflict arises, there are two possible courses of action that we take. First, students are engaged to try to find a solution to the problem together. However, if that fails and students become violent or there are signs that violence will surface, we call for police intervention. Usually, the police are very supportive and they come in without delays.*

HT 2: *Conflict is treated as a discipline case and those involved are deemed to be undisciplined. As such, conflict is handled using discipline procedures; a charge sheet is served to the offender, he or she is given the right to be heard, witnesses are called in and a decision is made. After that an issue is forgotten.*

HT 3: *When there is a conflict with students, teachers meet and source information from well-wishers. After that, they engage prefects who are then asked to go and address the rest of the students but if the issue is complicated, the head teacher goes with the teachers to address the students.*

HT 1: *When a conflict arises, the school's discipline committee takes the issue up following all procedures. First, the concerned students are served with a charge sheet after which they are given an opportunity to be heard. Thereafter, the students and witnesses submit written reports. However, there are times when we call for police intervention more especially when the situation is volatile*

FGD 1: *When a conflict has arisen, they gather us and they ask us to present our concerns. In some cases, after the discussions, the school improves the situation. For example, if the problem was meals, usually improvements are made and the conflict is managed. But, there are always casualties in the sense that some students get suspended or expelled*

FGD 3: *When there is a conflict, the head teacher and teachers engage prefects into discussions. At times, class teachers are requested to engage their classes to try to find out what the problem is. In some instances, prefects*

are asked to find out from their colleagues what the issue is all about after which the school addresses it

FGD 2: *The school invites the police for security purposes. Unfortunately, their presence usually infuriates anger in students such that they end up being violent. At times they invite the Education Division Manager to come and calm the situation although they meet parties separately and the decision they make is in most cases biased.*

FGD 4: *The school rushes into calling the police although in most cases, they come when damage to school property has already been made. Thereafter, the head teacher reports to the Education Division Manager or to the Ministry of Education head office. Usually, the education officials come just to close the school.*

EDO 3: *There are two scenarios for conflict handling by schools. In the first scenario, school counsellors engage students' councils or prefects. After that, the counsellors report to the head teacher who together with teachers looks at the issue before finally addressing the students. In the second scenario, the head teacher does not engage the students but instead, he/she calls the police to come and calm the situation. However, the involvement of the police has at times infuriated students' anger to the extent of becoming violent.*

EDO 4: *When a conflict arises, head teachers engage discipline committee so that the issue is handled professionally. In other cases, the head teacher may engage PTA to assist in counselling their children. When there is need, the head teacher may engage the Education Division Manager who goes to the school to assess the situation and assist in resolving it.*

EDO 1: *When rumours about impending violent conflict are heard, the EDM and police are informed and they step in to engage students. However, because of anger, students usually resort to violence.*

EDO 2: *When a conflict has arisen, the school identifies ring leaders and rusticates them with the hope that peace will be restored if they are not there.*

PT 4: *When a conflict arises, staff and students engage each other to find solutions to the problem although most of the times, it does not work and in the end, students go on rampage*

PT 2: *When there is a conflict, students are interviewed to find out perpetrators of the conflict. At times parents are called to assist. In fact one parent beat his child badly to the extent that the deputy head teacher had to intervene. However, the involvement of the parent resulted in change of behaviour by the student such that in the end, he made it to university*

PT 5: *They call parents to discuss the challenges which are leading to the conflict. The parents are then encouraged to talk to their children so that they abide by school rules and regulations*

PT 1: *When a conflict arises, they usually close the school, expel ring leaders from school and ask the students to meet costs for damages caused. In other instances, teachers and/or head teachers get posted away from the school*

TR 2: *When a conflict arises, we engage students to find out what the problem might be. In most cases, it is treated as discipline issue such that students found in the wrong go through disciplinary action. They are served with a charge sheet, they are given an opportunity to be heard and they are requested to write a report.*

TR 1: *Students are given an opportunity to be heard usually through prefects. Depending on the nature of the conflict, PTA is involved and the Ministry of Education is informed through the EDM. Finally, a decision is made.*

4.5.2 Steps followed in the management of conflict

The researcher further wanted to find out if participants were following the four steps of conflict management as outlined in the Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson

and Wood (2004). According to the model, in the process of conflict management, there is need to (1) develop expectations for a win-win solution (2) define issues in terms of underlying concerns, needs, or interests (3) brainstorming creative options which address the concerns of both parties and (4) combine the options into a win-win solution. The model assumes that if the steps are followed, conflict will be successfully managed. From the responses by the participants, it transpired that different stages of conflict management were followed by different stakeholders.

4.5.2.1 Develop expectations for win-win solution

The first step in the Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) is to develop expectations for a win-win solution. The researcher wanted to know if schools were doing this. On the overall, it transpired that some participants developed expectation for win-win while others never did so. Data from all sources; questionnaires, interviews and FGDs all showed that there were some variations. For example, data from questionnaires indicated that some participants developed expectation for win-win; others did not while others did not provide an answer. This can be seen from Table 4.12 below where of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires; 21 said they developed expectation for win-win representing 60% of the participants while 9 indicated that they did not develop expectations for win-win representing 25.7% of the participants. The remaining 5, representing 14.3% did not respond to the question.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	21	60.0	60.0	60.0
2. No	9	25.7	25.7	85.7
3. No answer	5	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-12: Development of expectation for a win-win

Data from questionnaires agreed with those from interviews and FGDs. For example, responses from head teachers showed that some developed expectation for win-win while others did not do it. A further analysis indicated that head teachers who used

conflict management strategies that consider the welfare of the opposing parties in conflict such as collaboration, comprise and accommodation developed expectations for win-win. It was further mentioned that other head teachers developed expectations for a win-win depending on the situation. However, it came out clear that some head teachers never developed expectations for win-win because they did not want to be seen as weak head teachers. This was said to be a result of the traditional perception that a strong head teacher should not give in to the demands of students.

On the part of students, it transpired that in some schools, they developed expectation for win-win while in other schools, they didn't. It was reported that in the schools where staff engaged students when a conflict arose, some kind of win-win would be expected while in the schools where management rushed to call for police intervention, there was no room for win-win.

Just as it was observed by head teachers and students, some education officials indicated that schools developed expectations for win-win solution while others indicated that schools did not develop expectations for win-win. Still others indicated that it all depended on the approach to conflict management that a school embraced. Thus, schools which engaged students in conflict management were likely to develop expectations for win-win while those who rushed to call the police were likely not to develop expectation for win-win. This is what some head teachers, some students and some education officials said on the issue.

HT 5: *At this school, we develop expectation for win-win. For example, there was a time when 80 students were found out of bounds because they went to attend prayers after some satanic experiences. Instead of suspending them as per school rules and regulations, we agreed to invite the reverend to conduct prayers right here.*

HT 3: *We develop expectation for win-win depending on the situation. For example, when the issue is related to resources, the school makes them available. Whether the resources needed are dietary or human resource*

related such as shortage of teachers, the school does everything possible to make them available.

HT 2: *It is not very easy to develop expectation for win-win because it is looked at as a weakness. Classically, the teacher is a source of wisdom such that any decision he makes has to be respected by all. In view of this, creating room for a win-win becomes a big challenge.*

FGD 2: *At this school, we do develop expectations for a win-win. We usually send prefects to meet staff and try to negotiate.*

FGD 4: *The school does not do it and we students do not do it either because when you are angry, you are angry.*

FGD 5: *No, there is no expectation for win-win*

EDO 1: *Schools do develop expectation for win-win with support from the EDM. Usually, when the EDM comes in to assist in settling the conflict, students are engaged and in the process, a win-win is developed.*

EDO 6: *Most schools do not do it. They usually make sure that their wishes are realized and not those of students*

EDO 3: *The answer to this question is yes/no. It all depends on the scenario which the school follows. A school which engages students in the management of conflict will develop an expectation for a win-win while a school which rushes to call the police cannot develop an expectation for a win-win solution.*

Data collected showed that most parents were not fully aware of the steps schools followed in the process of managing conflict. On the first step; develop expectations for win-win; only three parents gave some views which were in the same line of thought with the others. Two said the school developed expectations for win-win. As an example, one of them said there was a time when students stole school property

and were dismissed but they were allowed to sit for examinations. The third parent said at the school, there was no room for developing expectations for a win-win because students were always condemned.

Teachers' views on the issue did not depart from the rest. Some said schools developed expectation for win-win by appreciating students' concerns while others said schools did not develop expectation for win-win and that if at all anything, during students' engagement; there was more of imposition of decisions. Still others said it all depended on the situation. This is what some parents and some teachers said.

PT 1: *Yes, the school develops expectations for win-win. For example, there was a time when students stole school property. We advised the school to dismiss the students as decided but to allow them sit for examinations. This was in a way a win-win settlement*

PT 2: *At our school, there is a lot of students' engagement in such issues. This gives room for developing expectation for win-win*

PT 4: *There isn't anything like developing expectations for win-win because students are always condemned*

TR 2: *At this school, expectation for win-win between students and staff is developed in the process of managing conflict. To achieve this, staff engages students whenever there are some differences*

TR 1: *In most cases, expectation for win-win is not developed. While students are engaged, decisions are usually those that meet the interests of the school. So there is more of imposition.*

4.5.2.2 Define issues

The second step in the Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) is to define issues in terms of underlying concerns, needs, or interests. The researcher wanted to know if schools were doing this. It transpired that some participants defined issues while others did not do so. Data from all sources; questionnaires,

interviews and FGDs showed that there were some variations. For example, data from questionnaires show that 23 teachers indicated that their schools defined issues. This represented 65.7% of the participants. 3 of the teachers indicated that in their schools, issues were not defined. This represented 8.6%. The remaining 9 participants, representing 25.7% did not respond to the question. The data are presented in Table 4.13 below.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	23	65.7	65.7	65.7
No	3	8.6	8.6	74.3
No answer	9	25.7	25.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-13: Defining of issues

On the need to define issues in the process of conflict management, data from interviews and FGDs gave different views as well. All head teachers indicated that their schools were doing it. They observed that to arrive at decision, concerned students would be heard and witnesses interrogated thereby having issues defined. On the part of students, all FGDs indicated that they defined issues. The students observed that as a result of defining issues, there were times when they stopped each other from taking certain actions. One FGD indicated that they started defining issues after learning from past experiences when the school was closed, some students expelled and a lot of money paid for damages caused. However, the students were quick to mention that sometimes, it was not very easy for them to define issues because they were very much interested in quick action for quick response thereby foregoing such steps. This is what some head teachers and some students said on this.

HT 2: *Yes, issues are defined. Students are given a chance to be heard, witnesses involved. However, the major challenge is that of looking for data from predefined parameters in which students are supposed to be*

subordinates. As such, when defining issues, usually, we disregard students' concerns.

HT 3: *Usually, members of staff sit down to understand the issues through causes. Upon understanding the issue, options are thought about.*

FGD 1: *Yes, issues are defined. As a result, there are so many times when we have stopped each other from taking certain actions and it has worked*

FGD 4: *Yes, we define issues. After learning from past experience when the school was closed, some colleagues expelled from school and damages paid for, we now define issues so that we understand them and make an informed decision*

FGD2: *Somehow, issues are defined although not always because we look for a quick response*

Asked to comment if schools defined issues, education officials also gave different responses. There were those who said schools defined issues, those who said schools did not define issues and those who said it all depended on the situation – whether students were engaged or not. One of those who said schools defined issues observed that usually, the process would be done after students had already been punished. On the part of parents, some said schools defined issues while others said schools did not define issues. As for teachers, almost all said schools defined issues. This is what some education officials, a parent and a teacher said on this.

EDO 1: *Schools usually define issues with the aim of bringing to the surface causes of conflict and other related things.*

EDO 2: *Yes, schools define issues. However, in most cases, this happens when students have already been suspended.*

EDO 4: *Schools do not define issues. As a result, some of the decisions which they make are a result of not understanding the issues properly*

EDO 3: *It all depends on the scenario which the school follows. A school which engages students in the management of conflict is likely going to define issues while for a school which rushes to involve the police; it is unlikely that it can define issues*

PT4: *The school does not brainstorm creative options into a win-win solution because when a conflict has occurred, decision is made at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology*

TR 2: *Yes, issues get defined when students are engaged. For example, as a boarding master, I am at times asked to engage students to find root causes of problems. Not only that, every Sunday, students do evaluate the past week and present their recommendations to management for improvement. The recommendations are looked at and improvements are made.*

4.5.2.3 Brainstorm creative options

The third step in the Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) is to brainstorm creative options. The researcher wanted to know if schools were doing this. It transpired that some participants brainstormed creative options while others did not do so. Data from all sources; questionnaires, interviews and FGDs showed some variations on this. For example, data from questionnaires showed that 20 participants, representing 57.1% said schools brainstormed creative options before arriving at a decision. 3 participants indicated that schools did not brainstorm creative options. This represented 8.6%. The remaining 12 teachers, representing 34.3% did not provide an answer to the question. Table 4.14 below presents the data from questionnaires.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	20	57.1	57.1	57.1
2. No	3	8.6	8.6	65.7
3. No answer	12	34.3	34.3	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-14: Brainstorming of creative options

Data from interviews and FGDs also showed that to some participants, schools brainstormed creative options while to others they didn't. Some head teachers said their schools always did it such that a decision could only be arrived at after considering a number of options. While agreeing to the ascension, one head teacher noted a challenge in that options usually based on predefined parameters in which students were always in the wrong. As such, preferred option would always disadvantage students. Other head teachers said depending on the conflict beforehand, they could either brainstorm creative options or not.

Some students indicated that they brainstormed creative options such that there were times when certain options had been dropped in preference for others. However, one FGD said at their school, they never brainstormed creative options. All they did was to implement a decision that they arrived at without considering alternative options. This is what some head teachers and some students said on the issue.

HT 5: *When there is a conflict, we always brainstorm creative options. That is why the 80 students who deserved a suspension were not suspended because after examining different options, we realized that a suspension would likely result in a revolt. So we opted for a better option.*

HT 2: *Options are brainstormed but they are generally limited to predefined parameters where students are supposed to be subordinates such that the preferred option will be one that disadvantages students.*

HT 1: *We brainstorm options depending on the nature of conflict. Sometimes action is taken before options are brainstormed. For example, there are times when you realize that students have issues when they have already gone on rampage. In such instances, we call the police and do other things later.*

FGD 1: *We do brainstorm creative options. As a result, there are times when certain options have been withdrawn in favour of others.*

FGD 5: *Yes, we brain storm creative options. For example, there was a time when we wanted a disco but the school was not ready. After weighing different options, we accepted not to have it.*

FGD 3: *At this school, we do not brain storm options. We just do what we have decided to do.*

Just like head teachers and students, some education officials said schools brainstormed creative options while others said it all depended on the scenario; whether the school engaged students in the process or not. However, it is worth noting the observation by one education official who said brainstorming generally sidelined students and if they were involved, it was with some intimidation. As for parents, some just said schools brainstormed creative options without elaborating how while others just said schools did not brainstorm creative options. Likewise, one teacher who was interviewed said schools brainstormed creative options while others said schools did not brainstorm creative options. This is what some education officials and one teacher said on this.

EDO 1: *Yes, schools do brainstorm different options although closing the school is preferred when the situation has come to the worst.*

EDO 2: *Schools brainstorm issues but not with the students. If students are given a chance, then it is with some intimidation.*

EDO 3: *It all depends on the scenario. A school which engages students in the management of conflict will take some time to brainstorm creative options*

while a school which believes in using the police to intervene cannot brainstorm creative options

EDO 5: *Schools do not really brainstorm creative options. They make decisions without weighing different options. As a result, sometimes the situation gets worsened*

TR 5: *The school always brainstorms creative options in collaboration with students through their prefects.*

4.5.2.4 Combine options into win-win solutions

The fourth and last step in the Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) is combine options into win-win solutions. The study wanted to know if schools were doing this. It transpired that some schools combined options into win-win solution while others did not do so. Data from all sources; questionnaires, interviews and FGDs showed some variations on this. For example, data from questionnaires shows that 14 participants indicated that schools combined options into win-win solutions. This represented 40% of the participants. 6 participants, representing 17.1% said schools did not combine options into win-win. The remaining 15 did not respond to the question representing 42.9%. These statistics are shown in Table 4.15 below.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	14	40.0	40.0	40.0
2. No	6	17.1	17.1	57.1
3. No answer	15	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-15: Combine options into win-win solutions

Just as with data from questionnaires, it transpired that some schools combined options into win-win solutions while others did not do this. Some head teachers

indicated that they combined options into win-win while others indicated that they did not do it. Those who did it indicated that they could always take into consideration students' welfare when adopting an option while the others indicated that they did not do it because taking students' interests into consideration in decision making was considered a weakness. In addition, it was pointed out that on issues of policy, the head teachers could not do anything to take on board students' aspirations which were contrary.

Just like the head teachers, some students indicated that they combined options into win-win while others indicated that they did not do it. Those who did it said they learnt lessons from previous violence which resulted in the school being closed, some students expelled from school and damages paid for in large sums of money. Those who did not do it said since their interest was mostly in getting quick response, they could not waste time to think of combining options into a win-win. As for education officials, there were those who said schools combined options into win-win solutions, those who said schools did not combine options into win-win solutions and those who said it all depended on the approach to conflict management that a school used; whether students were engaged or not.

Teachers too made similar observations. Some said schools usually combined options into win-win solutions. An illustration to this effect was given by one teacher who said at their school, students were causing problems because they wanted meat every week and not per fortnight as was the case. When the school involved the students in drawing a budget, the agreement arrived at was that meat should be served once a week. Other teachers said schools did not combine options into win-win solutions. This is what some head teachers, some students, some education officials and some teachers said on the issue.

HT 1: *The school tries hard to combine options into a win-win solution by taking into consideration students' demands. For example, when students expressed unhappiness because of poor 'nsima' (hard maize meal) we explored what the problem was and discovered that our maize had a lot of dust and other impurities such that the flour could not properly cook. A*

decision was made to have all the maize sieved to remove the impurities and the situation improved.

HT 2: *It is not easy to combine options into win-win solution because when you settle for win-win you are considered weak. Not only that, policy issues do not allow for win-win as you cannot bargain its implementation.*

FGD 4: *Yes, we do combine options into win-win. This is after learning from the last experience when the school was closed, some students expelled from school and a lot of money spent on paying for damages.*

FGD 2: *No, we don't combine options into win-win mainly because we look for quick responses.*

EDO 4: *Culturally, a child is always in the wrong. As such, schools find it a waste of time to think of combining options into a win-win. Of course, it is high time such a mentality changed.*

EDO 6: *Schools do not spend any time to combine options into a win-win. They mostly, implement options which favour them at the expense of the students.*

TR 2: *Of late, this school does quite a lot of combining options into win-win solutions. A good example is a challenge we had when students were not ready to be taking meat once a fortnight. After some time, the schools decided to involve them in drawing a budget for their meals. They realized that the money they were paying was not enough to afford them meat every week. In the end a consensus was reached that meat should be served once a fortnight. That was win-win.*

TR 5: *Yes, options are combined into win-win solutions. The only challenge is that staff does not want to concede that they are in the wrong. As such, staff tries hard to show that students are in the wrong.*

In summary, the data on processes followed in the management of conflict have shown that on most issues, participants had common views. On the general approach to conflict management, almost all participants indicated that schools either engaged students in the process or called for police intervention. On the stages which were supposed to be followed in the management of conflict, data have shown some variations. Most participants have shown that they had problems with developing expectations for win-win and combining options into win-win. As for the other stages; define issues and brainstorm creative options, most participants have indicated that they did so.

4.6 Stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools

The study identified 5 key stakeholders in the running of secondary schools in Malawi. These were head teachers, teachers, students, parents and education officials. The researcher therefore, endeavoured to find out how these key stakeholders were involved in conflict management in the secondary schools in. The different responses which were solicited are presented and analysed here below.

From a quantitative perspective, data showed that teachers were involved in conflict management in four different ways. As can be seen from Table 4.15 below, out of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires, 12, representing 34.4% said that they were involved through participation in discussions on students' conflict. 9 teachers, representing 25.7% said they were involved through membership of discipline committees while 8 teachers, representing 22.9% said they were involved through the provision of guidance and counselling services to students. 3 teachers, representing 8.6% said they were involved through working with the head teacher in decision making while 2 teachers, representing 5.7% said they were involved through enforcement of school rules and regulations. Table 4.16 below presents an analysis of data on teachers' involvement in conflict management.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Supporting head teacher in decision making	3	8.6	8.6	8.6
2. Through guidance and counselling	8	22.9	22.9	31.4
3. Enforcing schools and regulations	2	5.7	5.7	37.1
4. Participation in discussions on students conflict	12	34.3	34.3	71.4
5. Membership of discipline committee	9	25.7	25.7	97.1
6. No answer	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-16: Teachers' involvement in conflict management

Data from qualitative sources also showed that different stakeholders were involved in conflict management in different ways. Information gathered showed that head teachers were involved in five different ways. The first way was engagement with students, prefects, teachers and parents whenever a conflict arose. The head teachers indicated that whenever a conflict arose, they engaged the different parties to try to find ways of containing the situation. The head teachers further stated that in the process, they could influence staff and/or students to reflect on their opinions so as to ensure rationality in their decisions. In so doing, they could persuade students and/or teachers to reconsider their position thereby managing the conflict.

The second way of involvement was enforcement of school rules and regulations. It transpired that head teachers always ensured that school rules were followed so that there was order in the secondary schools. By so doing, conflict was being managed proactively. The third way through which head teachers were involved in conflict management was by ensuring that structures for managing conflict like discipline committees and similar other offices were in place and that they were functional. As the structures performed their duties, the head teachers were expected to receive reports and recommendations and act on them.

The fourth way of head teacher involvement in conflict management surfaced upon receiving reports from conflict management structures. At this point, head teachers were expected to produce their own reports and submitting them to the MoEST through the EDM. It was learnt from the information gathered that it was a requirement for a head teacher to submit a written report to the MoEST through the EDM with clear recommendations anytime a conflict had ensued at a school. Finally, it was learnt that head teachers were also involved in seeking police intervention if there was need to do so. Information gathered showed that when a conflict ensued and the situation had become volatile, head teachers were supposed to call for police intervention so as to protect life and property.

Teachers who were interviewed indicated that they were involved in conflict management in the secondary schools in four different capacities. First, they were involved in the capacity of teacher counsellors. Information gathered showed that secondary schools had teacher counsellors whose work included providing guidance and counselling services to students through which conflict and other related issues were addressed. Information gathered showed that some teachers were involved in conflict management in the capacity of class teachers. The researcher learnt that in that capacity, teachers were supposed to be providing guidance and counselling services to students. In addition, if a student from a particular class was involved in a discipline case, the class teacher was supposed to sit on the discipline committee to represent the interest of the student.

Information further showed that teachers were involved in conflict management in the capacity of boarding master or boarding mistress. Information gathered showed that in that capacity, a teacher was supposed to counsel students on issues related to boarding services. Thus, any conflict on boarding affairs was supposed to be dealt with by the boarding masters or boarding mistresses. Finally, some teachers were involved in conflict management in the capacity of discipline committee member. Information gathered showed that in that capacity, teachers were supposed to sit on discipline committee meetings summoned to discuss issues of discipline and conflict related ones.

On their part, students indicated that their involvement was mainly in three different ways. First, they were involved through prefects who from time to time engaged staff on issues surrounding conflict. Information gathered showed that at times, prefects would even engage fellow students in order to reason with them on issues under contest. The second way of involvement was by taking issues to appropriate offices for action. Information showed that students always referred boarding issues to the boarding masters/mistresses, class issues to class teachers and similar other issues to appropriate offices. However, if issues were complicated, they could refer them direct to the head teacher. Finally, the students indicated that there were times when they engaged parents for advice more especially on fees related issues.

On the overall, the students said their involvement was limited because most of the times their voice could not be heard and the best they could do was to avoid issues so as not to disturb learning. This is what some head teachers, teachers and students said on their involvement in conflict management in secondary schools.

HT 1: *My work in conflict management involves analysing issues through a meeting with the concerned individuals. In addition, I also delegate some of the tasks in line with conflict management to the discipline committee, form teachers, boarding masters or any other trustworthy teacher. If the situation is volatile, I report the matter to Ministry of Education through the EDM and call for police intervention to protect property and lives*

HT 2: *As a head teacher, when there is conflict, I am supposed to engage students, parents and even teachers so that together, we solve the problem. For example, there was a time when students were complaining about food. There was very little I could do because the fees we were collecting could not afford better food than we offered. As a result, I engaged parents, students and teachers to budget for the food using the finances we collected. They found that the funds were not enough. As a result, they recommended for the removal of some items on the menu and that the fees should be raised although they had been opposing any upward adjustment of the fees*

HT 4: *I am supposed to civic educate students and remind them about school rules and regulations from time to time*

HT 5: *My task as a head teacher involves engaging prefects and staff in problem solving. I am also supposed to make sure that conflict management structures are in place and they are doing their work. In this case I am supposed to be receiving and acting on reports from the structures*

TR 1: *I assist a lot in conflict management at this school in my capacity as a class teacher. In this capacity, I am always involved in counselling students in my class and when one of the students is appearing before the discipline committee, I attend the meeting to represent his or her interests.*

TR 6: *As a boarding master, I am concerned with all issues in the cafeteria and the hostels. These are areas where conflicts are very many. I handle them and the head teacher just receives reports.*

TR 7: *A lot of conflicts are managed through guidance and counselling services. As a counsellor, that is my work. I am always in touch with students to counsel them. At times students come to me with their problems and they get assisted.*

FGD 1: *We get involved in conflict management by engaging staff through prefects who take our views. However, there are times when we just avoid it in order not to interrupt teaching and learning because we know that our concerns are not taken seriously*

FGD 2: *There is little involvement of students in conflict management. Prefects talk to us and reason with us on the issue in contest. Thereafter, they go and engage staff*

FGD 3: *We give our ideas on the conflict to the schools' management. We discuss issues in class and report to management. At times, we get advice from parents on how to proceed especially on fees related issues*

FGD 4: *We get involved in conflict management at this school in the sense that we take issues to appropriate offices. For example, boarding issues are referred to boarding masters or boarding mistresses while class issues are referred to class teachers. If an issue gets more complicated, we refer it to the head teacher.*

Interviews with education officials showed that their involvement in conflict management was in five different ways. First, they were involved in training/orienting head teachers and their deputies in school management which was supposed to cover issues of conflict management. However, some education officials confessed that not enough was done in the area. The other form of involvement which they mentioned was providing schools with guide lines for conflict management or providing guidance during the actual conflict. It was pointed out that the MoEST had written guidelines for schools to follow whenever conflict had arisen.

The education officials further observed that they were involved in conflict management when cases had been forwarded to them with recommendations for further direction. In such cases, it was pointed out their duty was to review the resolutions which were made at the lower level and give direction. For example, a recommendation would be made at the school level to expel students from school or even to close the school and it was the duty of the education officials at the ministry headquarters to approve it or turn it down.

The education officials also indicated that at times they were involved in conflict management by mediating between the conflicting parties so that a solution is found. In the process, they were supposed to listen to both sides and bring them to a common understanding. Finally, the education officials observed that they were also involved in assessing damages caused during violent conflicts and advising accordingly. However, it was pointed out that they were not aggressive at the task.

On their part, parents indicated that they were involved in conflict management in secondary schools in four different ways. First, they said they were involved in counselling the students. Information gathered showed that most schools gave parents an opportunity to counsel students from time to time. The second way was

through participation in the adjustment of schools fees and where necessary in the actual budgeting more especially for food. Information gathered showed that official school fees were very low but with support from parents, schools had adjusted them up. To them, this was a strategic way of managing conflict.

The other way in which parents were involved in the management of conflict was expansion of resources. This is a way of managing a conflict by supplying scarce resources which are a cause of the conflict. As an example, parents at one of the secondary schools gave a situation when students were about to revolt due to perpetual blackouts but parents intervened by buying lamps. The students were happy and the situation normalized.

The last way in which parents were involved in conflict management was by mediating between students and staff. The parents showed conviction that through PTA, they were better placed to mediate since they represented parents and students on the one hand and teachers and head teachers on the other thereby commanding respect on both parties. Consequently, it was mentioned that whenever there was a conflict, schools did not hesitate to call them for intervention.

On a pessimistic point of view, the parents bemoaned the tendency for schools to demand money for damages resulting from violent conflicts. They observed that very little was done to identify culprits and in the end, innocent students were forced to pay for the damages. With the poor socio-economic background, some students ended up withdrawing from schools because their parents could not pay for the damages. This is what some education officials and parents said on their involvement in the management of conflict in secondary schools.

EDO 1: *We get involved in conflict management in different ways. First, when EDMs have organized management meetings, we go there to train them – mostly head teachers and their deputies. In addition, we provide guidelines which schools follow in the management of conflict*

EDO 2: *Our involvement is mainly through training of head teachers, deputy head teachers and heads of department although we do not do enough. We also get involved in reviewing cases when head teachers have submitted reports after which a decision is made*

EDO 5: *When there is violence at a school, we go there to appreciate the situation and help the head teacher to manage the situation through mediation. Upon getting details of the issue, the committee which handles discipline issues at the Division sits down and makes decisions. At times, the committee makes a recommendation to the Ministry especially if their decision involves exclusion of students from school.*

EDO 6: *We are involved in assessing the magnitude of damage caused and advising accordingly but we are not aggressive. We can do better*

PT 1: *We are involved in different ways. First, we engage students in counselling so that they are able to make informed decisions. In addition, we participate in budgeting for the school more especially for food stuffs so that together with our children we should appreciate why the school cannot provide high standard diet. Furthermore, when the conflict is on lack of resources, we provide the resources. For example, when there was tension between staff and students because of persistent blackouts, we bought lamps and the problem was solved.*

PT 2: *When a conflict arises, we are called to the school to talk to the students and usually they listen to us. You know, generally, children have a lot of respect for their parents. As such, it is very easy for us to mediate between students and staff*

PT 4: *When property has been damaged as a result of a conflict, students are asked to pay for the damages. In such cases, we get involved in the sense that we pay for the damages. Of course, it is unfortunate that even innocent students are forced to pay for damages and if they can't, they end up withdrawing from school. I wished only culprits were forced to pay*

Since the education officials indicated that their involvement in the management of conflict in secondary schools included training staff in conflict management, the researcher wanted to know how they were prepared for the task. Information gathered indicated that they were not prepared in any way for the task apart from the courses they covered at bachelor's or master's degree studies. Some officials mentioned that they learnt something during short courses they attended which unfortunately, was not adequate. Consequently, all the education officials bemoaned the situation and emphasized on the need for training if they were to perform their duties diligently. This is what three of the education officials said on the issue.

EDO 3: *The Ministry did not prepare me in any way. If at all anything, some of the courses I covered at Master's degree such as Value Education prepared me in a way in addition to some courses at bachelor's degree which covered conflict management. However, there is need for training.*

EDO 4: *We are not trained. Of course there was a time when we attended a meeting organized by the Department of Human Resource Management and Development in collaboration with Ministry of Justice, Industrial Courts and Ombudsman during which we were taught how to handle conflicts from a legal perspective. Unfortunately, we did not cover a lot and very few people attended it. As such, there is need for training.*

EDO 5: *We are not prepared in any way for the task. We just learn on the job. However, there is need that upon assuming office, we should be trained. Training is very important*

In summary, the data that have just been presented on stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools have shown that although the different stakeholders were involved in different ways, their roles were inter-linked. It can be seen from the data that head teachers and teachers were mostly involved in engaging students to try to manage conflict. Not only that, parents and teachers were both involved in offering guidance and counselling services to students. Furthermore, education officials and parents indicated that they were both involved in mediating between staff and students. This is how inter-linked their roles were.

4.7 Skills stakeholders Knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict in secondary school

The researcher wanted to find out the skills participants knew in the management of conflict. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to find out conflict management strategies which participants mostly used in the management of conflict in secondary schools. In addition, the researcher wanted to learn from head teachers, teachers and students the strategy they thought would ensure successful conflict management despite not being preferred. Data on these three areas are presented and analysed here below.

4.7.1 Skills stakeholders knew in the management of conflict

Data from questionnaires, interviews and FGDs all showed that different participants knew different conflict management skills. As shown in Table 4.17 below, 12 teachers who completed questionnaires indicated that the skill which they knew well was negotiation aimed at reaching consensus. This represented 34.3% of the teachers who responded to questionnaires. 7 teachers, representing 20% indicated that the skill which they knew well was effective communication. Five teachers indicated that the skill they knew well was guidance and counselling. This represented 14.3% of the teachers. Some 3 teachers representing 8.6% indicated that they knew the skill of mediation well. Other 3 teachers, representing 8.6% as well indicated that the skill they knew well was avoiding. These data are clearly shown in Table 4.17 below.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Effective communication	7	20.0	20.0	20.0
2. Negotiation and consensus	12	34.3	34.3	54.3
3. Mediation	3	8.6	8.6	62.9
4. Avoiding	3	8.6	8.6	71.4
5. Guidance and counselling	5	14.3	14.3	85.7
6. Active listening	2	5.7	5.7	91.4
7. Other	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-17: Conflict management skills which teachers knew

Data from interviews and FGDs showed that all participants; head teachers, teachers, students, education officials and parents – with an exception of one education official – knew different skills that could assist in conflict management. The skills were: active listening, contact and dialogue, effective communication, problem solving, patience, counselling, tolerance, impartiality, critical thinking, arbitration, intermediation, dialogue, negotiation, transparency and not making decisions while angry. One parent added asking for God's help as yet another skill which could assist in conflict management in secondary schools. To the parent, the many conflicts were a result of the power of the devil hence the need for God's intervention. This is what some head teachers, students, education officials and parents said on their knowledge of conflict management skills.

HT 1: *I know different skills for managing conflict. The first one is listening. If you do not listen, you cannot manage a conflict. The other one is patience. A head teacher is supposed to be patient otherwise, you may mess things. The last one is contact and dialogue. There is need to engage students and teachers from time to time*

HT 5: *There are several skills which we use to manage to conflict. First, we have timely communication. If you communicate in time, some conflicts will be sorted before things go off hand. The other ones are continued engagement with students, counselling and contact and dialogue*

FGD 1: *We know different skills for managing conflict. For example, we have active listening, not making decisions while angry, tolerance, fair judgment and impartiality. If these are followed, conflict will be managed successfully*

FGD 5: *We know conflict management skills. Among others, we have arbitration, intermediation, dialogue and negotiation*

EDO 3: *Yes, I know a number of conflict management skills. Just to mention but a few, we have communication skills, listening skills and negotiation skills. These are just some. There are so many of them*

EDO 6: *Let me be honest. I am not aware of conflict management skills. It is possible that I use them without necessary knowing that they are skills for conflict management*

PT 1: *There are a lot of skills which one can use to manage conflict. What comes to my mind first is good communication. If there is good communication, conflict will be managed with ease. Other examples are guidance and counselling and leadership skills*

PT 5: *The main skill is to ask God to assist the children because they act under the power and influence of the devil more especially in these last days*

4.7.2 Strategies stakeholders used in the management of conflict

The researcher wanted to find out the strategies which participants mostly used in the management of conflict in secondary schools. Data collected yielded different responses from different participants. This part presents and analyses the different responses.

As can be seen from Table 4.18 below, out of the 35 teachers who completed questionnaires, 16 said the most commonly used strategy in their secondary schools was collaboration. This represented 45.7% of the participants. Five teachers, representing 14.3% indicated that competing was the most commonly used strategy. Some more 5 teachers who completed questionnaires, representing 14.3% as well indicated that accommodation was the most commonly used strategy. Four teachers, representing 11.4% indicated that compromise was the most commonly used strategy, 2 teachers, representing 5.7% indicated that avoiding was the most commonly used strategy while 1 teacher, representing 2.9% indicated that it all depended on the situation. Table 4.18 below presents a detailed analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Competing	5	14.3	14.3	14.3
2. Collaborating	16	45.7	45.7	60.0
3. Compromise	4	11.4	11.4	71.4
4. Avoiding	2	5.7	5.7	77.1
5. Accommodating	5	14.3	14.3	91.4
6. It depends on situation	1	2.9	2.9	94.3
7. No answer	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-18: Most commonly used strategies

Data from interviews and FGDs also gave different responses on the mostly used strategies. For head teachers, some said their most commonly used strategy was collaboration while others said it was competing. Students in two schools indicated that competing was the most commonly used strategy while collaborating, compromise and avoiding were mentioned by one school each as the most used strategy. As for teachers, the most commonly used strategies in their schools were competing and collaboration. On their part, education officials were asked to mention

strategies that students and staff used mostly in the management of conflict in secondary schools. 5 officials said staff used competing mostly while the remaining education official said staff used avoiding mostly.

As for students, 3 education officials said they used competing mostly, 2 education officials said they used collaboration mostly while one education official said they used accommodation mostly. The four groups of participants; head teachers, teachers, students and education officials were asked to give reasons for each of the strategies mentioned to be the most commonly used strategy. This is what each of the participants said on the issue.

HT 3: *For harmony and cooperation between different parties, there is need for collaboration. So, the strategy which I use mostly is collaboration. I try very hard to work with everybody including those with contrary views. However, when it is a policy issue, I use competing because you can't negotiate on such issues. Once in a while, I use avoiding in order not to provoke situations. For example, when form fours are about to sit for examinations, they become very unruly and at times I just do not act so as not to provoke the situation.*

HT 2: *The strategy I use mostly is competing because if you use strategies like accommodation and collaboration, you are considered weak. Otherwise people do not appreciate strategies which are democratic in nature. If I cannot compete, then I will avoid.*

HT 5: *I use collaborating, compromising and accommodating because these are the strategies that can work otherwise in the current democratic environment, competing cannot work.*

FGD 1: *The strategy of avoiding is mostly used by us students so as not to interrupt our studies. For example, when food is bad, we do not react. Instead, we just avoid it. As for the strategy of collaboration, its use ensures that we move together as a school*

FGD 2: *Competing is mostly used by staff more especially when they cannot solve a problem. For example, when diet is bad but they do not have money with which to improve it, usually they impose on students what they think will work. However, when handling small things such as budgeting, they open up for collaboration.*

FGD 4: *At this school, they mostly use competing because they underrate students. However, when students have gone on rampage because of dictatorial tendencies, they usually turn to collaboration.*

FGD 5: *This school uses collaboration mostly in order to avoid accumulating issues in students. As such, the school involves prefects quite a lot in the management of conflict. However, when conflict is on issues related to rules and regulations, the school uses competing by imposing decisions.*

TR 1: *Collaboration is used mostly because it is very crucial in the running of schools. This strategy helps in building trust between students and staff and when that happens, everything goes on very smoothly such that you cannot expect unnecessary squabbles.*

TR 3: *Competing is the most commonly used strategy because students make demands which cannot be met most of the times and for the school to move forward, you just have to impose hence the strategy of competing.*

EDO 1: *When an issue concerns school rules and regulations, staff usually uses the strategy of competing because they just have to ensure adherence*

EDO 2: *Students use the strategy of accommodation mostly in order to secure their places or to avoid punishment*

EDO 4: *The strategy of collaborating is used because in democratic Malawi, schools are encouraged to work in collaboration with students. The good part is that when the strategy is well-embraced, students become very collaborative*

On their part, parents were asked to give the conflict management strategies which they themselves used when they were involved in conflict management in secondary schools. The study learnt that they all used the strategy of collaboration in order to ensure cooperation between different parties. This is what some of the parents said.

PT 1: *The strategy of collaboration is very important because it ensures the smooth running of the school as all parties own decisions made. As such, we always use this strategy.*

PT 2: *We use the strategy of collaboration because it ensures that there is cooperation between parties in the way issues are handled.*

4.7.3 Strategies participants thought could lead to successful conflict management

While different secondary schools preferred different strategies in the management of conflict, the researcher went a step further to find out from head teachers, teachers and students the strategy they thought would ensure successful conflict management despite not being preferred. The researcher singled out the three from the rest of the participants because they constituted the conflicting parties such that if they could successfully manage conflict, the work of the other stakeholders would be limited. Different responses were solicited from questionnaires, interviews and FGDs. Table 4.19 below presents an analysis of data from questionnaires.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Accommodation	9	25.7	25.7	25.7
2. Compromise	2	5.7	5.7	31.4
3. Avoiding	2	5.7	5.7	37.1
4. Collaborating	16	45.7	45.7	82.9
5. None – situational	6	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-19: Strategies participants thought would lead to successful conflict management

From Table 4.19 above, 16 teachers indicated that the strategy that could ensure successful conflict management in secondary schools was collaboration. This represented 45.7% of the participants who completed questionnaires. Nine teachers, representing 25.7% were of the view that accommodation would assist in successful conflict management while 6 teachers, representing 17.1% indicated that none of the strategies was the best; otherwise, it all depended on the situation. Some 2 teachers, representing 5.7% opted for compromise while another 2, representing 5.7% as well opted for avoiding. No teachers went for competing. Figure 3.3 below summarises the data in a graph form.

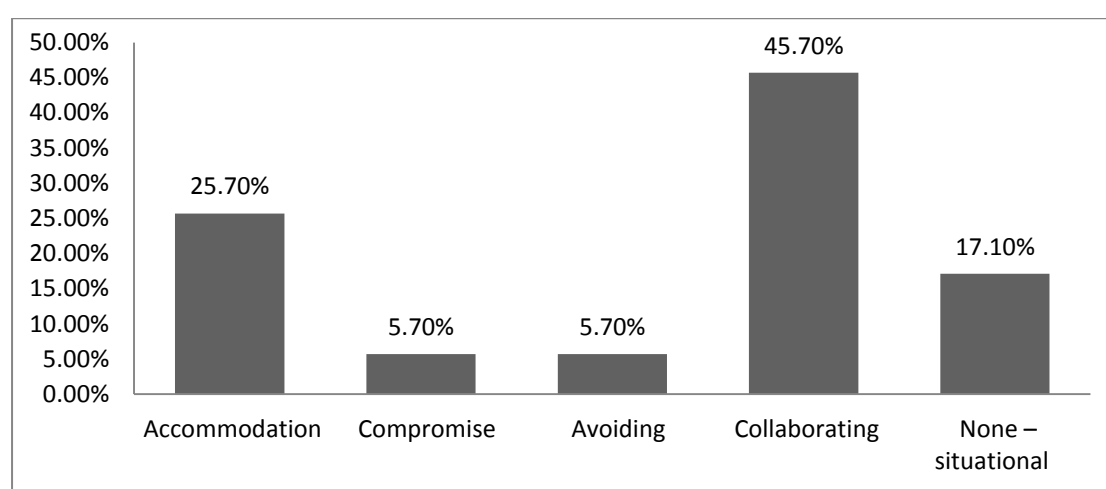


Figure 3-3: Strategies participants thought would lead to successful conflict management

Data from interviews and FGDs showed a similar trend. Responses from head teachers showed that 3 of them had collaboration as their choice number one for a strategy that could ensure successful conflict management. One head teacher had accommodation as the number one choice while the last two head teachers said it was situational. As for students, almost all of them mentioned collaboration as the strategy that could ensure successful conflict management. All but one teacher indicated that the strategy that could ensure successful conflict management was collaboration. The remaining teacher was of the view that competing would ensure successful conflict management in secondary schools. This is what some head teachers, some students and some teachers said.

HT 1: *All the strategies may lead to successful conflict management. It all depends on the situation and it is the duty of the head teacher to read the situation and determine which strategy to apply.*

HT 2: *Accommodation is the most appropriate strategy because it does not leave anybody out side in the process of managing the conflict. You always move together thereby creating trust and understanding among the members.*

HT 4: *collaboration is the most appropriate strategies for successful conflict management because it provides both parties an opportunity to solve the problem amicably*

FGD 3: *Collaboration is the most appropriate strategy because it takes care of concerns from both sides thereby arriving at an acceptable decision*

FGD 4: *The strategy that can ensure smooth management of conflict is collaboration because by getting views from the two parties, at the end of the process, you reach a common goal and you move together*

TR 2: *Collaboration is very important if we are to achieve school goals. This is the strategy we use at this school such that from time to time, students are engaged. We even ask them to suggest how best to use available resources. Because of such collaboration, students have at times recommended that fees should be increased, something which cannot happen elsewhere.*

TR 5: *For a school to run smoothly; there is need for students to follow school rules and regulations. In this case, the strategy that can ensure successful conflict management is competing because it will assist in enforcing school rules and regulations.*

The data on skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used showed some common trends. All participants apart from one knew some conflict management skills which included active listening, contact and dialogue, negotiation and communication skills among others. The data showed that although different

stakeholders had different strategies of preference, there were some common trends as well. Head teachers and teachers indicated that the most used strategies in their schools were collaboration and competing. As for students, they were of the view that their schools used competing mostly. On their part, education officials indicated that both staff and students used competing mostly. Parents were asked to mention the strategy that they themselves used mostly. They all indicated that they used collaboration mostly. On the strategy that participants thought could assist a lot in the management of conflict, a majority were of the view that collaboration could assist a lot.

4.8 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management by education officials and other stakeholders

The researcher further wanted to find out if education officials and other stakeholders had put in place support and monitoring mechanism in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. This was in accordance with literature which clearly indicates that schools need support if they are to manage conflict successfully. The researcher went further to find out if there were other stakeholders who were providing support in the management of conflict in secondary schools. This part presents and analyses data that were collected on mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict in secondary schools. Data on other stakeholders who provided support to secondary schools in addition to education officials are also presented and analysed.

For coherence purposes, the data are presented in three parts; mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools, mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools and other stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools.

4.8.1 Mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools

Mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools were categorized into two; those which upon being instituted would be implemented by the schools themselves – here in referred to as school level mechanisms – and those which could only be implemented by the system – here in referred to as system level

mechanisms. Data on the two categories of mechanisms are presented and analysed in detail below.

4.8.1.1 School level mechanism

At school level, the researcher wanted to explore whether the system required schools to fulfil the following: teach conflict management, put in place channels of communication, institute guidance and counselling structures, have discipline committees and conflict management committees. Different responses were solicited through questionnaires, interviews and FGDS. It transpired that while some mechanisms to support conflict management in secondary schools were in place, others were not there. Following is a presentation and analysis of data on these mechanisms one by one.

4.8.1.1.1 Teaching of conflict management in secondary schools

On the overall, the study found that conflict management was taught in secondary schools in Malawi. Data from questionnaires showed that 91.4% of teachers indicated that conflict management was taught in secondary schools against 8.6% who said it was not taught. Table 4.20 below presents an analysis of responses from questionnaires on whether conflict management was taught in secondary schools or not.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	32	91.4	91.4	91.4
2. No	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-20: Whether conflict management was taught or not

Data from interviews and FGDS also indicated that conflict management was taught in secondary schools in Malawi. Head teachers indicated that conflict management was taught in the secondary schools mostly in two subjects; Social Studies (called Social and Development Studies in the senior section) and Life Skills. In agreement,

students indicated that conflict management was taught in subjects like Social Studies, Life Skills, Bible Knowledge, English Literature, Chichewa and History. To authenticate the point, some students mentioned that in Bible Knowledge, they learnt that when a conflict arose between Abraham and his brother Lot over grazing land which was not enough, the two (Abraham and Lot) agreed to resolve the issues amicably using a win-win approach to it by giving each other areas to take control of.

Education officials too indicated that conflict management was taught in secondary schools in Malawi in Life Skills and Social studies. Just like the other participants, teachers too indicated that conflict management was taught in subjects like Social Studies, Life Skills, History and Bible Knowledge. Since the issue was a bit technical, parents were spared from it.

As part of document analysis, the researcher took some time to look at text books which were used in the teaching of some of the subjects which were mentioned. The analysis found that in Life Skills, textbooks by Kadyoma, Mukachi and Mumbi (2012), Kadyoma, Ndung'u, Omae and Mumbi (2012), Kadyoma, Muraya and Magoka (2012) and Kadyoma, Gunyali and Owiti (2012) had topics on conflict resolution in forms one to four respectively. Likewise, Life Skills textbooks by Mhlanga, Chiziwa and Maluwa-Banda (2007) and Mhlanga, Maluwa-Banda, Chiziwa and Mphande (2002) had topics on conflict resolution for junior and senior secondary schools respectively.

In Social Studies, textbooks by Agabu (2014), Agabu (2014) had topics on conflict management in forms one and two respectively. Malunda and Mpinganjira (2010) too had a chapter on conflict resolution in Book 3. Likewise, Fabiano and Maganga (2002) had a detailed coverage of conflict resolution. The Bible was also looked at since some students referred to it through the story of Abraham and Lot. The researcher found that indeed, in Genesis 13, verses 7 to 12, a conflict arose between the two and was managed amicably through a win-win of some kind.

While the teaching of the subjects was an achievement, two observations were made on what would be challenges. First, it was observed that the two subjects were not offered by all secondary schools such that not all students were studying them.

This meant that only few students had the opportunity to learn conflict management. The second observation was that in most cases, students studied courses just to pass examinations not necessarily to acquire the knowledge, skills and values which the subjects were supposed to equip them with. Here are some responses which were made by different participants on the teaching of conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi.

HT 2: *Conflict management is covered in Social Studies and Life Skills but there are two challenges. The first challenge is that students learn the subjects to pass exams not for the application of the knowledge acquired. The other challenge is that the two subjects are not offered by all secondary schools such that not all students take them.*

HT 3: *At this school, all the students take Social Studies. However, it may mostly be to pass examinations and not to improve skills. In the end, there is very little value added in as far as conflict management is concerned.*

FGD 1: *We learn conflict resolution in Social Studies and Life Skills and there are different topics covered. A good example is Chapter 13 of Social Studies Book 2 where conflict resolution is very well discussed.*

FGD 5: *We learn conflict management in subjects like Life Skills, Social Studies, History and Bible Knowledge. A good example can be given from Bible Knowledge where we learn that when Abraham and his Brother Lot had disagreements over land for feeding their animals, they sat and resolved the issues peacefully. However, the major challenge is that we learn to pass examinations and not to acquire the knowledge for use in life*

DO 6: *Conflict management is taught in our secondary schools mostly in Life Skills and Social Studies. The only drawback may be the fact that not all schools offer the subjects and where they are taught, not all students may take them*

EDO 2: *Conflict management is well covered in subjects like Life skills, Social studies, Bible Knowledge, History and other humanities subjects. May be the only challenge would be that not all students study these subjects*

TR 3: *Conflict management is taught in subjects like Social Studies, Life Skills, History and Bible Knowledge. However, not all students take these subjects which means not all learn them*

TR 7: *Conflict management is taught mainly in two subjects; Social Studies and Life Skills. It may be there in other subjects but not as detailed as in Social Studies and Life Skills.*

It is contended that schools can effectively manage conflict if conflict management is taught to students. The thinking behind this is that by doing so, students will learn how to engage with conflict in constructive, innovative and democratic ways. In the end, they will be able to manage their own conflicts productively. In this regard, education officials may support schools in the management of conflict by ensuring that conflict management is taught in the schools hence, the initiative to find out if it was a policy requirement to have conflict management taught in the secondary schools under study. As can be seen from the data, it was a requirement by the MoEST that conflict management should be taught in the secondary schools hence, its inclusion in the curriculum.

4.8.1.1.2 Channels of communication

The study found that there were channels of communication in secondary schools in Malawi. Out of the 35 teachers who completed questionnaires, 33; representing 94.3% indicated that there were channels of communication in secondary schools and they gave different examples as the most commonly used channels in their respective secondary schools. The remaining 2 teachers, representing 5.7% gave no answer. Table 4.21 below gives a detailed account of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Assemblies	9	25.7	25.7	25.7
2. Notice boards	2	5.7	5.7	31.4
3. Rules and regulations	2	5.7	5.7	37.1
4. Meetings	2	5.7	5.7	42.9
5. Staff – students interaction	18	51.4	51.4	94.3
6. No answer	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-21: Channels of communication in secondary schools

From Table 4.21 above, it can be seen that 18 teachers, representing 51.4% indicated that the most commonly used channel of communication was staff-students interaction. The table further shows that 9 teachers, representing 25.7% of the participants indicated that the most commonly used channel of communication was assembly. Other channels mentioned in the table are use of notice boards, use of rules and regulations and use of meetings. Each of the three channels was mentioned by 2 participants representing 5.7% each.

Data from interviews and FGDs too showed that channels of communication were there in secondary schools. Both head teachers and teachers mentioned assemblies, notice boards, staff-students interaction, meetings including PTA meetings and school reports. Students also mention different channels namely; assemblies, notice boards, staff-students interaction, career talk, counselling. On staff-students interaction, it was observed that communication flowed from staff to students and vice versa through class teachers, heads of department, club patrons/matrons, and boarding masters/mistresses on the part of staff and class monitors and prefects on the part of students. However, students stressed that on some issues, school management never communicated.

On their part, education officials emphasized that it was a requirement for schools to have channels of communication in place. Among other channels, they mentioned assemblies, notice boards, staff-students interaction, and circulation files. Document analysis showed that indeed some of the records which were supposed to be available during inspection were those which could facilitate communication and they included calendar of events, school menu for boarding secondary schools and master timetable. As for parents, they mentioned assemblies, school reports, PTA meetings, engagement with parents when students misbehaved, parental talks and use of prefects. Here is what the different participants said on the channels of communication.

HT 3: *Some channels of communication which are used in secondary schools are assemblies, notice boards, use of monitors, form teachers, heads of department, matrons, and use of school reports although most teachers do not treat them with the seriousness they deserve.*

HT 1: *Another channel of communication at this school is general meeting with PTA during which parties discuss issues. For example, there was an issue concerning form fours who were reportedly demanding money from form ones. The issue got known during a PTA meeting. The school took it up and we established that it was true. Finally, we sorted it out.*

TR 3: *Communication is done in different ways at this school including interaction between prefects, monitors and students on one side and the head teacher, heads of department, deputy head teacher and staff on the other side.*

TR 2: *Communication channels at this school include assemblies, notice boards, and engagement of staff by prefects.*

FGD 2: *Communication at this school is mostly done during assemblies which are conducted once a week although on some issues, they do not communicate*

FGD 4: *There are different channels of communication such as assemblies, use of prefects, career talk and counselling by police. However, there are so many other things which are not timely communicated thereby leaving students in the dark*

EDO 6: *Communication channels are there although at times they are poorly used resulting in students claiming not to be aware of some obligations. As such, schools are requested to effective communication including displaying rules and regulations and other issues that need to be communicated*

EDO 4: *Use of form teachers and boarding masters/mistresses serves as a channel of communication from staff to students and vice versa. Prefects are also very crucial in facilitating communication from staff to students and back.*

EDO 2: *There are different channels of communication such as use of assemblies, use of notice boards, use of students' councils and class announcements. All these facilitate communication schools*

PT 1: *Channels of communication at this school include assemblies, school reports, engagement with parents when students misbehave and parental talk during which we address the students on different issues*

PT 2: *One channel of communication at this school uses is PTA meetings during which different issue are communicated. The school also uses prefects to communicate issues to students*

It is observed that in the absence of communication, conflicts escalate because people act on assumptions resulting from wrong information that is interpreted as an act in bad faith. From such an understanding, having channels of communication would assist a lot in the management of conflict. It was for this reason that the researcher enquired from participants whether there were channels of communication in the secondary schools or not. As can be seen from the responses, channels of communication were there and some were mandatory such that during inspection, education officials would want to ascertain their availability.

4.8.1.1.3 The presence of guidance and counselling structures

The researcher found that guidance and counselling services were there in the secondary schools in Malawi. Out of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires, 31 indicated that guidance and counselling services were there in the secondary schools. This represented 88.6% of the participants. The remaining 4 teachers, representing 11.4% did not respond to the question. Table 4.22 below presents a breakdown of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	31	88.6	88.6	88.6
2. No answer	4	11.4	11.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-22: Availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools

Data from interviews and FGDs also showed that guidance and counselling services were there in the secondary schools in Malawi. 4 head teachers indicated that their schools had teacher counsellor while 1 head teacher indicated that his/her school did not have a teacher counsellor. However, all head teachers indicated that staff covered some ground of guidance and counselling during lessons or during special talk to students. At one school, it was learnt that there was a community mentor who was assisting in counselling students. However, one shortfall was that the teacher counsellor were not trained in the task while those trained did not do their work well because they had a big work load and the system did not recognize their qualifications in any special way.

All students indicated that guidance and counselling was done not as a routine practice but when students were about to sit for examinations or when there were misunderstandings. Some students mentioned that at times, guidance and counselling was done during meetings organized by Students' Christian organization of Malawi (SCOM), Young Christian Students (YCS), Church of Central African Presbyterian students' Organisation (CAPSSO) and Adventist Youth (AY). Teachers

also indicated that in the schools, guidance and counselling services were offered. It was observed that there were teacher counsellors responsible for this while in other cases, there was a committee responsible for guidance and counselling. This is what head teachers, students and teachers said:

HT 2: *Guidance and counselling are there but not to the effective levels. There is need for a thoroughly training for teachers in the field. Unfortunately, as a system, we still do not appreciate the issue of counselling because we are examinations oriented*

HT 5: *The head teacher, deputy head teacher and mentor teacher go to different classes to counsel students. In addition, there is a community mentor; a competent person identified by the school to be offering guidance and counselling to the students*

HT 4: *The school has a guidance and counselling teacher who was trained but she doesn't do the work as expected because of a big workload and also because the position is not recognized by the system*

FGD 1: *Yes, the school offers counselling and guidance. Usually, they talk to us when we are about to sit for examinations.*

FGD 3: *Counselling and guidance is done more especially when something wrong has happened. Of course there are times when they talk to us even before something wrong happens such as during closing assembly and during youth programmes*

FGD 5: *Yes, guidance and counselling is done here mostly by the Deputy Head Teacher who comes to class from time to time to talk to us. At times, it is done during meetings of clubs such as SCOM, YCS, CAPSSO and AY*

TR 6: *There are teachers responsible for guidance and counselling who always talk to students on how to behave. In addition, guidance and counselling is covered in most subjects which the school offers*

TR 3: *Guidance and counselling is offered by a committee of teachers which the school established. At times, individual teachers give guidance and counselling to students. However, there is a challenge in the sense that the teachers are not trained in guidance and counselling.*

Education officials observed that it was a requirement for secondary schools to have guidance and counselling services. As such, they indicated that most secondary schools had functional structures in place. It was noted that the main task of the structure was to guide and counsel students on how best they should conduct themselves. In addition, teacher counsellors were supposed to mediate between students and staff in times of differences. However, the education officials noted that there were some challenge in the way guidance and counselling was done. First, teachers were not prepared for the task. Second, the post of teacher counsellor was not established. Last, the number of teacher counsellor was generally smaller compared to the number of students. Since the issue of guidance and counselling was a bit technical, parents were not asked about it. This is what the education officials said.

EDO 1: *Teachers responsible for counselling and guidance are there in schools but there is only one per school against a very big number of students. Furthermore, there are no incentives for the teachers.*

EDO 4: *The teachers are not prepared in any way for the task although there are some who take personal initiatives to study for a certificate or degree in guidance and counselling. Unfortunately, such teachers are not recognized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and they get demoralized*

EDO 2: *The teachers are not prepared in any way. Some go to school to study guidance and counselling on their own but they are not recognized.*

It has been observed that guidance and counselling is very important in conflict management because people, more especially students, get involved in conflict mostly out of mischief or fun. In this regard, having counselling and guidance services in schools would be very crucial in as far as conflict management is

concerned. Thus, by making counselling and guidance services a requirement for the schools, education officials would be providing support in the management of conflict. For this reason, the researcher enquired from participants whether counselling and guidance services were there in the schools. From the responses, it was established that it was indeed a requirement for schools to have the services such that almost all the schools had them.

4.8.1.1.4 Presence of discipline committee

While it came out clear that secondary schools did not have conflict management committees, the study found that every secondary school had a fully constituted discipline committee headed by the Deputy Head Teacher. Out of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires, 34 indicated that discipline committees were there in the secondary schools. This represented 97.1%. The remaining 1 teacher, representing 2.9% did not respond to the question. Table 4.23 below presents an analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	34	97.1	97.1	97.1
2. No answer	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-23: Availability of discipline committees in secondary schools

Data from interviews and FGDs also showed that discipline committees were there in the secondary schools. All head teachers indicated that discipline committees were there in their secondary schools and that they were chaired by deputy head teachers. However, it transpired that the committees treated discipline cases as issues to do with indiscipline. As such, students who were answering disciplinary charges were liable to punishment.

It transpired that discipline processes followed included issuing a charge sheet to the students detailing the offence committed, giving the student an opportunity to be

heard, allowing witnesses to tender their evidence and engaging parents so that they were aware of the offence committed by their child. In agreement, teachers observed that when a conflict arose, the discipline committee handled the case and made a recommendation to the head teacher after following processes as highlighted by the head teachers.

On their part, students indicated that their schools had discipline committees. However, they observed that the committees always came in when things went wrong. For this reason, in their eyes, the committees were more of judges than anything else. Education officials too indicated that all secondary schools in Malawi had discipline committees whose main task was to hear disciplinary cases and make recommendations to the head teacher who in turn would make recommendations to the MoEST through the EDM. Document analysis indeed showed that one of the records that schools were supposed to produce during inspection was a discipline file. However, the education officials observed that teachers were not prepared for the task. Only head teachers and deputy head teachers were oriented during management meetings with the hope that they would in turn orient the teachers; something that did not happen. This is what some head teachers, some teachers, some students and some education officials said.

HT 2: *A discipline committee is there but it handles issues of conflict from a discipline perspective where contrary views are looked at as indiscipline and they attract punishment*

HT 5: *We have a discipline committee chaired by the deputy head teacher. Other members are heads of department, the form teacher for the concerned student and the boarding master/mistress if the issue involves his/her department. The process involves issuing a charge sheet, hearing students' side of the story, engagement of witnesses and at times, engagement of parents after which a decision is made.*

TR 1: *At this school, we have a discipline committee which is chaired by the deputy head teacher. The committee follows procedures which include*

serving the concerned student with a charge sheet, hearing the student after which the student and witnesses each produces a report

TR2: *When a conflict arises, the discipline committee handles the case after which it makes a recommendation to the head teacher who in turn makes a recommendation to the MoEST through the EDM for final decision.*

FGD 1: *The school has a discipline committee which mostly handles discipline cases. When a student has done something wrong, they give him/her a charge sheet, after which he/she is given an opportunity to be heard. Then he/she writes a report on what happened and witnesses write reports too. Finally, a decision is made.*

FGD 5: *Yes, a discipline committee is there at this school. Its work is mostly to suspend students who are found guilty and nothing else. They are more of judges than anything else.*

EDO 4: *The main task of the discipline committee is to hear disciplinary cases and make recommendations to the head teacher for him/her to make a decision*

EDO 6: *Their work is simply to hear discipline cases after which they make recommendations to the head teacher who makes further recommendation to the Ministry through the Division.*

Discipline committees are very important in conflict management more especially when their roles include arbitrating conflict between different parties in the school. Thus, the presence of discipline committees in schools would go a long way in the management of conflict. It was for this reason that the researcher engaged participants to learn if the committees were there. The responses show that it was a requirement for schools to have discipline committee such that all the secondary schools under study had them.

4.8.1.2 System level mechanisms

At system level, the researcher wanted to establish if conflict management was taught in teacher training colleges, if education officials conducted training for head teachers, teachers and education officials themselves and if there was a legal framework to support schools in conflict management. Other forms of support have been clustered together under the banner other forms of support and they include expansion of resources, provision of advice, mediation, eradication of troublesome personnel and closure of schools. Data on the four issues are presented and analysed here below one issue after the other.

4.8.1.2.1 Teaching of conflict management in teacher training institutions

The researcher learnt that conflict management was taught in teacher training institutions. Of the 35 teachers who completed questionnaires, 30 said conflict management was taught in teacher training institutions. This represented 85.7% of the teachers. 1 teacher, representing 2.9% said it was not taught while 4 teachers, representing 11.4% did not respond to the question. Table 4.24 below presents an analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	30	85.7	85.7	85.7
2. No	1	2.9	2.9	88.6
3. No answer	4	11.4	11.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-24: Whether conflict was taught in teacher training institutions or not

Data from interviews and FGDs also showed that conflict management was taught in teacher training institutions in such courses as Education Administration and Management, Sociology of Education, Psychology of Education and other humanities courses. In their contribution, head teachers indicated that they all learnt conflict management while in teacher training institutions in the three courses. Teachers too indicated that they all learnt conflict management while in teacher

training institutions in the courses mentioned earlier. Five education officials collaborated with the rest that conflict management was taught in teacher training institutions in the same courses mentioned earlier while 1 official said it was not offered in college. This is what the participants said on the issue.

HT 1: *Yes, conflict management is covered in college mostly in Education Administration and Management. Of course, in Child Psychology, it is also covered though not much*

HT 3: *We learnt conflict management in college in Education Administration and a little bit of it in Sociology of Education*

TR 2: *in college, conflict management is covered in Education Administration and Management. In Educational Psychology and Educational Sociology it is also covered.*

TR 6: *We learnt conflict management while in college in Education Management and Leadership. We also learnt some conflict management in guidance and counselling courses*

EDO 5: *Yes, conflict management is taught in teacher training institutions such that everyone who under goes teacher education is supposed to learn it. However, the content does not come out clearly*

EDO 3: *Conflict management is not there in teacher education. I did not learn it while in college*

4.8.1.2.2 Training of head teachers, teachers and education officials in conflict management

The researcher wanted to find out if head teachers, teachers and education officials were trained in conflict management as one way of ensuring successful conflict management in the secondary schools. Data from questionnaires indicated that some teachers got trained in conflict management. Out of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires, 17 indicated that they received special training in

conflict management. This represented 48.6%. 11 teachers, representing 31.4% said they did not receive any special training while 7 teachers, representing 20% did not respond to the question. Table 2.25 below presents an analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	17	48.6	48.6	48.6
2. No	11	31.4	31.4	80.0
3. No answer	7	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-25: In-service training in conflict management for teachers

Data from interviews showed that head teachers, teachers and education officials did not undergo any special in-service training in conflict management to prepare them for the task at hand. Head teachers indicated that if at all anything, some luck ones attended management training at Mpemba Institute of Management which was not specifically on conflict management. As for teachers, none had attended any courses on conflict management. Education officials too indicated that they did not undergo any tailor made course to prepare them for the task of managing conflict in the system with an exception of few luck ones who attended short courses but not organized by the MoEST.

The data from interviews are in a way contradictory to those from questionnaires. Upon triangulating the two sets (of data), the researcher assumed that the participants who responded to questionnaires mistook the training in question with the training which they went through while undergoing teacher education. Thus, the final position might be that head teachers, teachers and education officials did not undergo any special training in conflict management apart from the initial teacher training. Presented here below is what the head teachers, teachers and education officials said on the issue.

HT 5: *There is no training for head teachers or teachers although sometimes talks on conflict management are given during management meetings. Of course there was a time when Mpemba Institute of Management organized training for head teachers which touched something on conflict management but not many attended.*

HT 1: *Head teachers in Malawi assume office without any prior training, not even orientation such that it is not easy to run a school later alone to manage conflict. I wished something could be done about it.*

TR 2: *There is no in-service training in conflict management for teachers. The little knowledge teachers have on conflict management is from college.*

TR 7: *Teachers are not trained in conflict management. May be head teachers undergo induction – may be.*

EDO 3: *The Ministry did not prepare me in any way. If at all anything, some of the courses I covered at Master's degree such as Value Education prepared me in a way in addition to some courses at bachelor's degree which covered conflict management. However, there is need for training.*

EDO 4: *As I mentioned before, we are not trained in conflict management. Of course there was a time when we attended a meeting organized by the Department of Human Resource Management and Development in collaboration with Ministry of Justice, Industrial Courts and Ombudsman. During that meeting, we were taught how to handle conflicts from a legal perspective. Unfortunately, we did not cover a lot and very few people attended it such that there is need for training*

4.8.1.2.3 Presence of a legal framework to support conflict management

The researcher wanted to find out if there was a legal framework in place to support the management of conflict in the secondary schools in Malawi. Information collected showed that there was no legal framework in place. However, because some policies in place were so supportive, some participants considered them to be legal

instruments. As a result, there were divided opinions with some saying a legal framework was there while others were saying it was not there. The views are discussed here below.

Data from questionnaires gave divided opinions. 14 teachers out of the 35 who completed questionnaires said there was no legal framework. This represented 40% of the participants. 11 teachers, representing 31.4% said a legal framework was there. Some more 10 teachers, representing 28.6% did not give any answer. Possibly, they were in dilemma. Table 4.26 below presents the data on whether a legal framework was there to support conflict management or not.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Yes	11	31.4	31.4	31.4
2. No	14	40.0	40.0	71.4
3. No answer	10	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-26: Presence of a legal framework to support conflict management

Data from interviews also yielded divided opinions. Among the head teachers, some indicated that there wasn't any legal framework for the formalization of conflict management structures in secondary schools in Malawi while others indicated a legal framework was there. Teachers too gave divided opinions. Some indicated that a legal framework was not there while others said it was there. Some education officials too indicated that there wasn't any legal framework established specifically for the purpose while others said it was there in form of policies guiding discipline committees and school rules and regulations.

A close interaction with the data showed that those who said it was there were referring to discipline policy or similar other policies. Similarly, those participants whose response in the questionnaire was that a legal framework was there might have been referring to the same policies. Otherwise, the truth of the matter was that

there was no legal framework to support the management of conflict in secondary schools. This is what some head teachers, teachers and education officials said on the issue.

HT 2: *I am not sure about the availability of a legal framework to support conflict management in secondary schools.*

HT 5: *While we may say that here is no legal framework to support conflict management in secondary schools, a close look at the system shows that there are policies which are in away legally binding like discipline policy.*

TR 3: *We do not have anything like that in Malawi*

TR 5: *There is no legal framework to support conflict management. However, we have policies which serve the purpose such as counselling and discipline policies*

EDO 4: *We do not have a legal framework to support conflict management. This is a strange thing*

EDO 3: *In Malawi we do not have a specific legal frame to support conflict management in secondary schools but alternatively, we have them through such policies like discipline policy*

4.8.1.2.4 Other forms of support

Data collected revealed that education officials also provided support to secondary schools in different forms. Head teachers observed that education officials provided support through expansion of resources; material or human which went a long way in managing some conflicts. Parents indicated that support which education officials provided to schools took different forms such as advice to schools, expansion of resources, eradication of troublesome teachers or students from the schools and closure of a school if the situation was bad. On their part, education officials indicated that they supported schools through mediation although students insisted

that they met parties separately and in the process; they were seen to favour staff. This is what one head teacher, two parents and one education official said.

HT 4: *The Ministry of Education also supports us a lot in conflict management by providing resources especially when the cause of the conflict is scarcity of resources. For example, if the problem is lack of teachers for certain subjects, the Ministry posts some so that the situation is controlled*

PT 4: *Support to schools takes different forms such as advice to head teachers on how they should handle a conflict and provision of resources when the conflict has arisen due to lack of resources. For example, when tension has mounted in students because the school has water or electricity disconnected due to unsettled bills, the Ministry of Education has on so many occasions settled such bills thereby managing the situation.*

PT 1: *Education officials support schools in different ways. For example, when a conflict arises because of difficult personalities; students or teachers, at times they move such personalities away from the school. In other instances, they provide resources to schools such as teachers and books if the cause of the problem was lack of resources. There are also times when support is in the form of mediation between students and staff while in other cases, it is in the form of closure of schools*

EDO 4: *The support we provide to schools takes different forms. There are times when we have mediated between the conflicting parties and in the end the conflict has been settled*

4.8.1.3 Other stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools

The researcher wanted to find out if there were other stakeholders apart from education officials who supported secondary schools in the management of conflict. Data collected showed that there were indeed other stakeholders who supported secondary schools in the management of conflict. The data are presented and analysed here below.

From questionnaires, data showed that out of the 35 teachers, 12 said police provided support in the management of conflict. This represented 34.3% of all the participants. 8 teachers indicated that PTAs provided a lot of support representing 22.9%. 5 teachers opted for NGOs as stakeholders who provided a lot of support in the management of conflict. This represented 14.3% of all the participants. 2 participants, representing 5.7% and another 2 participants, representing 5.7% as well indicated churches and alumni respectively as stakeholders who assisted a lot in conflict management. 6 participants, representing 17.1% did not give any answer. Table 4.27 below presents the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. PTA	8	22.9	22.9	22.9
2. NGOs	5	14.3	14.3	37.1
3. Churches	2	5.7	5.7	42.9
4. Police	12	34.3	34.3	77.1
5. Alumni	2	5.7	5.7	82.9
6. No answer	6	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-27: Other stakeholders who provided support to secondary schools

Data from interviews and FGDs also found that apart from education officials, there were different stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools. Head teachers said police assisted a lot more especially when the situation was hostile. In addition, PTA and religious leaders helped the schools by talking to students on need for proper behaviour. In agreement with the head teachers, teachers indicated that schools received lots of support from police, and PTA. They observed that police came in when there was violence but occasionally, they could come in to counsel students. As for PTA, it was indicated that they were

always there to counsel students and at times to assist in the formulation and enforcement of school rules and regulations.

On their part, students said police assisted to put volatile situations under control. However, they were quick to mention that most of the time, their presence complicated matters. The students said PTA was also very helpful although other students felt they usually sided with staff. The students also mentioned clubs such as SCOM which conducted leadership training and alumni who gave talks to students from time to time. Parents too indicated that the police was playing a great role in bringing peace and calm during violent conflicts. They also mentioned that in the event of conflict spilling over to the community, community leaders were very critical in normalizing the situation. This is what some head teachers, some teachers, some students and some parents said on the issues.

HT 1: *The other stakeholders who support us in the management of conflict are the police and PTA main executive. The police usually come in when the situation is volatile and there is need to contain it while PTA comes in to talk to students on sensitive issues like when the school wants to raise fees.*

HT 3: *PTA assists us very much in managing conflicts. Some members come to talk to students and usually students listen to them. For this school, the proprietors also assist a lot. Pastors talk to students from time to time. In other instances, they support us by providing resources thereby assisting to manage resource related conflicts*

TR 1: *PTA provides a lot of support in the management of conflict by counselling students. They also assist a lot in the formulation and enforcement of school rules and regulations.*

TR 5: *The police assist a lot in conflict management more especially when there is violence*

FGD 1: *This school receives a lot of support from alumni and the police. The alumni usually come to talk to us on how to conduct ourselves and sometimes they provide us with resources like books. As for the police, they usually come in when there is violence so as to bring peace.*

FGD 2: *We can say that the police and PTA offer some kind of support to the school in the management of conflict. The police mainly come to assist the administration and not to manage the conflict because they do not engage us and their presence usually makes students become more furious. PTA does the same; they just talk to staff without hearing anything from us.*

PT 2: *The police are very useful especially when students have become violent. They come in to control the situation so that property and life are protected*

4.8.2 Mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools

Looking at the many conflicts that were taking place in secondary schools in Malawi and the concern that was raised by the Directorate of Secondary and Distance Education in 2014 on the rising number of cases of indiscipline and violence in secondary schools, the researcher felt it was necessary to find out if education officials had put in place mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools. It transpired that there were no mechanisms put in place for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools. If at all anything, there were some routine practices which some participants felt could facilitate monitoring of conflict management. The practices are here in referred to as ad hoc mechanism. Table 4.28 below shows some of the ad hoc mechanisms as indicated by teachers who completed questionnaires.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Inspection visits	7	20.0	20.0	20.0
2. Monitoring policy implementation	1	2.9	2.9	22.9
3. Making decisions on discipline cases	2	5.7	5.7	28.6
4. Reports	14	40.0	40.0	68.6
5. Not sure	11	31.4	31.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-28: Ad hoc mechanism for monitoring conflict management

From Table 4.28 above, it can be seen that 7 of the 35 teachers who completed questionnaires, representing 20% indicated inspection visits as a mechanism through which education officials monitored conflict management. 14 other teachers, representing 40% indicated that monitoring of conflict management in secondary schools was done through reports which head teachers submitted to the MoEST. Related to reports, was the requirement that education officials should make the final decisions when discipline cases had been handled by schools and recommendations forwarded to them. From the questionnaires, 2 teachers, representing 5.7% indicated that through such a process, education officials monitored conflict management. 1 teacher, representing 2.9% was of the view that by monitoring policy implementation, the education officials also monitored conflict management. Worth noting is that because there were no purposefully instituted mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools, 11 teachers, representing 31.4% indicated that they were not sure if there were any mechanisms in place. Figure 3.4 below summarises the data in a graph form.

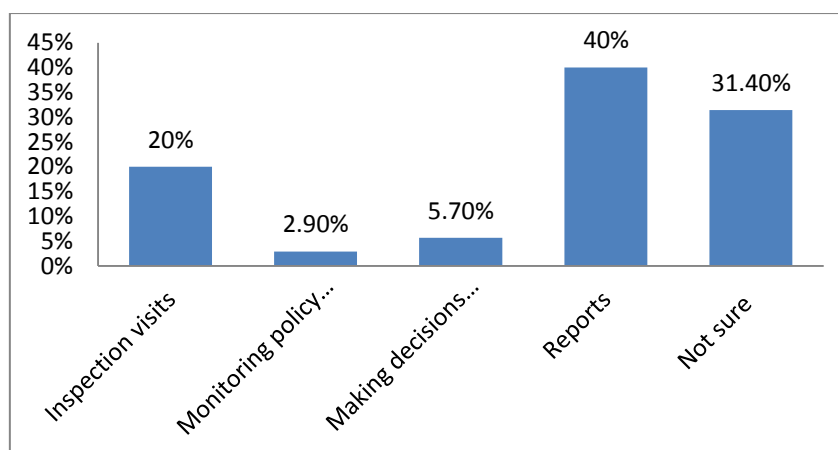


Figure 3-4: Ad hoc mechanism for monitoring conflict management

Data from interviews and FGDs also showed divided views. Some participants indicated that there was no monitoring of conflict management in secondary schools while others said there were some ad hoc mechanisms for the same. One such mechanism was inspection visits. Head teachers, education officials, some teachers and some students observed that during inspection visits, education officials monitored different things including conflict management. The other mechanism was reports. Head teachers and education officials said through reports which head teachers were required to submit to the MoEST from time to time, issues of conflict management were covered. In addition, some students were of the view that through encouragement talks which they gave to students, education officials monitored conflict management.

On their part, parents noted that there was no monitoring of any kind and that if at all anything, education officials only got involved in conflict management in secondary schools when the situation went off hand. This view was shared by some teachers who were interviewed and some students.

Data from document analysis indicated that records which education officials called for during inspection visits included discipline files and punishment books. Since conflict was handled mostly from a disciplinary point of view, the two records were very useful for them to follow conflict management issues. The other records which the education officials also looked at were log books. These are books which

contained records of major occurrences in schools. Thus, if a school experienced a major conflict, the log book would contain a record of it and the education officials would see it. Presented here below is what the different participants said on how education officials monitored conflict management.

HT 2: *During inspection, education officials talk about discipline which addresses cases of conflict to a large extent. However, they do not inspect schools regularly citing lack of resources as the cause. What is funny though, is that in town, they pass by schools on their way to work but they cannot stop for inspection*

HT 4: *There are no clear mechanisms for monitoring conflict management but during management meetings, head teachers are asked to give reports on issues that take place in their schools.*

FGD 2: *There is no monitoring of any kind. If at all anything, they wait until something wrong happens. It is then that they come in*

FGD 1: *They pay supervisory visits to schools during which it can be assumed that they talk to teachers. May be we can say that they also do it through encouragement talks which they offer to students*

EDO 1: *During school inspection visits, inspectors look at discipline records from which they get updated on issues of conflict*

EDO 5: *There are no monitoring mechanisms in place but head teachers usually submit reports on discipline in their schools*

TR 1: *During inspection visits, education officials go through discipline file which contain conflict management records. In the process, they monitor conflict management.*

TR 5: *Not really. Education officials do not monitor conflict management in secondary schools. Actually, they rarely visit schools*

PT 2: *They do not monitor. They only get involved when things go wrong and the situation is bad*

PT 6: *There is nothing they do to monitor conflict in secondary schools*

In summary, it can be said that education officials provided support to secondary schools at two levels; school level and system level. At school level, they supported the schools through such mechanisms like the inclusion of conflict management in the curriculum, the requirement that schools should have channels of communication, and the requirement that schools should have structures such as discipline committees and guidance and counselling services. At system level, support was through such mechanisms like teaching of conflict management in teacher training institutions, expansion of resources and mediating between students and staff. However, other forms of support such as presence of a legal framework and training of stakeholders in conflict management were not done. Other stakeholders who also provided support to secondary schools in conflict management were PTA, NGOs, police, alumni and church organizations. As for monitoring, the data have shown that there were no purposefully instituted mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools. If at all anything, education officials relied on supervision visits by inspectors and reports by head teachers. The two mechanisms have been referred to in this study as ad hoc mechanism.

4.9 Measures for ensuring effective conflict management in secondary schools

The researcher sought views of participants on what they thought could be done to ensure effective conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi. The question was posed to solicit responses that would strengthen the alternative framework for conflict management which the study intended to propose. The responses were in three parts; what they thought could be done (1) before the conflict (2) during the conflict and (3) after the conflict. This was in accordance with Robbins & Judge (2013); the proponents of the managed conflict view. The two contend that for successful conflict management, there is need to manage the whole context in which conflicts occur; before, during and after the occurrence of the conflict. Participants' views are presented and analysed here below according to the three contexts.

4.9.1 Measures before the conflict

On what could be done before the occurrence of the conflict, participants gave different views aimed at ensuring coexistence and preparing people for any possible conflicts. Data from all sources; questionnaires, interviews and FGDs all pointed at the same things. Suggested measures that stakeholders could put in place before the occurrence of conflict were: (i) the need to involve stakeholders in the running of schools so as to ensure transparency, (ii) ensuring effective communication, (iii) enforcing school rules and regulations, (iv) training stakeholders in conflict management, (v) intensifying guidance and counselling, (vi) ensuring that conflict management is taught in class, (vii) making resources available and (viii) avoiding admission of rejects. Table 4.29 below presents data on the measures as capture from questionnaires.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Ensure effective communication	3	8.6	8.6	8.6
2. Enforce rules and regulations	9	25.7	25.7	34.3
3. Make resources available	1	2.9	2.9	37.1
4. Train stakeholders in conflict management	6	17.1	17.1	54.3
5. Involve stakeholders in school management	10	28.6	28.6	82.9
6. Teaching of conflict management by schools	1	2.9	2.9	85.7
7. Intensify guidance and counselling	2	5.7	5.7	91.4
8. No answer	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-29: Measures to be taken before a conflict erupts

As can be seen from Table 4.29 above, of the 35 teachers who responded to questionnaires, 10 teachers, representing 28.6% indicated that for effective conflict management, there was need to involve stakeholders in the management of schools.

Another measure which was proposed was to enforce school rules and regulations. This was proposed by 9 teachers, representing 25.7% while the need to train stakeholders in conflict management was proposed by 6 teachers, representing 17.1% of the 35 teachers. 3 teachers were of the view that conflict could be effectively managed if there was effective communication in the secondary schools. This represented 8.6% of the teachers who responded to questionnaires.

Intensifying guidance and counselling was yet another measure which participants felt could assist in ensuring effective conflict management in secondary schools. 2 teachers, representing 5.7% were of this view. The last two measures which participants felt would contribute towards effective conflict were making resources available and teaching conflict management in the secondary schools. Each of these measures was proposed by 1 teacher, representing 2.9% each. A total of 3 teachers, representing 8.6% gave no answer to the question.

Data from interviews and FGDs yielded almost the same results as those from questionnaires. The need to train stakeholders in conflict management came out clear as a measure which could assist in ensuring effective conflict management. Head teachers, teachers and education officials emphasized that for effective conflict management, there was need for head teachers, teachers, students and other stakeholders to undergo training in conflict management so that they know how to handle situations. In this regard, it was mentioned that newly appointed head teachers needed to undergo an orientation before assuming office.

It also came out very clear that for effective conflict management; secondary schools would have to put in place proper channels of communication so that nobody acted in speculation. Head teachers, teachers, students, education officials and parents all emphasized that there was need for secondary schools to ensure continued collaboration and engagement between and among the different stakeholders. This was after noting that most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were a result of poor communication.

Another measure which came out was the need for schools to be governed by clear rules and regulations which should be known to all. Teachers observed that there

was need for schools to ensure that school rules and regulations are well known by all students and they are enforced. Similarly, education officials emphasized that students should know school rules and regulations in detail and they should be reminded about them from time to time. On their part, parents said schools should make sure that rules and regulations are read to students in the presence of their parents after which they should make sure they are followed. In their contribution, students said there was need to make sure that schools are governed by rules and regulations formulated collaboratively – not imposed.

Participants were also of the view that conflict could be effectively managed if secondary schools involved stakeholders including students in school management. In their contribution, head teachers emphasized the need to involve teachers and students in the running of the schools. On their part, parents advised that head teachers should engaging prefects from time to time with the aim of finding out what they want after which management should sit down and find ways of assisting them. In the same line of thought, students indicated that there was need for transparency which could be achieved by making sure that all activities that were done at a school were known to all including the students themselves.

In their contribution, head teachers and students further highlighted the need for students and staff to ensure that there is tolerance among them. In their observations, they noted that some of the conflicts which secondary schools registered were a result of failure to tolerate contrary views by either staff or students. In this regard, they emphasized that if there was tolerance among students and staff, some of the conflicts would be easily managed.

Participants also emphasized the need for schools to have vibrant guidance and counselling services through which students would be modelled into upright citizens. Parents said there was need that students be talked to from time to time not only when things have gone amiss. Students too emphasized that there was need to intensify guidance and counselling and that the work of discipline committees should include guidance and counselling and not just suspending students. Similar sentiments were expressed by teachers and education officials who emphasized that

guidance and counselling would go a long way in managing some of the conflicts in secondary schools.

The other measure that was mentioned was the need for schools to make resources available where possible. Emphasizing the point, parents observed that on the issue of diet, there was need for schools to try hard to offer quality meals and that where the situation could not allow, schools should engage students in budgeting so that they appreciated the challenges which were contributing to the poor diet. Students too mentioned the need for schools to provide resources as a measure that could assist in managing some of the conflicts.

Some head teachers also noted that in some cases, conflicts were due to influence by students rejected elsewhere and admitted into a school. They noted that such students brought foreign cultures into the new schools. To this effect, it was observed that there was need for the MoEST to avoid admission of such students; a practice which they labelled illegal admissions. However, education officials indicated that the practice had been stopped. This is what some head teachers, some teachers, some education officials, some teachers and some parents said.

HT 1: *For proper conflict management, teachers, head teachers and deputy head teachers should be trained in conflict management.*

HT 2: *There should be tolerance between staff and students. They should appreciate that as human beings, they can learn from each other.*

TR 1: *Head teachers should be involving students and other stakeholders in the running of schools and they should be quick in addressing students' concerns.*

TR 3: *Schools should make sure that resources are available for students. If they are not there, students should be communicated to in good time.*

FGD 1: *Head teachers should make sure that their schools are governed by rules and regulations which should be formulated in collaboration with students.*

FGD 5: *Schools should ensure effective communication. When there is a problem pending, students should be warned in advance just as water boards do – warning customers about an impending water problem.*

EDO 1: *Teachers and students should be trained in conflict management so that they are aware of it. In addition, new head teachers should always be oriented on conflict management before they assume office*

EDO 4: *Schools should try hard to offer quality meals. Where they can't, they should engage students in budgeting so that they appreciate the challenges which are contributing to the poor diet.*

PT 1: *There is need to ensure that from time to time, students are offered guidance and counselling. This can help to model them properly*

PT 2: *Schools should make sure that rules and regulations are read to students in the presence of their parents. When that is done, schools should make sure that the rules and regulations are followed.*

4.9.2 Measures during the conflict

Participants were asked to indicate what they felt could be done by the different stakeholders during a conflict. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate what they expected head teachers, teachers, students, parents and education officials to do when a conflict had occurred. Different responses were given and they showed that all stakeholders were supposed to take part in conflict management in secondary schools.

All participants indicated that head teachers had a crucial role to play during the conflict. As can be seen from Table 4.29 below, data from questionnaires proposed a number of things that head teachers would have to do if conflict were to be

successfully managed. First, head teachers would have to engage students in order to work out solutions collaboratively. In the table, this was supported by 8 of the 35 teachers who completed questionnaires, representing 22.9%. 13 teachers, representing 37%, were of the view that working collaboratively with teachers and other stakeholders was the best way to go.

Another proposal was that when a conflict ensued, the head teachers would have to analyse the situation and handle it accordingly. This view was supported by 8 teachers, representing 22.9%. Finally, 4 teachers, representing 11.4% indicated that the head teachers' task was to make sure that they create trust in all stakeholders so that they move together. 2 teachers, representing 5.7% gave no answer to the question. However, none of the teachers who responded to questionnaires proposed that head teachers should call for police intervention. Table 4.30 below shows proposed measures to be taken by head teachers during the conflict.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Analyse the situation	8	22.9	22.9	22.9
2. Work in collaboration with teachers and others	13	37.1	37.1	60.0
3. Engage students	8	22.9	22.9	82.9
4. Cultivate trust and good relationship	4	11.4	11.4	94.3
5. No answer	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-30: Measures to be taken by head teachers during the conflict

Data from interviews and FGDs proposed two major things for head teachers to ensure effective conflict management. The proposals were that head teachers should either engage students to manage the conflict collaboratively or call for police intervention depending on the situation.

Head teachers, teachers, students, education officials and parents emphasized on the need to engage students for a successful conflict management. It was further observed that the engagement with students would have to be done through prefects by reasoning with them and brainstorming possible solutions. The participants further observed that this would have to be done with support from teachers. In the final analysis, parents advised that the engagement would have to be diplomatically and timely done so as not to provoke and worsen the situation.

The proposal for head teachers to call for police intervention was made by head teachers, teachers, education officials and parents. To them, the head teachers' responsibility during a conflict was to ensure the safety of life and property. As such, they were supposed to inform the police and communicate the same to the MoEST through the EDM. However, some students warned that if schools were not ready to engage them, then they should call for the intervention of the Malawi Defense Force (MDF) and not the police who they indicated they did not fear.

On the role of teachers, different proposals were made. From Table 4.30 below, teachers were expected to work with head teachers to contain the situation. The observation was made by 10 teachers, representing 28.6%. Another proposal was that teachers should analyse the situation in order to establish the real issue and advise the head teacher accordingly. This observation was made by 7 teachers, representing 20%. Another observation was by 3 teachers, representing 8.6%. Their view was that teachers should assist in elaborating school rules and regulations to students. 11 teachers, representing 31.4% proposed that during a conflict, teachers should strive to engage students in order to bridge the gap between administration and the students themselves. 4 teachers, representing 11.4 did not respond to the question. Table 4.31 below presents an analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Work with the head teacher	10	28.6	28.6	28.6
2. Analyse the situation to establish real issues	7	20.0	20.0	48.6
3. Elaborate rules and regulation to students	3	8.6	8.6	57.1
4. Engage students to bridge the gap with administration	11	31.4	31.4	88.6
5. No answer	4	11.4	11.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-31: Measures to be taken by teachers during the conflict

Data from interviews and FGDs emphasized one thing – teachers must work collaboratively with head teachers to engage students and find solutions to the conflict. This was proposed by all participants; head teachers, teachers, education officials, students and parents. An observation was made that during such times, head teachers need the support of teachers. Head teachers further proposed that since teachers sometimes command special respect in certain students, they could take it as opportunity to engage such students as the head teachers engaged the rest.

On what students could do during a conflict, data collected showed that they too could do a number of things. As shown in Table 4.32 below, 8 teachers who responded to questionnaires were of the view that students should engage staff. This represented 22.9% of the 35 teachers. 4 teachers, representing 11.4% proposed that students should refer issues to the EDM if they were not satisfied with the way staff handled the conflict. Furthermore, 12 teachers, representing 34.3% said students should adhere to rules and regulations while 5 teachers, representing 14.3% said students should use proper channels of communication. 1 teacher, representing 2.9% said students should avoid being used. 5 teachers, representing 14.3% did not respond to the question.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Engage staff	8	22.9	22.9	22.9
2. Adhere to school rules and regulations	12	34.3	34.3	57.1
3. Use proper channels of communication	5	14.3	14.3	71.4
4. Avoid being used	1	2.9	2.9	74.3
5. Refer concerns to appropriate authorities	4	11.4	11.4	85.7
6. No answer	5	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-32: Measures to be taken by students during the conflict

Data from interviews and FGDs emphasized that students would have to engage staff so that a solution to the conflict is worked out together. This was proposed by head teachers, teachers, students themselves, education officials and parents. For fruitful results, parents and head teachers advised that students should engage staff through prefects. It was further proposed by head teachers and education officials that prefects should be proactive by engaging their fellow students as well so as to contain the situation. All participants insisted on the need for students to be calm, accept if they are in the wrong and desist from damaging property. Finally, head teachers advised that students should refer issues to the EDM if not satisfied with the outcome of engagement with staff instead of turning violent.

Different proposals were also solicited on what parents could do during the actual conflict. As can be seen in Table 4.33 below, data from questionnaires yielded different proposals. 17 of the 35 teachers, who completed questionnaires, representing 48.6%, proposed that parents should come in to counsel the students. Another proposal was that parents should assist in mediating between students and officials. This proposal was made by 11 teachers who representing 31.4 %. On their part, 2 teachers, representing 5.7% proposed that parents should call for a PTA

meeting to see how best to manage the situation. 5 teachers, representing 14.3% did not respond to the question. Table 4.33 below presents an analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Mediate between parties	11	31.4	31.4	31.4
2. Guide and counselling students	17	48.6	48.6	80.0
3. Call for PTA meeting	2	5.7	5.7	85.7
4. No answer	5	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-33: Measures to be taken by parents during the conflict

Data from interviews and FGDs yielded two proposals. The first one was that parents should come in to counsel students. All participants; head teachers, teachers, education officials, students and the parents themselves said parents should come in to assist in counselling the students. One official observed that parents' intervention was likely to assist because students generally behave in a moderate way in the presence of their parents. The second proposal was that parents should assist in mediating between students and staff. The proposal was made by education officials, students and parents themselves. Students strongly recommended that during mediation, parents would have to talk to all parties not just one.

Proposals were also made on what education officials could do during conflict. As can be seen in Table 4.34 below, one of the proposals was that education officials should mediate between the conflicting parties. This proposal was made by 8 teachers who responded to questionnaires, representing 22.9% of the 35 teachers. 6 teachers, representing 17.1% were of the view that whatever they could do, education officials would have to get views from all parties. 9 teachers, representing 25.7% of were of the view that the most important thing education officials could do was to come in quickly to assist. 1 teacher, representing 2.9% proposed that education officials would have to uphold decisions made by discipline committees.

11 teachers, representing 31.4% chose not to respond to the question. Table 4.34 below presents an analysis of the data.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Come in quickly	9	25.7	25.7	25.7
2. Mediate between the parties	8	22.9	22.9	48.6
3. Uphold decision by discipline committee	1	2.9	2.9	51.4
4. Get views from all parties	6	17.1	17.1	68.6
5. No answer	11	31.4	31.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-34: Measures to be taken by education officials during the conflict

Data from interviews and FGDs also showed different proposals on what education officials could do during conflict. All participants; head teachers, teachers, students, parents and the education officials themselves observed that their main role was to mediate between the parties and facilitate negotiations. It was further observed that in the process, the education officials would need to get views from all parties for a successful mediation. Students emphasized on the need for education officials to bring students and staff together instead of talking to the parties separately and consider what staff says as the truth. Some education officials went further to note the need for them to rush to the scene of the conflict upon being informed about it. Finally, head teachers said there was need for education officials to keep monitoring the unfolding of events so as not to be taken unawares.

Presented here below are comments which were made by two head teachers, two teachers, two students, two education officials and two parents on proposed measures to be taken by different stakeholders during the actual conflict.

HT 5: *When a conflict has erupted, head teachers should meet prefects with the support of teachers to find ways of managing it. If the situation is bad, they should inform the police and the Ministry of Education for intervention. In this case, teachers should always be supportive of the head teachers while prefects should engage their friends to contain the situation. As for parents, they should come in to counsel their children while education officials should come in promptly to mediate between the conflicting parties.*

HT 4: *When students have been engaged by staff and they are not satisfied with the outcome, it is very important that they should refer issues to the EDM instead of turning violent. Otherwise, by the end of the day, life has to proceed.*

TR 3: *Education officials should come in quickly when they have been informed about a conflict and they should be objective in the way they handle issues.*

TR 5: *When a conflict has erupted, the head teacher is supposed to make sure that lives and property are safe. As such, the first thing for them should be to call for police intervention*

FGD 1: *During a conflict, the head teacher should engage students while teachers should assist the head teacher in negotiating with the students. On their part, parents should talk to students while education officials should assist in mediating between the two parties.*

FGD 4: *If head teachers think that things have gone off hand, they should call for the intervention of the army and not the police because students don't the police.*

EDO 3: *During the actual conflict, teachers should work hand in hand with the head teacher whereas students should air out their views. Parents should always be brought in to counsel their children because students generally behave in a moderate way in the presence of their parents.*

EDO 5: *Students should take responsibility to engage each other so as to avoiding violence. Otherwise, when they have damaged property, most parents struggling to pay for damages*

PT 2: *Head teachers should engage prefects diplomatically while teachers should work hand in hand with the head teacher. Students should always engage staff through prefects. In this process, parents and education officials should mediate between the two parties*

PT 3: *When a conflict has erupted, we parents should rush in to counsel our children. With the respect we command among our children, it will be very easy to manage a conflict if we come in quickly*

4.9.3 Measures after the conflict

Understood from the managed conflict view by Robbins and Judge (2013), conflict management extends to the post conflict period. As such, participants were asked to state what they thought could be done after the conflict for effective management. Different responses were solicited from different participants. Figure 4.1 below gives what teachers who responded to questionnaires thought were the most important things to be done after a conflict had been managed.

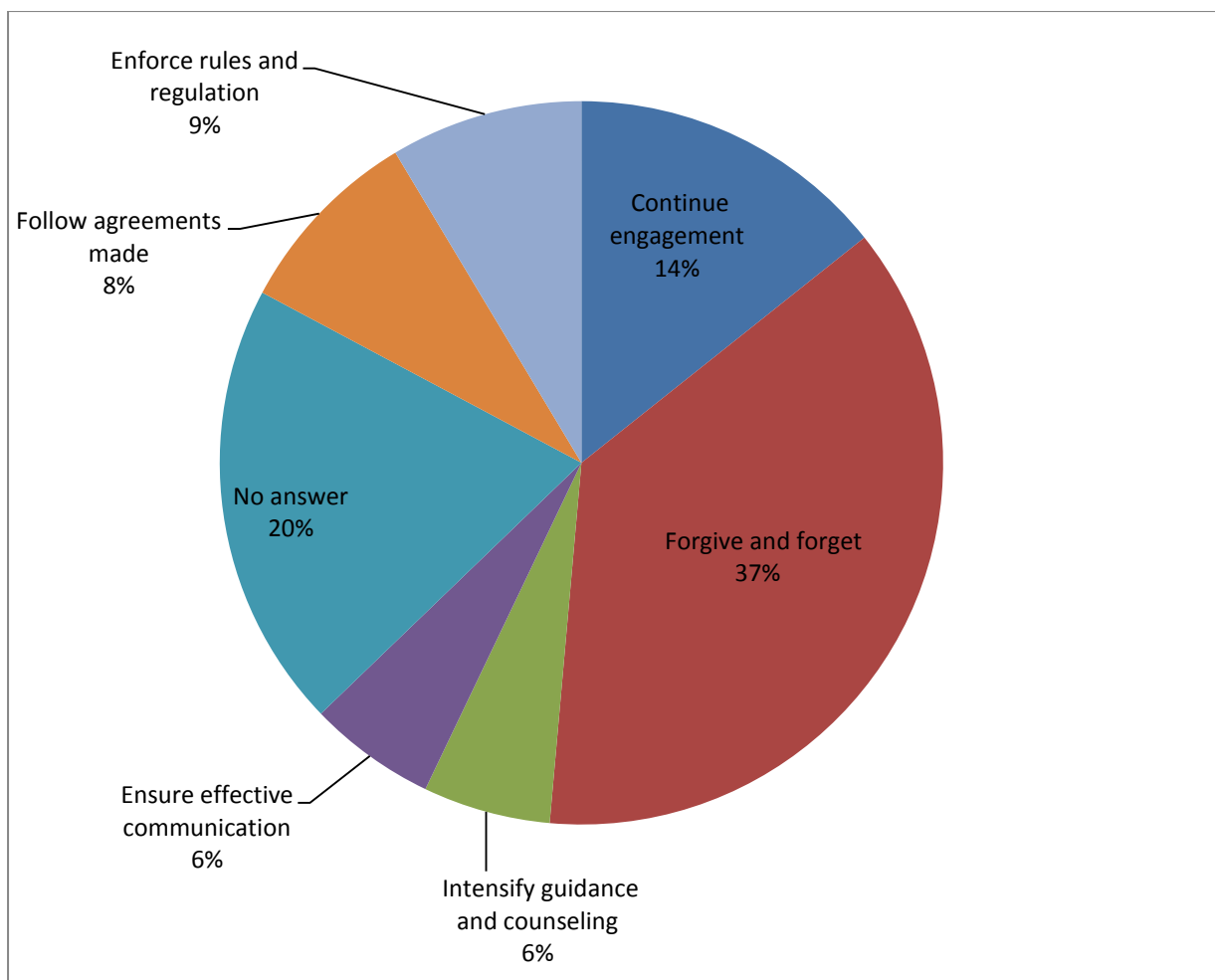


Figure 4-1: Measures to be taken after a conflict

From Figure 4.1 above, 37% of the teachers who responded to questionnaires indicated that after a conflict was managed, what the parties were supposed to do was to forgive and forget. On their part, 6% of the teachers observed that after a conflict, there was need to ensure effective communication in the secondary schools. Another 6% was of the view that after a conflict, secondary schools should intensify guidance and counselling. 14% mentioned the need for continued engagement between staff and students while 9% indicated the need to enforce rules and regulations among the students. To 8% of the teachers, what was supposed to be done after a conflict was to follow agreement made. However, 20% of the teachers did not respond to the question.

From interviews and FGDs, different responses were also solicited. Teachers, education officials, students and parents emphasized on the need for stakeholders to

conduct a post-mortem of the conflict in order to establish its causes. Upon conducting the post-mortem, it was proposed that stakeholders should map the way forward indicating how to coexist and how to handle future conflicts. To successfully do this, the participants emphasised that there was need for parties to forget the past, forgive each other, reconcile and start afresh so as to make conflict a learning point.

Head teachers and teachers further observed that upon starting afresh, parties should ensure that a new environment of tolerance is created. The observation was made after noting that in some cases, violence was due to lack of tolerance among the parties. This was supported by students who said when parties have forgiven each other; there should be tolerance among them such that they should accommodate contrary views. However, it was pointed out that to harness tolerance, there was need to improve communication between students and staff. This observation was made by all participants.

All participants proposed that after the conflict, secondary schools should make sure that students are counselled from time to time on the evils of violence and on how best they should conduct themselves when a conflict has arisen. Education officials and head teachers went further to propose that secondary schools should organize sessions during which parents could counsel the students. The observation was made on the basis that generally, parents commanded lots of respect on their children such that if involved, they could make a difference.

Head teachers further noted that after a violent conflict, the MoEST should not post the concerned head teacher away from a school because some of the violence by students in the secondary schools aimed at getting rid of head teachers and doing so would mean rewarding them (the students). The head teachers regretted that a lot of their colleagues had been portrayed as failures by being posted away unceremoniously after their schools had been vandalized. They observed that most of those cases were manipulated with the aim of getting rid of the head teacher and because the MoEST had the tendency, head teachers ended up being victimized.

Another thing that came out was payment for damages. Students observed that after violent conflicts, all students were usually asked to pay for damages; something which they felt was not fair. Therefore, they proposed that after violence, an assessment should be done as was the case then but damages should be paid for by the culprits not every student including the innocent. In their comment, parents said it was necessary that damages should be paid for by the culprits not all the students. The parents emphasized the need to track the culprits so that they pay for the damages.

One parent looked at violence from a spiritual perspective. She/he therefore, said that when a conflict has been managed, stakeholders should make it a point that they pray to God. The proposal was made on the basis that most conflicts in secondary schools were due to the influence and powers of the devil. Thus, prayer was the only weapon with which to deal with the challenge. This is what some head teachers, teachers, students, education officials and parents proposed on what could be done after a conflict has been managed.

HT 3: *A school should conduct a post-mortem of the conflict and come up with ways of addressing issues. Parties should make sure they forgive each other and start afresh. Students should be counselled by different people including parents.*

HT 4: *When a conflict has been managed, all stakeholders should hold a review meeting to see what went wrong and map the way forward. As for the MoEST, they should avoid posting concerned head teachers away because students, who take violence as a tool for getting rid of head a teacher, feel rewarded. It is unfortunate that with such a tendency, head teachers have on several occasions been humiliated by being posted away unceremoniously*

TR 1: *Head teachers and teachers should be counselling students from time to time and there should be two-way communication between staff and students*

TR 6: *After a conflict, what is important is for the parties to forgive each other, forget the past and start afresh. In this way, a conflict will be like a learning point*

FGD 5: *When a conflict has been managed, education officials should come to establish the truth and do everything possible for it not to occur again. If the conflict has led to damage of property, compensation should be paid by the culprits only. Why should innocent students be forced to pay for damages? In addition, students should be reminded about the effects of conflict from time to time.*

FGD 3: *After a conflict, head teachers should improve communication in the schools. They should be calling for assemblies from time to time during which issues can be clarified*

EDO 1: *After a conflict, there is need to strengthen counselling services in the secondary schools and to improve communication*

EDO 2: *After a conflict, there should be reconciliation. Parties should forget the past and start afresh*

PT 2: *Schools should conduct a post-mortem of the situation to see where things went wrong with the aim of not repeating the same mistakes. When that is done, parties should forgive each other and start a new life*

PT 5: *After a conflict, there is need for stakeholders to hold prayers because most of the violence is due to the influence and power of the devil and the only way to deal with it is to pray*

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented and analysed data that were collected in six different parts. In the first part, biographical data for the 103 participants who took part in the study has been presented and analysed. The second part has presented and analysed processes which schools followed in the management of conflict. It has

been found that schools either engaged students or called for police intervention any time a conflict occurred. In addition, it has been established that while stakeholders were able to define issues and brainstorm creative options in the process of managing conflict, they could not create expectations for win-win nor could they combine options into win-win solution because they could be considered weak. To put the study in perspective, causes of conflict, its benefits, its effects and reasons for conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi to be ending in violence mostly have been presented and analysed first. In the third part, the study has presented and analysed data on the involvement of stakeholders in conflict management in secondary schools. The analysis has shown that different stakeholders were involved in conflict management in different ways. For example, head teachers were involved in engaging students or calling for police intervention while students were involved in the engagement of the head teacher and teachers and also referring issues to appropriate offices. In the fourth part, the study has presented and analysed data on skills that stakeholders knew and the strategies they used in the management of conflict. The analysis has shown that stakeholders knew different skills. In addition, the stakeholders used different strategies for the management of conflict mostly depending on the situation. The fifth part has presented and analysed data on mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools. The analysis has shown that support was offered at two levels; school level and system level. As for monitoring, the analysis has shown that there were no special mechanisms in place. If at all anything, there were ad hoc measures such as inspection visits and reports by head teachers. The last part has presented and analysed data on participants' views on what measures they thought would assist in the management of conflict in secondary schools. The analysis has shown that if conflict in secondary schools was to be successfully managed, there was need to address it holistically; before, during and after its occurrence. The next chapter discusses the findings which have just been presented and analysed in this chapter.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the information which has been presented and analysed in chapter 4. In accordance with the objectives of the study, the discussion is based on six main themes namely, causes of conflict in secondary schools, processes followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools, involvement of stakeholders in conflict management in secondary schools, skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict in secondary schools, support and monitoring mechanisms in the management of conflict in secondary schools and proposals on what could be done to ensure effective conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi. To appreciate the existence of conflict in secondary schools, under causes, the chapter first discusses effects of conflict; positive and negative and why conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi mostly end in violence. Presented here below is a discussion on each of the six themes.

5.2. Causes of conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi

According to Bannerman (2012), to understand a conflict better, there is need to understand the underlying causes first. As such, the chapter first discusses causes of conflict. To appreciate the existence of conflict in the secondary schools even better, effects of conflict; both positive and negative are also discussed in addition to why most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence.

Just like in the study by Ramani and Zhimini (2010) in Kenya, the current study established that there were different causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. Major among them were: poor diet, misunderstanding of human rights, misunderstanding of school rules and regulations, poor communication, unfair treatment of students by staff, poor school management by head teachers, instigation of students by teachers and parents, students indiscipline, lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them and peer pressure. Minor ones were lack of teaching resources, poor teaching, lazy prefects and teachers'

failure to maintain social distance. These causes are discussed with a reflection to the human needs theory and/or the contingency theory which guided the study.

5.2.1. Poor diet

The findings of the study revealed that poor diet was one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. It was learnt that most times, students revolted against school management if the food was of poor quality or if it was insufficient. Looked at from the view point of Rothman's (2014) model of contingency conflict management, the issue of diet might be categorised as resource based conflict which might be addressed through expansion of resources. However, the findings further revealed that it was not easy for secondary schools to offer good meals because the fees which students were paying were too low.

Data showed that the official fees which students were supposed to pay to cater for food and other requirements for a term of about 4 months was K3,000 (about \$4). With support from parents, schools adjusted the fees to around K40, 000 (about \$53) which was still not adequate and remained a recipe for conflict. It transpired that in granted aided secondary schools – those secondary schools which were run by churches with support from government – the fees were about K80, 000.00 (about \$106) per term which was a bit realistic. The findings showed that even Government appreciated that the fees were on the lower side such that an initiative was once made by the MoEST to adjust the fees up but it was shot down by Members of Parliament (MPs) who observed that most Malawians could not afford to pay the new fees and in the end, most students could withdraw from school. To the MPs, this would mean denying students their constitutional right.

The issue of diet being a cause of conflict is in tandem with human needs theory which contends that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs (Kok, 2007). Thus, students may not have seen any way of meeting their dietary needs hence, their venturing into conflict. While the problem could be addressed by capacitating the secondary schools financially, the shooting down of the proposal to increase fees meant that the system did not have a solution in sight. Consequently, all that participants could do was to bemoan the situation and pray for the day when fees would be revised up.

Different studies have also featured poor diet as a cause of conflict in secondary schools. Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that in Uganda, at times, students destroyed school property because the food they were given was poor. Similarly, Abaasa (2005) found that at Nabumali High School in Uganda, students destroyed school property because food was bad and there was no milk in their porridge. Another study by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) also found that in Kenya conflicts arose when school administration failed to provide sufficient food. Similar findings were registered by Afful-Broni (2012) whose study in Ghana found that conflicts in schools at times arose due to insufficient food. The similarities in the findings indicate that the issue of diet is a challenge in secondary schools in different countries. This may justify the fact that food is a need as advanced by the human needs theory (Kok, 2007). As such, schools may have to handle it with great care.

5.2.2 Misunderstanding of human rights by students

The findings of the study further indicated that some of the conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were due to students' misunderstanding of human rights. It was learnt that sometimes, students emphasised on their rights without any consideration for their duties. The study further learnt that students could damage property or cause harm to lives because they were fighting for their rights. Such a conduct contradicts the advice by Wani (2011) who says when there is a conflict, people should explore and promote the common good and meet individual needs without infringing on the basic rights of others. Unfortunately, students could infringe on other people's rights as long as they were able to realise their own rights.

According to the Republican Constitution of Malawi, human rights in the country dwell much on freedoms. Consequently, students might have been thinking that all they had were freedoms and not responsibilities. With such thinking, they felt justified to do whatever they wanted. This observation may be supported by Malenya (2016) who established that in Kenya, students felt justified to go on rampage whenever they thought they were being denied what they consider to be 'their right.' Malenya further observed that because of the feeling that they were justified, the students fondly invoked a popular expression 'haki yetu' (our right) and they could do whatever they wanted. The current study therefore, found that

participants bemoaned the behaviour of students and called on them to embrace responsibilities in the fight for their rights.

5.2.3 Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations

The findings of the study revealed that misunderstanding of school rules and regulations was yet another cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. Although the practice required that students and their parents should read the rules and regulations after which they should sign and co-sign them respectively as a sign of commitment, the findings confirmed that there was no commitment to them. Thus, the signing was done as a matter formality.

These findings are in agreement with a study which was conducted by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) in Kenya. The study found that conflict in schools at times arose due to students' failure to adhere to school rules and regulations. In another study, Malenya (2016) found that in Kenya, there were a lot of incidences of students protesting against school rules and regulations describing them as oppressive, strict and tough. The tendency to sign rules and regulations with no commitment to them seemed to be common. A study by Mlalazi (2015) also found that in Zimbabwe, parents did not know the code of conduct for schools much as they were required to read, sign and retain copies for their use.

One challenge that data revealed in the implementation of school rules and regulations was that students were not involved in their formulation and as a result, they did not own them. Such a situation created fertile ground for conflict as observed by Adeyami (2009) who says failure to involve students when executing school policies results in conflict. Fisher (1997 in Ghaffar, 2009) sums it all in the observation that people have an undeniable need to participate in decisions that affect them. Thus, to address the challenge, there may be need to involve students in both the formulation and implementation of the rules and regulations so that they own them.

Since this study also found that some conflicts were due to students' misunderstanding of human rights, it might be assumed that school rules and

regulations were misunderstood because they were seen as impinging on students' rights hence their failure to adhere to them.

5.2.4 Poor communication

The findings of the current study further revealed that some conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were due to poor communication. It was learnt that in so many instances, students acted in a violent manner just because they did not have appropriate or sufficient information on a particular issue. In such cases, students acted on speculation and ended up being violent. For instance, the findings showed that when issues of diet led to violence, it was mostly because students were not informed about change of menu just to realize right at the table that the food they were given was not what they were supposed to have. The findings seemed to be strongly suggesting that in such cases, if students were informed in advance, they could likely not turn violent.

Different studies also found that poor communication was a cause of conflict. Morake, Monobe and Dingwe (2011) found that in Botswana, communication breakdown in schools was a cause for antagonism and it gave rise to conflicts. In another study, Turay (2001) found that in Sierra Leone, poor communication was one of the causes of conflicts in secondary schools. According to Turay (2001), when students were not given a forum to communicate their feelings, interests, fears and concerns, conflicts arose. Similarly, Abaasa (2005) found that in Uganda, poor communication led to violent reactions by students in secondary schools. Abaasa (2005) gives the example of a routine practice such as end of term disco which if cancelled without clear communication to the students, would lead to conflict because of anger. In a study they conducted in Thailand, Johdi and Apitree (2012) found that poor communication created barriers in the school and in the end, conflict arose. The many cases which have been discussed show that the issue of poor communication is a challenge in different countries.

According to Abaasa (2005), failure to communicate sends the message that students are not recognised. From a human needs perspective, this is a serious situation because recognition is a salient need and denying people of such a need is recipe for conflict (Kok, 2007). In addition, Mayer (2001) says communication is one

of the constellational forces in which human needs are embedded and if people are denied of it, conflict will arise. Mayer further observes that conflict escalates because people act on assumptions resulting from inaccurate or wrong information that is usually interpreted as an act in bad faith. In this regard, if secondary schools in Malawi do not improve communication between students and staff, conflict and its consequent violence are likely to keep occurring.

5.2.5 Unfair treatment of students by staff

The study learnt that some conflicts were caused by what they described as unfair treatment of students by staff which manifested itself in different ways including favouritism and harsh punishments. The findings showed that at times, students got angered because some members of staff gave preferential treatment to some students. Similarly, students got angered when harsh punishments had been meted on them. Such anger led to conflict and violence most of the times.

Different other studies found that unfair treatment of students was also a cause of conflict in secondary schools. One such study was conducted by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) in Uganda. The study found that students expressed resentments to unfair treatment and in other instances, they were forced to strike. In Kenya, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) found that students were not amused with hostile punishment meted on them. In the end, such treatment caused conflicts in the schools. A study conducted by Mncube and Harber (2013) found that in South Africa, some violent conflicts were a result of ill-treatment of students by teachers. A good example of such treatment was the administration of corporal punishment. Similarly, Turay (2001) observes that in Sierra Leone, one of the causes of conflicts was teachers' excessive use of corporal punishment which angered students. In Malawi, use of corporal punishment is prohibited and the study confirmed that secondary schools were not administering them. However, cases of favouritism were said to be rampant.

Looked at from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the issue of favouritism implies that students were denied love needs (Maslow, 1943) thereby making conflict the most likely reaction. If assessed from Rothman's (2014) model of contingency conflict management theory, the resulting conflict may fall under identity based conflict and

may require close attention to be managed. The foregoing shows that there was need for schools to be mindful of how they treat students.

5.2.6 Poor management of schools by head teachers

The findings of the study also showed that poor management of schools by head teachers contributes to conflicts in secondary schools. The thinking behind this was that if schools were well managed, some conflicts could not escalate into violence. It was mentioned that because of poor management, some head teachers failed to do the obvious administrative things such as involving students in issues concerning them. In the end, students remained violent as they fought for their involvement.

The findings of the study are in line with different studies. Saiti (2015) observes that the effectiveness of any conflict management strategy depends on the performance management of school principals. By this, it implies that the many conflicts that schools experience may be a result of head teachers' failure to do their work properly. Concurring with Saiti, a study conducted in Osun State in Nigeria by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) found that one of the causes of school conflict was administrative incompetence. In this regard, the study attributed the high rate of conflicts in schools to lack of knowledge in conflict management by school administrators. While the MoEST (2000) indicated that head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and teachers were being trained, the study established that conflict management was not covered such that most participants strongly recommended that these stakeholders should be trained in conflict management.

A study by Gyan and Tandoh-Offin (2014) in Ghana found that ineffective school management contributed a lot to conflicts. As such, the study recommended the establishment of proper guidelines for conflict management so that when a conflict arises, principals should know what steps to take. A study by Kipyego (2013) in Kenya also found that head teachers with poor leadership qualities were a source of conflict as discontentment with decisions made provoked anger among students which finally led to strikes.

In Malawi, poor management of schools by head teachers has been a problem for quite some time. A study which was commissioned by the MoEST in 1996 to find out cause of the many indiscipline cases which led to damage of school property established that it was mostly due to head teachers' lack of management skills (Kuthemba Mwale et al., 1996). The current study revealed that the status quo had not changed as head teachers assumed office without any prerequisite training or orientation. While conflict management was taught in teacher education in courses like Education Administration and Management, the head teachers in the study would still need some form of reorientation as over 20 years had passed since they left college. Otherwise, without the necessary competencies, the head teachers would remain part of the many conflicts.

5.2.7 Instigation of students by teachers and parents

The study found that some of the conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were a result of students being instigated by teachers or parents. Data showed that due to lack of cooperation between the head teacher and teachers, the latter would instigate students just to deal with the head who they did not like. It was also established that parents too would instigate students just to frustrate the head teacher more especially if they did not want him/her. It transpired that there were cases when parents wanted to micromanage schools but if the head teacher was too strong to be manipulated, the parents could instigate students to riot against him/her so that the MoEST should post him/her away from the school. As a result, head teachers had been unceremoniously posted away because their schools had been vandalized after instigation. The findings revealed that participants were not amused by the tendency by the MoEST to post away head teachers whose secondary schools had been vandalized.

The findings further showed that students admitted into a school after being expelled from other schools also did a lot of instigation. The findings showed that generally, such students lacked interest in education and in most cases; they would instigate others to revolt against the head teacher. In this view, blame went to the MoEST who were admitting such students into the system. However, data from education officials indicated that admission of students had been stopped such that this was no longer an issue.

Studies elsewhere mostly talked about instigation by students who had been withdrawn from school. A study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that in Uganda, at times, students who had been withdrawn from school due to poor performance instigated others to strike. In Kenya, students perceived expulsion and suspension from school to be unjustified since they were not given a chance to be heard. As such, conflicts usually arose whenever students were expelled or suspended from school (Ramani & Zhimin 2010). In Malawi, a case close to this could be what happened at one secondary school where students set ablaze school property and damaged some staff houses in protest against the expulsion of fellow students (*The Nyasa Times* of September 28, 2014). However, in this scenario, there was more of sympathy than instigation.

From Rothman's (2014) model of contingency conflict management theory, the instigation by teachers or parents or students might result in objective based conflict since the head teacher would have his/her own intentions for implementing certain programmes which the teachers or the parents or students would not subscribe to. However, the findings showed that to convince students to revolt against the head teacher, the instigators could mostly present their case as a resource based issue. For example, they would say that the students were given poor food because the head teacher was misusing their funds. Since food is a basic need, such an allegation would easily gear students into violence.

5.2.8 Students' indiscipline

The findings further showed that in some secondary schools, conflict was caused by students' indiscipline. It transpired that because discipline in schools was on the decline, violence by students had become a common thing. The findings clearly showed that with human rights, students took it that they were free to do whatever they wanted. Consequently, enforcing discipline was met with a lot of resistance from students. Just as with school rules and regulations, a head teacher who would be serious with the enforcement of discipline in the school would be seen to be oppressive and chances of students revolting against him would be high.

The findings of the study were in agreement with the observation which was made by the MoEST (2014) in a paper which was presented at a management meeting in

Zomba from 13th to 15th March, 2014. In the paper, the MoEST bemoaned the rising number of indiscipline cases that led to damage and destruction of school property, bodily injury and even death of a student in one case. A study by Ageng'e and Simatwa (2011 in Kipkemboi & Kipruto, 2013) also found that in Kenya, indiscipline was one of the major causes of conflict in secondary schools. These findings show that secondary schools in Malawi and world over, were supposed to instil discipline if they were to manage conflict accordingly and reduce its associated violence.

5.2.9 Failure to involve students in decisions that concerned them

The findings of the study showed that another cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi was failure to involve students in decisions that concerned them. It was learnt that there were times when students acted irrationally because they were not involved in decision making. The current study established that while poor diet was a cause of conflict in its own right, the major problem was that in most cases schools did not involve students in drawing the menu. In the end, students felt head teachers were misappropriating their money despite the fact that the fees they were paying were too low to afford schools better meals.

The revelation is in tandem with the findings of a study by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) in Osun State in Nigeria which indicated that failure to involve students in school affairs was a cause of conflict. According to Fisher (1997 in Ghaffar, 2009), people have an undeniable need for participation in decisions that affect them such that failure to do so might create grounds for conflict. From a human needs perspective, involving students in issues concerning them might satisfy their needs for identity and belongingness (Maslow, 1943). In as far as conflict management is concerned, this is very important because as observed by Rothman (2014), people would always want to be recognised failure and failure to do so may lead into identity based conflict.

The foregoing shows that some of the conflicts which were tormenting secondary schools in Malawi could be properly managed and the associated violence avoided if schools involved students in decisions that concerned them. Unfortunately, the findings further revealed that because of the traditional thinking that students are

supposed to listen to elders, head teachers and teachers would hardly engage them for the fear of being considered weak.

5.2.10 Peer pressures

The findings of the study also showed that at times, students engaged in vandalism just because of peer pressure. It was learnt that there were times when students engaged in violence not because there was anything wrong but because their colleagues elsewhere had gone on rampage. Data showed that because of such pressure, most times, schools experienced violence in a sequence; one after the other.

The findings further revealed that at times peer pressure was mounted by students who had been admitted from another school. This revelation agrees with Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) who found that at times, students who had been withdrawn from school due to poor performance instigated others to strike. The findings further showed that such students were usually so influential that they could introduce a foreign culture and have it embraced by the others within a short period of time after which they could operationalize it. The findings further showed that to make their action authentic, the students would fake reasons and popularize them so that their colleagues are persuaded and finally mobilized. However, education officials emphasized that admission of students into secondary schools had been stopped and the issue was water under the bridge.

5.2.11 Other causes of conflict in secondary schools

The findings of the study further revealed that other causes of conflict included lack of teaching resources. The research findings showed that lack of teaching resources angered students more especially if management was not showing any interest to improve the situation. The issue was well collaborated with a study that was conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2012) who found that in Zimbabwe, a lot of conflicts in secondary schools were a result of insufficient resources. Similarly, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) found that in Kenya, a lot of conflicts in secondary schools were a result of limited resources; finance, materials and facilities. The situation was similar in South Africa where studies by Mncube and Harber (2013), Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) found that causes of conflict included competition for

insufficient resources. The studies observed that at times, when resources were not sufficient, students got discontented and opted for strikes.

The findings showed that to students, teaching resources were needs and as observed by Maslow (1943), denying people of their needs provokes conflict. According to Rothman's (2014) model of contingency conflict management theory, such a situation may give rise to resource based conflict. To address the situation, secondary schools may have to provide the resources and where they cannot do so, they may have to communicate the same and show some levels of concern.

The findings showed that conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were also caused by poor teaching. The study learnt that if a teacher was not doing his or her work properly, students could easily get frustrated and engage in violence to try to influence him or her to change or influence education officials to remove him or her from the school.

The findings agree with Adeyami (2009) who observes that in Nigeria, some conflicts between teachers and students arose because of teachers' underperformance. It is said that when a teacher did not perform his/her duties as expected, students made fun of him/her. In the end, the teacher got angry and a conflict arose. In agreement, Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) observe that in Nigeria, one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools was negligence of duties by teachers. According to Rothman's (2014) model of the contingency conflict management theory, the type of conflict in this regard would be objective based as the students would be fighting for the realization of their goal to which the teacher would be seen to act antagonistically.

The study also learnt that lazy prefects were a cause of conflict. It transpired that, due to their lack of interest in education, such prefects could incite riots so that learning should be disturbed. It came out clear that with respect that the prefects commanded, when they called for mass action against the school, it usually happened like that. This might be more of the instigation issue and according to Rothman's (2014) model of contingency conflict management theory; it may give rise to objective based conflict as the prefects would be trying to achieve their goal which was against taking studies seriously. To counter such a scenario, the findings

showed that most schools considered good performance and interest in school for a student to become a prefect. With such screening, the study further learnt that most prefects were serious with school and in most cases made it to university.

The findings further showed that teachers' failure to maintain social distance with girls was yet another cause of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. The findings revealed that in such cases, boys considered teachers as competitors. However, because students were socioeconomically weaker than the teachers, violence became an additional weapon with which to defeat the competitors. Consequently, the boys resorted to violence anytime competition arose. These findings agree with Adeyami (2009) who observes that rivalry between students and teachers over girlfriends is a serious cause of conflict between the two parties.

Looked at from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the teachers and the students were struggling for love needs and such a situation could likely lead into conflict. However, the current study established that the teachers and the boys were not supposed to be in love with girls and that the practice was an issue of immorality. According to Rothman's (2014) contingency conflict management theory, the conflict that emanated from the competition for girls could be categorized as identity based conflict as the two parties wanted to be identified with a certain type of life.

The causes of conflict that have been discussed were further categorised into primary and secondary causes. A total of four primary causes were identified and each of the remaining ones fell under one of the four. The first one was poor management of schools by head teachers. Secondary causes under this one include failure to involve students in decisions that concerned them, poor communication and unfair treatment of students. All these were spin-offs from poor management of schools by head teachers. The second primary cause was misunderstanding of human rights. A close analysis showed that due to misunderstanding of human rights, students' indiscipline and misunderstanding of school rules and regulations were on the rise. The third one was instigation of students which could be by teachers, parents, lazy prefects or other students who exerted (peer) pressure on their friends. The final primary cause was lack of professionalism by teachers which gave rise to issues like poor teaching and failure to maintain social distance.

5.3 Effects of conflict on secondary schools

The findings of the study revealed that conflict had both positive and negative effects on secondary schools in Malawi. These findings imply that on the one hand, conflict is not just a bad thing as it is contended by the traditional view of conflict (Meer, 2013) while on the other hand, it is not just as good as advanced by the traditional and interactionist views of conflict (Meer, 2013 and Robbins & Judge 2013). In this regard, the findings of the study justified the use of the managed view of conflict which accepts the negatives of a conflict but emphasizes the need to manage the situation. The effects are discussed in two parts; positive effects and negative effects.

5.3.1 Positive effects of conflict on secondary schools

On the part of positive effects of conflict on secondary schools, the findings revealed four different areas namely; an opportunity to learn and improve the running of schools, improvement of infrastructure, an opportunity for students to air out their concerns and a means to deter would be offenders. The four positive effects are discussed one after the other here below.

5.3.1.1 A learning opportunity for stakeholders

The study learnt that conflict offered the schools an opportunity to learn where things were not well and improve on them. It came out clear that this was the case because conflict offered the parties an opportunity for self-assessment and understanding of others. In the end, parties registered improved cooperation and trust which resulted in a rebirth in the way business was conducted. This is in tandem with the observations by Gamage and Pang (2003) who note that conflict can be a source of creativity, constructive action and organisational renewal. Summarising the significance of conflict, Kaiser (2003 in Sarpkaya, 2014) says “the clash of thesis with antithesis can result in synthesis.” Thus, after a conflict, the secondary schools registered a synthesis in their day to day business hence the rebirth.

To the contrary, the current study further established that some schools were registering violent conflicts almost on yearly basis. It can be argued therefore, that if conflict was indeed an opportunity for learning and consequent renewal in the running of the schools, subsequent conflicts would be successfully management

such that cases of violence would be reduced. Therefore, while conflict might indeed be a learning opportunity, the study could not appreciate it much because of the recurrence of violence which meant there was no learning of any kind.

5.3.1.2 Improvement of infrastructure

The findings of the study showed that conflict caused a lot of damage to school property. However, on a rather instrumental note, it transpired that schools benefitted from the situation in the sense that it resulted in the improvement of infrastructure. It was observed that after conflict, damage was assessed and costed after which students paid for it. Using the money, schools were able to carry out maintenance works on infrastructure and replacement of broken equipment where it was broken. The findings further revealed that in most cases, the costing of damages was exaggerated with the aim of covering even things which might have been damaged before the violence. By so doing, infrastructure improved and schools changed their faces for the better.

While this was a benefit, the current study established that there were many associated challenges. First, it was learnt that there were cases of schools which had not been maintained even after damages had been paid for. One possible reason for the scenario was that with an unstable currency, there were chances of the raised money being overtaken by inflation thereby losing the buying power. It also transpired that there were cases when students could not meet the cost of the damage caused because it was too high. It was revealed that at one of the secondary schools, when students burnt 30 computers, payment for damages did not include them because the students could not afford. As such, the computers were not replaced. It was also noted that where maintenance was done, materials used were generally of poor quality compared to the initial materials. Thus, instead of gaining value, infrastructure ended up losing value.

One other revelation was that the repayment system lacked fairness in the sense that even those who were not involved in the violence were forced to pay for damages just because the system could not easily identify the culprits. Such a practice penalized innocent students. The findings showed that parents and students

were not amused with the practice and in a way it posed a danger as innocent students would be forced to participate in vandalizing school property so that they pay for damages they actually cause.

5.3.1.3 An opportunity for students to air out their concerns

The current study established that generally, students were not given an opportunity to air out their concerns and that if an opportunity was there, those concerns would not be acted upon. According to Turay (2001), such a situation is delicate and can likely lead to conflict. In fact, the study further revealed that in secondary schools in Malawi, conflicts mostly ended in violence because that was the only way through which students' concerns could be heard and acted upon. Indeed, the findings established that after a conflict, students were usually given an opportunity to air out their concerns and have them acted upon. However, the recurrence of conflict in secondary schools might imply that students' concerns were heard and acted upon soon after the conflict after which the status quo remained.

According to Mayer (2001), denying people the opportunity to air out their concerns means denying them the opportunity to ventilate their emotions in safe increments thereby building pressure of emotions which can explode into violence. Mayer observes that emotions are the energy that fuel conflict as they contribute strength, courage and perseverance necessary for people to participate in the conflict forcefully. This means that secondary schools in Malawi could manage a lot of conflicts by just according students to air out their concerns and have them acted upon.

5.3.1.4 A deterrence to would be offenders

The findings of the study further revealed that conflict assisted in deterring would be offenders from doing the same. It was established that after a conflict, if some students were rusticated or suspended or expelled from school, the message sent was that any violence would not be tolerated. As a result, students who wanted to be violent would think twice before acting knowing that they too could face a similar fate. While this was seen to be positive, expelling students as result of conflict meant that schools were not interested in conflict management but rather conflict resolution which according Sarpkaya (2014) focuses on separating conflicting parties with the

aim of preventing them from harming one another. This is contrary to the managed conflict view which emphasizes on the need to manage the situation (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Thus, instead of rushing at expelling students from the schools, secondary schools would have to find mechanisms for managing the situation.

The findings also showed that one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi influence of newly admitted students who were expelled from elsewhere. This means that while would be offenders would be deterred from doing the same; there were high chances that they would be influenced by vandals who upon being expelled elsewhere, would be admitted into the school.

5.3.2. Negative effects of conflict on secondary schools

The findings of the study revealed that there were different ways in which conflict affected secondary schools in Malawi. Specifically, three different ways were identified namely; (a) a disturbance to teaching and learning, (b) damage of property and (c) a danger to people's lives. These effects of conflict are discussed in detail here below.

5.3.2.1 A disturbance to teaching and learning

The findings of the study were very clear that conflict caused disturbance to teaching and learning in secondary schools in Malawi. The study established that conflict resulted in closure of schools thereby bringing teaching and learning to a halt. Not only that, in other cases, students got rusticated or suspended or expelled from school thereby disturbing their learning. In the process, some students could not to regain their level of potential. The findings further revealed that conflict resulted in strained relationships between students and teachers. Such a situation was observed to be retrogressive as time, energy and attention of the conflicting parties would be redirected towards the conflict and not teaching and learning as was supposed to be the case.

Different studies agree that conflict disturbs learning. Gamage and Pang (2003) observe that conflict diverts energy from the task at hand, destroys morale and in the end decreases productivity. So teachers who used to perform wonders could not do so because their morale was destroyed while their energy was diverted to the

conflict. Likewise, students who were performing very well could not do so because they too had their morale destroyed and their energy diverted to the conflict. In agreement, Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) say that in Nigeria, conflict led to a steady decline in the quality of education.

5.3.2.2 Damage of property

The findings of the study came out clear that conflict resulted in damage of school property. There were different cases which could substantiate these findings. For example, *The Nyasa Times* of September 28, 2014 carried a story in which students set ablaze school property including thirty computers and other property worth millions of kwachas. Such cases remained numerous to the effect that in 2014, the MoEST issued a circular letter (Ref. No. C31/1/1) expressing regret on the rising cases of riots and vandalism in secondary schools which led to damage of school property. In fact, this study emanated from such a background after the MoEST presented a paper during a management meeting in Zomba in 2014 in which they bemoaned the rising number of conflicts that led to damage and destruction of school property (MoEST, 2014).

The findings are in total agreement with studies elsewhere. In Kenya, a study by Kipyego (2013) found that many conflicts were characterized by violence and wanton destruction of institutional property. Similarly, In Uganda, Abaasa (2005) observed that a term hardly passed without a school striking and that in most cases students destroy school property. Abaasa (2005) gives an example of Kisubi High School where students went on rampage destroying property worth millions of shillings all because they were denied an end of term disco. In South Africa, Majola (2013) also found that conflict caused a lot of damage to school property.

While respondents were of the view that conflict improved infrastructure, the findings indicated that in most cases, damaged infrastructure remained damaged even after students had paid for it. Possible reasons for such a development were that with inflation, the buying power had been lost or someone somewhere had misappropriated the finances. In other cases, maintenance was done but the materials used were not as strong as the original ones or the workmanship was not up to standard. The findings further showed that payment for damages was costly as

it came over and above fees such that some students ended up being withdrawn because their parents could not pay for the damages.

5.3.2.3 A danger to people's lives

The findings also showed that conflict endangered people's lives. It was learnt that some years before, a student lost life during a conflict at one of the schools. Similarly, the paper which was presented by the Directorate of Secondary and Distance Education during a management meeting in Zomba in 2014 indicated that in one of the conflicts captured, a student lost his life (MoEST, 2014).

The findings are in total agreement with studies made elsewhere. In Uganda, Abaasa (2005) says a student was burnt to death when fellow students burnt a dormitory block. This is qualified by Aluede, Jimoh, Agwinede and Omoregie (2005 in Fatile and Adejuwon, 2011), who observe that students' crisis results in loss of lives and properties among others. Such a loss is contrary to the tenets of conflict management which aims at minimizing the dysfunctions of conflict while enhancing its constructive functions in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization (Rahim, 2002).

Against this background, the findings established that whenever a conflict arose, stakeholders were never at peace. Parents feared for the lives of their children, head teachers and teachers feared for their lives while education officials feared for the lives of teachers, students and their own lives especially that there were times when they had been chased from schools. Although students were on the offensive most of the times, they too feared for their lives more especially when the police came into the scene to control the situation.

5.4 Why most conflicts ended in violence in secondary schools in Malawi

Although literature emphasizes that conflict is healthy and that what matters is how it is managed, in secondary schools in Malawi, the case was different as most conflicts ended in violence and damage to school property. The findings of the study revealed five reasons and they are: (a) win it all mentality, (b) head teachers' lack of conflict management skills, (c) it was the only way for students to communicate and be

heard (d) it was the easiest way to get rid of unwanted head teacher and (e) poor upbringing of students. These reasons are discussed here below.

5.4.1 Win it all mentality

The findings showed that among other reasons, most conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi ended in violence because a win it all mentality by both staff and students. Unfortunately, it transpired that in the end, no one won anything. This was in agreement with yet another revelation that both staff and students preferred competing strategy in the management of conflict. The findings showed that students felt their wishes were non-negotiable such that failure to address them made them wild whereas staff could hardly bow to students' demands because traditionally, students were supposed to be subordinates. With such a mentality, parties could not accommodate contrary views and competing remained the most viable option.

By using competing strategy, secondary schools in Malawi created a fertile ground for fighting. This is supported by Morake et al. (2011) who say that people who use the strategy of competing try hard to get what they want irrespective of whether or not they ruin relationship. Consequently, Everard et al. (2010) call the strategy, "fighting" while Blake and Moutom (1964 in Rahim, 2001) call it "forcing." The many cases of violence in secondary schools in Malawi might confirm that the strategy of competing ruins relationships as people who were supposed to have a parent/child relationship became enemies.

5.4.2 Head teachers' lack of conflict management skills

The findings further showed that most conflicts escalated into violence because head teachers did not manage students properly. The findings established that this was the case because the head teachers, as chief executive officers for the secondary schools, did not have conflict management skill much as they indicated that they knew them. The findings confirmed that head teachers did not have conflict management skills because they were not trained in conflict management and they assumed office without any induction. It transpired that the head teachers learnt about conflict management while undergoing teacher training in college. Outside that, they were drilled in the handling of discipline which was different from conflict

management. The findings concluded that students were quite objective but because of poor school management, they usually lost their cool and turned violent.

The findings are in tandem with studies elsewhere. For instance, Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) found that in South Africa, most conflicts were a result of poor school management by school principals. Consequently, the two studies recommended that school principals and teachers must be trained in conflict management and that before assuming office they should be inducted. Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) also found that in Nigeria, most conflicts were a result of lack of management skills by school principals. Consequently, they recommended that there should be seminars, conferences, and symposia on education management in general and conflict management in particular. Afful-Broni (2012) observes that in Ghana, seminars and workshops were being held during which school principals; teachers and even students were accorded an opportunity to share views on conflict management.

5.4.3 The only way for students to communicate and be heard

The findings showed that in secondary schools in Malawi, it was not easy for students to communicate their views to staff and that where an opportunity was available, their views could not be easily acted upon. However, it transpired that when they acted violently, action was taken spontaneously. Consequently, the findings established that precedence had been set that violence was an effective way of communicating if a response was to be received. The findings further established that the system did not provide alternative channels through which students would take issues if they were not satisfied with the way they were treated at school level. This made violence the only plausible and in a way legitimate alternative.

These findings are in agreement with some other studies. For example, the initial study which was commissioned in 1996 by the MoEST established that students at one secondary school registered their anger by burning the head teacher's office because the head teacher was seen not pay attention to their grievances. Similarly, a study conducted by Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) in Nigeria found that for school principals to managing conflict, there was need to put in place an open door policy

through which students and teachers could be engaged from time to time with their concerns taken on board using different mechanisms including suggestion box.

Basing on the findings, the situation would be redressed if secondary schools started acting on students' concerns without waiting for violence. Similarly, some violence would be avoided if the MoEST put in place alternative avenues to which students would refer their issues in an event of staff not doing enough.

5.4.4 A means to get rid of a head teacher not want

The findings of the study showed that precedence had been set that violence by students was the easiest way to get rid of a head teacher. The findings revealed that when student became violent, the MoEST usually posted the head teacher away. In this regard, whenever students did not want a head teacher, they could become violent even if the issue at hand was very small and manageable. Similarly, if teachers and/or parents did not want a head teacher, they could instigate students to become violent after which the MoEST could post him/her away.

The findings show that secondary schools exploited a conflict management technique called altering structural variables by Robbins & Judge (2013) which the MoEST had embraced. According to Robbins and Judge, using this technique involves changing the formal organization structure and the interaction patterns of conflicting parties through such mechanisms as job redesign, transfers and creation of coordinating positions. However, transferring an officer does not solve the problem but transfers it as its aim is simply to separate the conflicting parties so that they do not harm each other (Sarpkaya, 2014).

The findings revealed that secondary schools had at times had very good head teachers posted away just because some students or teachers or parents sabotaged them through violence. This meant that a head teacher's stay at a secondary school in Malawi was always in the hands of students and the other stakeholders who could remove him or her any time they wanted through violence. To counter the situation, the MoEST would have to find ways of managing conflicts and not just altering structural variables through transfer of head teachers.

5.4.5 Poor upbringing of students

The findings of the study further established that most conflicts ended into violence just because of the sort of students who were there in secondary schools. It transpired that due to poor upbringing, most students lacked morals and values and consequently were very unruly and uncontrollable. The findings showed that even where efforts were made to have a conflict peacefully managed, the students could resort to violence just out of mischief.

The findings tally with observations by Afful-Broni (2012) who acknowledges that some students indeed resort to violence due to mischief. Affil-Broni further notes that such students could be assisted through guidance and counselling. Fortunately, the current study established that the secondary schools which were involved in the study had guidance and counselling structures although with some challenges including use of untrained teacher counsellors.

5.5 Processes followed in the management of conflict

The findings of the study revealed that there were two approaches in the handling of conflict by schools. In the first approach, whenever a conflict arose, staff would engage students in order to manage the situation. The findings further established that engagement with students was done in different ways. First, the head teacher and/or teachers could engage prefects who could in turn engage their colleagues. If this was not the case, the head teacher and/or teachers could engage the entire student body. The last option was engagement of individual students by discipline committees. It came out clear that this option was the most commonly used. However, worth noting was a revelation that in this option, conflict was treated as an issue of indiscipline such that students involved were looked at as lacking discipline and they were subjected to disciplinary measures including punishments if found guilty.

Literature looks at discipline committees from two different perspectives. Some studies recognize discipline committees as avenues for managing conflict. For example, Turay (2001) observes that in Sierra Leone, one of the duties of a discipline committee was to arbitrate conflicts between different stakeholders in the school. On the contrary, Bickmore (2004 in Hakvoort & Olsson, 2014) expresses

resentments on the use of discipline committees to manage conflict. Bickmore observes that when schools address students' conflict as a discipline problem, students get deprived of opportunities to learn about conflict management and to appreciate diversity. Looking at the two views, the current study was inclined to conclude that there was need to reorient discipline committees so that they are able to manage conflict as a difference in opinion and not indiscipline.

The findings showed that in the other approach, instead of engaging students, police would be called to intervene in order to protect life and property. The understanding behind this was that students usually became violent when a conflict arose such that there was need to proactively safeguard life and property. To the contrary, the findings revealed that the involvement of the police at times worsened the situation as students took their intervention for entertainment. Such a revelation showed the need for secondary schools to engage students as much as possible and call for police intervention only when dialogue had failed and students had turned violent.

Literature shows that calling for police intervention was a common practice in the management of secondary schools. In Uganda, Abaasa (2005) reports of a case in which students damaged school property and police came in to calm the situation. Abaasa observes that in the end of the intervention by the police, some students were arrested. In Malawi, a lot of violent conflicts attracted police intervention with some students arrested in the process. For example, *The Nation* of Tuesday, 4 January 2011 carried an article which talked about court acquitting Viphya Secondary School pupils who had been arrested on suspicion that they had initiated a strike that cost the school's property worth K2.3 million. Further to this, *The Nation* of November 17, 2011 carried a story which said police had arrested 9 students in riots that occurred at St John Bosco Secondary School in Mzimba.

The study further wanted to know if in the process of managing conflict, participants followed Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) or any other models which were there. The findings revealed that while the second and third stages – define issues and brainstorm creative options respectively – were easy to follow; the first and last – develop expectation for win-win and combining options into

a win-win solution respectively were not that easy for most stakeholders. The findings revealed that for head teachers, it was not easy to develop expectation for a win-win and combine options into a win-win solution because traditionally, they could be looked at as being weak. Paradoxically, the findings showed that students too could hardly give room for win-win as they felt that their demands were most of the times, non-negotiable. This meant that managing conflict in secondary schools in Malawi was not that easy as both parties aimed at winning it all.

Failure to practise win-win in the management of conflict contravenes the tenets of most conflict management models. One such model is the Conflict Resolution Education Programme Models which emphasise very much on the need for a win-win interest-based problem-solving (Jones and Kmatta, 2001). Unfortunately, the findings showed that schools chose to shut students down so that they do not bargain for what was for them. Equally, students could not give room for something less than what they wanted. However, the findings made it clear that if schools were to manage conflict peacefully, there was need to embrace win-win approaches as advanced by most conflict management models. In this case, there would be need to engage students as much as possible otherwise, violence would remain inseparable from secondary schools in Malawi.

5.6 Stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools

The current study established that stakeholders namely; head teachers, teachers, students, parents and education officials were involved in different ways in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. This part discusses how each of these stakeholders was involved in the process.

5.6.1 Head teachers' involvement

Saiti (2015) observes that the effectiveness of conflict management in schools depends on how school principals handle the situation. The current study, therefore, assessed how head teachers were involved in the process. The findings showed that head teachers' involvement was mostly two fold; engaging students and other stakeholders or calling for police intervention. It was learnt that engagement with students was done in the whole conflict management cycle; before, during and after its occurrence. Such an approach is in agreement with the managed conflict view by

Robbins and Judge (2013) which says in conflict management, there is need to manage the whole context in which conflict occurs; before, during and after its occurrence.

The findings showed that before the occurrence of conflict, head teachers' engagement with students took different forms. First, they were involved in the process of enforcing school rules and regulations which were very critical in the management of conflict in secondary schools. This must have been a big task as the study also revealed that misunderstanding of school rules and regulations was one of the causes of conflict in secondary schools.

Elsewhere, Malenya (2016) observes that in Kenya, school rules and regulations were crucial in the management of schools. Malenya (2016) further advises that for students to follow rules and regulations in a meaningful way; there is need for the students to understand them not only in terms of what they (the rules) require of them but also, how they (the students) stand to benefit by complying with them. To achieve this, it is suggested that students should not be involved only in the implementation of the rules and regulations but also in their formulation.

The findings further showed that head teachers' engagement with students was also done through conflict management structures which they established such as guidance and counselling structures and discipline committees. In this case, the head teachers' first task was to make sure that such structures were in place. Upon achieving that, the head teachers were supposed to make sure that the structures were functional by among other things, monitoring their operations and receiving reports.

As observed by Afful-Broni (2012), guidance and counselling is very important in conflict management in schools as most people, especially students, get involved in conflict simply out of mischief or fun. In this regard, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) conclude that conflict can best be managed if schools embrace guidance and counselling programmes so as to instil in students a spirit of tolerance and coexistence. As for discipline committees, Turay (2001) says in conflict

management, such committees are very important more especially when their roles include arbitrating between conflicting parties.

The findings further showed that head teachers were involved in conflict management through interaction with students and other stakeholders in forums such as meetings with students, assemblies, head teachers' talk, PTA meetings, staff meetings and many others. Through these forums, head teachers engaged with students and other stakeholders and in the process, conflict management was facilitated.

The findings further revealed that during the actual conflict, the head teachers' role was still to engage students and or staff to try to influence them on a position taken for a peaceful management of the conflict. If it was a committee handling the conflict, the head teachers' role would be to advise the committee accordingly, to receive reports and make a decision. Depending on the situation, the head teachers' decision would be in a form of recommendation to be forwarded to the MoEST through the EDM for further direction or an action to be implemented by the school itself within its mandate.

Such practices are in tandem with what studies elsewhere recommend. For example, Kgomo (2006 in Majola, 2013) observes that the role of the school principal in conflict management is to facilitate the process by being an agent of communication, problem solving, a negotiator, a leader, a mediator, a decision maker and a researcher. However, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) recommend that to achieve this, the school principal needs, among other things; drive, energy, vision, and skills for conflict management with which he or she can create conducive environment for learning. This might justify the need for head teachers to be trained in conflict management as earlier observed by the study.

The other form of involvement by head teachers was to call for police intervention. The findings established that some head teachers preferred engaging police even if students were not violent while others only called for police intervention if the situation was volatile. As mentioned earlier, the findings showed that police intervention was a recipe for more serious violence in most cases. Such findings

acknowledge the need for continued engagement with students rather than police intervention if conflict is to be peacefully managed in secondary school. As earlier observed, police intervention has been registered in different scenarios. For example, a study by Mncube and Harber (2013) which was conducted in South Africa found that one way in which schools dealt with violence was to call for police intervention. However, such a move might be an indication that win-win has failed.

5.6.2 Teachers' involvement

The study found that teachers too were involved in conflict management in different ways. The first way was through membership of discipline committees. The study learnt that schools had committees responsible for handling discipline cases which were headed by deputy head teachers. Among other members, class teachers for concerned students were always involved in proceedings. Likewise, boarding masters and boarding mistresses were always involved in the proceedings if the issues concerned boarding affairs.

While appreciating the involvement of teachers in conflict management through membership of discipline committees, the study established that there were challenges with handling conflict from that perspective. First, teachers were not prepared in any way for the task such that they could not assist students in the best way possible. Second, handling conflict from a discipline point of it, results in conflict wearing a negative face as the concerned students are deemed to be undisciplined and not holding contrary opinions (Bickmore, 2004 in Hakvoort & Olsson, 2014). As such, teachers could not assist concerned students accordingly as they were labelled undisciplined.

The findings showed that teachers were also involved in conflict management through guidance and counselling. The study established that the secondary schools had teachers designated as counsellors. In addition, it was learnt that the work of class teachers also involved counselling students. This was very important as observed by Ramani and Zhimin (2010) that conflict can best be managed if schools embrace guidance and counselling programmes in order to instil in students a spirit of tolerance and coexistence.

However, the study findings revealed a number of drawbacks in the provision of guidance and counselling services. First, it was learnt that counsellors were not trained in guidance and counselling while those who were trained using personal initiatives were not recognized by the system, something that must have demotivated them. Not only that, it was also established that schools did not have enough counsellors such that one counsellor could be required to handle over four hundred students. Furthermore, it transpired that guidance and counselling were not given enough time such that the teacher counsellors could not sufficiently engage with the students. Against such a background, the findings showed that guidance and counselling might not have been as effective as should have been the case.

Literature acknowledges that counselling and guidance in secondary schools indeed faces challenges. Oguzie (2014) states that challenges in the offering of guidance and counselling include use of non-professionals, inadequate continuous staff training and development and inadequate time allocated for the service. With such an observation, Oguzie (2014) makes a recommendation to the effect that school administrators should effectively support guidance and counselling through continuous staff training.

The findings further showed that teachers were involved in conflict management through the enforcement of school rules and regulations. It came out clear that since they were always in touch with students, teachers were better placed to enforce school rules and regulations. The findings also showed that teachers were involved in conflict management through the teaching of carrier subjects such as Social and Development studies and Life Skills. It actually transpired that there were a lot of topics on conflict management in the two subjects.

Finally, the findings showed that during the actual conflict, teachers worked hand in hand with head teachers to try to find a solution to a conflict. In the process, teachers offered advice to head teachers accordingly. Studies elsewhere have also shown that teachers play a crucial role in the management of conflict in schools. Snodgrass and Blunt (2009) found that in South Africa, teachers spent a lot of time and energy managing classroom conflicts that arose with administrators, other teachers and even parents. However, Snodgrass and Blunt acknowledged that

teachers may not have been that effective because of not being trained in conflict management. The current study makes a similar observation after noting that teachers and even head teachers and education officials were not trained in conflict management.

5.6.3 Students' involvement

Students' involvement in conflict management is very important. Consequently, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) say schools in Kenya conduct consultation with prefects regularly to identify areas of conflict and how best to handle them. The findings of the study showed that students in Malawi were also involved in the management of conflict but at a superficial level as their views could hardly bring any difference. It transpired that although from time to time prefects engaged staff on behalf of their colleagues, their efforts rarely bore fruits due to the schools' failure to embrace their views. The study saw this as a lost chance since elsewhere, engagement with prefects assists a lot in conflict management. Kipyego (2009) reports that in Kenya, prefects' involvement minimized conflict in secondary schools.

The findings further showed that students were also involved in referring issues to appropriate offices for guidance and further direction. In this regard, issues related to boarding would be referred to the boarding master or mistress while issues related class operations would be referred to class teachers. If issues were more complicated, they could be referred to the head teacher or deputy head teacher. Outside referring issues to the appropriate offices, the students had very little say and their concerns were rarely acted upon.

The findings also showed that there were times when students engaged parents for advice on different issues such as those related to fees. The study established that the issue of fees was possibly one of the success stories in as far as parents' involvement in conflict management was concerned. It transpired that all the schools that were involved in the study had their fees increased with the blessing of students after parents facilitated the process. With the new fees, schools were able to improve diet for the students thereby managing a lot of likely conflicts.

In the final analysis, the findings showed that students were in a way extremists. Their likely reaction when a conflict arose was either avoidance; doing nothing about it so as not to disturb learning or violence so as to communicate their concerns and be heard. This might be one of the reasons why most conflicts ended into violence because if they decided to act, their action was at the extreme end where violence was the only option. If that was not possible, the other extreme was to avoid the conflict and pretend as though everything was in order.

5.6.4 Education officials' involvement

The findings showed that education officials were involved in conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi in five different ways. First, it transpired that they were involved in training head teachers and their deputies in school management which they said covered issues of conflict management. This is very important as observed by Msila (2012) who emphasized the need for induction for school principals before assuming office and CPD for those already serving. However, the head teachers themselves indicated that they were not trained in conflict management and that if at all anything; they were oriented on discipline during management meetings. Document analysis showed that indeed, issues of discipline were covered during management meetings outlining procedures to be followed when handling such issues.

It might be worth noting that even though the officials indicated that they were involved in training head teachers in conflict management, they too were not prepared in a way for handling conflict management. According to Northouse (2015), an individual who has not been trained in conflict management does not have the technical competences with which to manage conflict. As such, the education officials might not have been the right people to train staff.

The other form of involvement by the education officials which the study found was providing schools with guide lines for managing conflict. However, from document analysis, it transpired that what schools had were guidelines for handling discipline cases and not conflict management. The problem with mixing the two is that conflict wears a negative face contrary to the sentiments by Scannell (2010) who says conflict is necessary as it challenges people to think harder, to be more creative, to

develop greater understanding of issues and to search for alternative avenues that are more efficient, more effective and more productive.

The findings showed that education officials were also involved in reviewing resolutions which were made at school for final verdict. Thus, if a school recommended that students should be expelled, it was the duty of the education officials at the ministry headquarters to approve it or turn it down. This could be authenticated by the paper which the DSDE presented during a management meeting in Zomba in 2014 which indicated that between January, 2013 and March, 2014, 69 cases were referred to the MoEST for final decision (MoEST, 2014). However, head teachers bemoaned two things; the slow pace at which the education acted and their occasional failure to uphold recommendations made by schools; a thing that head teachers felt weakened their positions. The latter concern could be due to the traditional thinking that a student should always be in the wrong.

The findings further showed that education officials' involvement in conflict management was in the form of mediation between the conflicting parties. The study learnt that when a conflict had occurred, education officials usually engaged the students and staff to hear their sides of the story after which a solution would be found. These findings are in agreement with studies elsewhere. Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) say that in Nigeria, the Ministry of Education got involved in the management of conflicts involving students by sending inspectors of schools to the concerned schools to mediate. Supporting the practice, Bodin and Crawford (1999 in Ghaffar, 2009) warn that since school comprises people with different generational ages, mediation is one of the best strategies for handling conflicts. However, students complained that the education officials usually met the parties separately and in the end, they believed staff more.

Finally, the findings showed that education officials were also involved in the assessment of damages caused during violent conflicts. However, some participants bemoaned the slow pace at which the education officials moved while others bemoaned the amounts that students were paying after the assessment which they felt were on the higher side. It further transpired that in other instances, all students were asked to pay for damages even those who were not involved in the violence.

This could be a deliberate move aimed at deterring would be offenders more especially that some participants mentioned that one advantage of conflict was that it deterred would be offenders. However, the study found that to students and parents, this was unfair.

5.6.5 Parents' involvement

The study learnt that parents were involved in conflict management before, during and after its occurrence. Such an approach is in tandem with the tenets of the managed conflict view by Robbins and Judge (2013) which says conflict management should run across the whole context in which a conflict occurs; before, during and after its occurrence.

The findings showed that from time to time, parents were brought in to counsel students. According to Afful-Broni (2012), counselling is very important in conflict management in schools as most people, especially students, get involved in conflict simply out of mischief or fun. However, the study established that not all schools gave parents time to counsel the students. In addition, the parents were not prepared in any way for the task of counselling students. In this regard, it might be doubtful if they were offering the service in the appropriate manner.

Parents were also involved in budgeting for fees in the secondary schools. The study learnt that the official fees which students were supposed to pay to cater for food and other requirements for a term of about 4 months was about K3,000 (about \$4) which was not enough. It transpired that Government maintained the low fees not to disadvantage students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. However, with support from parents, schools revised the fees to around K40, 000 (about \$53) which was better although not adequate. The initiative was acknowledged to be a success story in as far as parents' involvement in conflict management was concerned since they reduced diet related violence. What was even acknowledged more was that the fees increase had students' approval despite their anticipated resistance.

The study further learnt that when a conflict occurred, parents were also involved in mediation. This resonates well with studies by Mncube and Harber (2013), Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) who recommended that for conflicts in secondary schools in

South Africa to be managed properly, there was need for mediation to be facilitated by the SGB. In Malawi, this task was performed by PTAs whose one advantage was that they commanded so much respect among students such that students would easily listen to them and take advice. As such, whenever there was a problem, schools did not hesitate to call parents for intervention. It might be for the same reason that the NESP (2008-2017) says to improve management and governance of secondary schools, government shall endeavour to strengthen PTAs and management boards.

The findings further showed that parents were involved in conflict management through expansion of resources. This is the provision of resources when the cause of conflict is their scarcity (Robbins & Judge, 2013). The findings established that during PTA meetings, parents could agree to provide resources which were a cause for conflicts in the school. In the same vein, the findings showed that at one of the schools, students almost revolted because the school did not have power such that they could not study. Parents managed the situation through expansion of resources by simply buying lamps for use by students.

5.7 Skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict

Studies have shown that a lot of conflicts in secondary schools are a result of lack of conflict management skills by school principals and other stakeholder. For example, studies conducted in South Africa by Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) found that one cause of conflict in schools was lack of conflict management skills by school principals which resulted in insensitive decisions that in some cases provoked anger and violence. Consequently, among other things, the studies recommended that school principals and teachers should be trained in conflict management. However, Wilmot and Hocker (2001 in Hong, 2005), observe that in the process of managing conflict, people use different strategies also called intentions by Robbins and Judge (2013). Thus, the skills that are there for managing conflicts are utilized in strategies. This study, took the initiative to find out the skills that different stakeholders knew and the strategies which they used when managing conflict. The findings which have been presented and analysed in Chapter 4 are now discussed.

5.7.1 Skills stakeholders knew

The study wanted to find out if participants knew any skills for managing conflict. The findings showed that apart from one education official, participants knew some skills and they were able to mention them. Some of the skills which they mentioned were effective listening, contact and dialogue, timely communication, problem solving, patience, counselling, leadership skills, tolerance, impartiality, critical thinking, arbitration, intermediation, negotiation, transparency and not making decisions while angry. On their part, students included skills like writing a letter to the head teacher, reporting to Education Division Manager, seeking guidance and counselling and avoiding the situation.

While acknowledging participants' knowledge of the skills, the study doubted if they knew how to use them. Otherwise, if they did, conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi should have been managed successfully. This might justify the need for training and/or orientation in conflict management for the participants as per the recommendation by Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) whose studies established that one cause of conflict in schools in South Africa was lack of conflict management skills by school principals.

As for the education official who said did not know the skills, his/her responses in the course of interviews showed that he/she knew them but what was lacking was the formal realization that those were skills. This also justifies the need to train or orient the education officials in conflict management more especially that by virtue of their positions, they were expected to be more knowledgeable in such issues than the other stakeholders.

5.7.2 Strategies stakeholders used in the management of conflict

According to Wilmot and Hocker, (2001 in Hong, 2005), conflict management strategies are patterned responses, or clusters of behaviour, that people use in the management of conflict. The study wanted to find out the most commonly used strategy by the different stakeholders. The findings are discussed in detail here below.

The findings showed that for head teachers, the most used strategies were collaboration and competing. Elaborating what is meant by collaboration, Morake et al. (2011) say people who use the strategy try hard to find a solution that will help them meet their interests and help everyone to maintain good relationships. On competing, Morake et al. (2011) say that people who use the strategy try hard to get what they want irrespective of whether or not they ruin relationship. In this case, it can be said that head teachers were for extreme options; maintaining or ruining relationships with students.

The findings are in agreement with similar other studies. An assessment of conflict management and resolution in public secondary schools in Kenya which was conducted by Ageng'e and Simatwa in (2011) found that among other strategies head teachers used collaboration when good working relationship was important and competing when relationship was not critical.

The current study established that the two strategies; collaboration and competing which head teachers used matched the two approaches which secondary schools said were used when managing conflict; engagement with students and calling for police intervention respectively. While engagement with students would be expected to yield good relationships, the many violent conflicts that secondary schools registered in Malawi could be an indication that the sort of engagement was rather superficial.

As for students, the findings showed that they used different strategies as well. Two FGDs indicated that they used competing mostly while the remaining three FGDs used avoiding, compromising and collaborating respectively. According to Morgan (1986 in Tumwesigye, 2008), in avoiding, you ignore the conflict and let it take its course. In compromising, Everard et al. (2010) say you seek quick solutions that satisfy both parties. Considering that the students earlier indicated that they could hardly give room for win-win because their demands were mostly non-negotiable and that these were schools where violent conflicts repeatedly occurred, it was doubtful if indeed they used avoiding, compromise and collaboration as indicated. Otherwise, chances were high that they used competing hence the many violent conflicts.

Education officials were asked to give strategies that staff and students used to manage conflict in the secondary schools. The findings showed that to education officials, staff and students used different strategies with competing as the most popular. For staff, five officials said they mostly used competing strategy while one official said they mostly used avoiding strategy. For students, 3 officials said they mostly used competing strategy; two officials said they mostly used collaboration strategy while one official said they mostly used accommodation strategy.

The observation that the two parties mostly used competing strategy could be true if the many violent conflicts which secondary schools registered were anything to bear testimony. In addition, the traditional thinking that students were supposed to listen to elders might be a drive for staff to prefer competing strategy to other strategies. For students, the mentality that their concerns were not negotiable could also be a drive for them to use competing strategy. Otherwise, if schools were using collaboration or accommodation, conflicts should have been managed peacefully.

Parents were asked to indicate the strategy which they themselves used to manage conflict in the secondary schools. The findings showed that they mostly used the strategy of collaboration which they believed could ensure cooperation between different parties. Considering that all the five schools in the study indicated that parents had facilitated the raising of school fees with no opposition, it was easy to accept that they indeed used collaboration. It might be in recognition of the potential that parents had in the management of schools that the NESP (2008-2017) came out clear that to improve management and governance of secondary schools, government would endeavour to strengthen PTAs and management boards.

5.7.3 Strategies respondents thought could lead to successful conflict management

Participants were asked if they thought there was a strategy which could lead to a successful conflict management even if they were not using it. The findings revealed that most participants were of the view that the strategy of collaboration was the most appropriate. Some few participants observed that no strategy was better than the other and that it all depended on the situation while few others still were of the view that the strategy of accommodation was better than the others.

Looked at from the perspective of Davidson's and Wood's (2004) Conflict Resolution Model A, the view that collaboration would assist in ensuring effective conflict management might be very true. In this model, what is paramount is to ensure a win-win outcome in any conflict. This can be achieved through collaboration which is elaborated as an "I Win, You Win" strategy by The U.S. Department of the Interior (2010:32). The view that it all depended on the situation is in agreement with the contingency theory which says in conflict management, different types of interventions are useful at different points depending on the situation (Fisher & Keashly, 1991). While the observation by other participants that accommodation may assist in ensuring effective conflict management may be true, Everard et al (2010) emphasize that among other occasions, the strategy could best be used when you know that you are in the wrong.

Although the three suggestions could indeed assist in ensuring successful conflict management, the many cases of violence in secondary schools meant that they (the strategies) were not made use of. This might be in agreement with the observation by education officials that both staff and students preferred the strategy of competing to the others. As a matter of fact, the stance by students that their demands were non-negotiable meant that they could not opt for certain strategies no matter what. Likewise, the stance by staff that they could not opt for win-win solution so as not to be seen weak meant that they could opt for certain strategies no matter what. This implies that secondary schools did not apply Rothman's (2014) model of contingency theory which requires that parties should first understand the type of conflict in order to employ an appropriate strategy.

5.8 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management by education officials and other stakeholders

The study found that there were some mechanisms put in place for supporting conflict management in secondary schools. However, it transpired that there weren't any mechanisms purposefully put in place for education officials and other stakeholders to monitor conflict management in secondary schools. If at all anything, the study found that there were some ad hoc mechanisms in place for monitoring conflict management. The findings which were presented and analysed in Chapter 4 are discussed in this Chapter. The discussion is in two parts; mechanisms for

supporting conflict management in secondary schools and mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools.

5.8.1 Mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools

The study found that different mechanisms had been put in place for supporting conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi. Examined closely, the different mechanisms could be categorized into two namely; school level mechanisms and system level mechanisms. In accordance with the two levels of the mechanisms, the discussion is presented in two parts; each one focusing on mechanisms of one level.

5.8.1.1 School level mechanisms

The findings showed that at school level, there were different mechanisms for supporting conflict management in secondary schools. The first one was the teaching of conflict management in different subjects. In this mechanism, conflict management is infused in the curriculum so that students acquire conflict management knowledge, concepts, skills, values etc. right in school. A good example is what happens in the USA where Jones and Kmatta (2001) say conflict management education is offered in schools and through it, students learn how to engage with conflicts in constructive, nonviolent, and democratic ways. Zariski and Styles (2004) observe that in Western Australia, conflict management is integrated in the curriculum and through it schools teach conflict management skills. Justifying the need for teaching conflict management in secondary schools, Shahmohammedi (2014) says through it; students are provided with necessary tools to solve conflict in a productive and practical way.

The findings revealed that in Malawi, conflict management was taught in secondary schools. Document analysis confirmed that conflict was explicitly taught in Social Studies; renamed Social and Development Studies at senior level and Life Skills. In subjects like Bible Knowledge, English Literature and Chichewa Literature, it was also taught but implicitly. The study confirmed that conflict management was indeed taught as students were able to mention chapters in which they covered it. It was even more convincing to hear an FGD confirming that they learnt conflict management in Bible Knowledge with a specific reference to Genesis 13 verses 7 to

12. Upon checking in the Bible, the researcher found that indeed Abraham and his brother Lot were rocked in a conflict but they managed it amicably.

While the teaching of conflict management in secondary schools was a big achievement, the findings noted a challenge in the sense that the carrier subjects were not taken by many students. This was because not all schools offered the subjects and where they were offered, not all students opted for them. The findings further showed that in most cases, students studied different subjects including the two just to pass examinations and not necessarily to acquire the accompanying knowledge, skills, values etc. It might be for this reason that violent conflicts remained numerous in the secondary schools in Malawi despite students learning conflict management.

Different studies have shown that poor communication is a recipe for conflict (Ramani & Zhimin, 2010, Morake, Monobe & Dingwe, 2011 and Johdi & Apitree, 2012). Consequently, Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) make it mandatory that for effective conflict management in secondary schools, governments and school principals should establish effective communication network among the educational organs. So the requirement by the MoEST that secondary schools should have communication channels was yet another mechanism for supporting conflict management in secondary school.

The findings showed that during supervisory visits, education officials always wanted to see documents for communication such as assembly announcement books, circulation files, time tables and such other documents. A checklist of documents which inspectors always called for during inspection included some which could facilitate communication in the schools such as calendar of events, school menu for boarding secondary schools and master timetable. Through such requirements, the MoEST was actually supporting the secondary schools in conflict management.

The findings showed that another mechanism for supporting secondary schools in the management of conflict was the requirement that schools should have structures for guidance and counselling. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) say that one way through which schools can manage conflict is by making sure that they have guidance and

counselling programmes so as to instil in students a spirit of tolerance and coexistence. By making guidance and counselling a requirement, the MoEST was actually offering support to the secondary schools.

The findings confirmed that it was a requirement for secondary schools to have guidance and counselling structures and that the structures were indeed there with teachers designated for the task. It was also learnt that in other cases, teachers offered guidance and counselling during lessons. In addition, it transpired that there was a time when the MoEST in collaboration with the Malawi institute of Education (MIE) trained teachers in guidance and counselling. The study further learnt that parents were also offering a lot of guidance and counselling to students. At one school, it was learnt that in addition to these ways, they benefitted from the services of a community counsellor who from time to time was requested to come to the school and talk to students.

The findings showed that there were a number of challenges in the way guidance and counselling services were offered in the secondary schools in Malawi. First, most teacher counsellors were not trained for the task while those who were trained through personal initiatives could not cover much because of time constraints and demotivation due to the failure by the system to recognize them. Another challenge was that there weren't enough teachers assigned to the task such that an entire school could have only one teacher counsellor. Over and above this, it was learnt that guidance and counselling were not routine practices such that in most cases, they were done when students were about to sit for examinations or when something had gone wrong. As for the community counsellor, the study found that he/she did not have any training in guidance and counselling.

These challenges were in agreement with Oguzie (2014) whose study in Nigeria found that although guidance and counselling were very important in managing conflict, major challenges included use of non-professionals, inadequate staff training and development and inadequate time for the service. Therefore, if the services were to assist in the effective management of conflict in secondary schools, there was need to have enough trained teacher counsellors while those who were

trained through persona initiatives, would have to be recognized. In addition, there would be need to allocate adequate time for the service.

The other mechanism was the mandatory requirement that secondary schools should have discipline committees. A study by Turay (2001) observed that in Sierra Leone, one of the duties of such committees was to arbitrate students-students conflict, students-teacher conflict and teacher-teacher conflict. The findings of the study show that in Malawi, discipline committees were fully fledged under the chairmanship of deputy head teachers who reported to the head teachers. The study learnt that procedures for handling discipline cases were in place and that head teachers and their deputies were oriented on the handling of conflict during management meetings.

It was also learnt that it was a requirement that during the hearing of a discipline case, the class teacher for a concerned student was supposed to be in attendance to represent the interests of the students. However, the challenge with use of a discipline committee to handle conflict is that it portrays conflict as a lack of discipline (2004 in Hakvoort and Olsson, 2014) and not just a difference in opinion.

According to Malenya (2016), one of the ways in which schools work towards achieving moral and social development of their students (including conflict management) is by enacting rules and regulations. The study established that it was a requirement for all secondary schools to have rules and regulations which students and their guardians were supposed to read and understand them after which they would sign and counter sign them respectively (MoEST, 2014). It indeed transpired that as per the requirement by the MoEST, every secondary school had rules and regulations. This constituted a mechanism for support secondary schools in the management of conflict.

While Garner (2008) recommends that to manage conflict, schools should have conflict management committees which should aim at planning and implementing conflict management programmes with membership including professional school counsellors, teachers, students, administrators, parents and community members, the study found that the structure was not there in the secondary schools. However,

in the absence of such a structure, if secondary schools made proper use of the available structures such as discipline committees and guidance and counselling structures, violent conflict should have not been an issue.

5.8.1.2 System level mechanisms

The findings of the study showed that at system level, there were different mechanisms for supporting secondary schools in conflict management. The first one was the teaching of conflict management in teacher education institutions. This is advocated by different studies including Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) who observe that there is need to incorporate conflict management courses in the curriculum for teacher training in order to empower graduating teachings. In summary, Snodgrass and Blunt (2009), say failure to train teachers in conflict management disempowers them when they encounter conflict and consequently they may react defensively, thereby exacerbating the conflict. Against this background, inclusion of conflict management in teacher training becomes a mechanism for supporting secondary schools.

The findings showed that conflict management was taught in teacher training institutions in such courses as Education Administration and Management, Sociology of Education, Psychology of Education and other humanities courses. However, the difficulties that some participants had in mentioning the courses in which they covered the topic might imply that either they did not cover the topic in detail or because of the long time that had passed after they left college, they had forgotten the content. This might justify the need for in-service training which is itself, a form of support that could be provided at system level.

Another mechanism for supporting secondary schools in the management of conflict was inducting head teachers before they assumed office and offering CPD for those who were already in the system. In South Africa, Msila (2012) emphasized on this with the aim of improving efficiency in conflict management. The current study found that the head teachers and even the teachers and the education officials were not given any induction or specialized in-service training in conflict management to prepare them for the task at hand. There was need to think of ways of inducting them

before assuming office or offering them an in-service training in order to capacitate them.

The other mechanism for supporting secondary schools in conflict management was expansion of resources. The study learnt that there were times when conflict in secondary schools emanated from lack of resources. According to Robbins and Judge (2013), in such cases, support would be in the form of expansion of resources which involves supplying the needed resources. The findings showed that there were times when conflict arose because of shortage of teachers or because supply of water or electricity had been disconnected due to non-payment of bills by secondary school. The study established that in such cases, the MoEST always came in to provide support to the schools through expansion of resources.

The other mechanism through which education officials could support secondary schools was mediation. Bodin and Crawford (1999 in Ghaffar, 2009) advise that since school is an entity which comprises different people with different generational ages, mediation is one of the best strategy for handling conflicts. The findings showed that indeed, education officials always came in to mediate between students and staff when the situation was bad. However, it transpired that they always engaged the parties separately; a tendency that forced students to conclude that they were usually biased towards staff. In addition, schools observed that education officials seemed to lack mediation skills such that at one school, they were chased away because students did not feel satisfied with the way they handled issues. This could be a result of the fact that the officials themselves were not trained in conflict management. Consequently, there may be need to train them as well.

5.8.1.3 Other stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools

The study wanted to find out if there were other stakeholders who provided support in the management of conflict in secondary schools apart from education officials. The findings showed that the police, PTA, religious groups and schools' alumni were offering some support though not to a large extent. The findings are discussed here below.

The findings showed that police usually came in to restore order and to protect life and property upon invitation by head teachers. The study established that some head teachers took it as a priority to engage police in any conflict while other head teachers did so only when students became violent. In some schools, it was learnt that there were times when the police came to counsel students. The latter form of support was more positive as it aimed at character building which was very necessary in conflict management. As for the former form of support, students indicated that the presence of the police usually exacerbated violence.

Literature shows that the involvement of police in the management of conflict is a common practice. A study by Majola (2013) in South Africa, found that among other things, SGBs were actively engaged with community forums and the South African Police Service (SAPS) to manage conflict in schools. However, just as students in the current study were not amused with police intervention, a study by Mncube and Harber (2013) found that in South Africa, people had mixed reactions towards police involvement. Some questioned the picture they would portray since they themselves had been accused of lacking accountability, and using excessive force and violence.

The findings showed that support from PTA was mostly in the areas of budgeting, counselling and expansion of resources. The study established that in most secondary schools, parents were involved in budgeting for food items; an area which was very fertile for conflict. It was further learnt that in other cases, parents offered guidance and counselling to students. The study established that because of the respect that parents commanded from students, their involvement in counselling was very fruitful. Still in other cases, it transpired that PTAs supported schools by providing resources; a good example being the case where parents bought lumps at a time when students were about to revolt because they were not studying due to interrupted electricity supply.

It must be borne in mind that the good work that the PTAs were doing was in line with the NESP (2008-2017) which says to improve management and governance of secondary schools (in Malawi), government shall endeavour to strengthen Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and management boards. Instead of PTAs, Majola

(2013) says in South Africa, SGBs are mandated by the South African Schools Act to assist in the minimization and management of conflict.

Religious groups such as SCOM, YCS, CAPSSO, AY and churches also provided support to schools through guidance, counselling and leadership courses. The study established that during their meetings, the groups usually held guidance and counselling sessions which benefitted students quite a lot. In addition, the groups at times held leadership courses for their members during which conflict management was covered. In other instances, church pastors, more especially the proprietors of schools gave support through guidance and counselling and at times through expansion of resources. The pastors held counselling sessions for students and where there was need; they could provide schools with resources such as food items.

The study also learnt that alumni supported their respective secondary schools through guidance and counselling and expansion of resources. Since the alumni had excelled in life because they did well at the same schools, students took their guidance and counselling service seriously. In other instances, the alumni assisted schools with resources. For example, at one school, they had supplied computers. In the absence of such resources, conflict could easily erupt due to discontentment by students. However, it remained a challenge that despite all the support, conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi remained rampant.

5.8.2 Mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools

The study established that the system had not put in place mechanisms for monitoring conflict. However, it transpired that there were two main ad hoc mechanisms through which education officials monitored conflict management in secondary schools. The mechanisms were inspection visits which education officials made to secondary schools and the requirement that head teachers should be submitting reports to MoEST from time to time. The study termed them ad hoc mechanisms.

5.8.2.1 Inspection visits to secondary schools

In the absence of purposefully instituted mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools, the findings showed that through inspection visits, education officials did some form of monitoring. It transpired that during such visits inspectors of schools usually paid some attention to issues of discipline which covered conflict management. In addition, the inspectors also paid attention to records which schools kept some of which were instrumental in conflict management. The study established that the inspectors were mandated by the Education Act (2012) which in Section 53, Sub Section1 (c) says inspectors may require any manager, principal or teacher to produce any book, document or other article or to furnish any information relating to administration or management of teaching or activities in the school or college.

Document analysis indeed showed that upon visiting a secondary school, inspectors always requested for such documents as discipline records and punishment books among others. The study noted that discipline records and punishment books were very critical in conflict management more especially that in the Malawi scenario, discipline committees were the major structure for conflict management although the way they conducted business might not have been in tandem with the tenets of conflict management. Other records which inspectors asked for were school menu, and master timetables both of which if not properly handled would cause conflict.

While the monitoring process in the current study was an ad hoc one, the situation in Zimbabwe seems to be different. A study by Mlalazi (2015) who was looking at the implementation of strategies used to maintain positive discipline in secondary schools in Zimbabwe found that the responsible Ministry; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) monitored the process through education officials who visited schools purposefully to supervise the same. Of the two scenarios, the current study was of the view that the Zimbabwe case was better placed to facilitate implementation of policy and/or other related issues.

5.8.2.2 The requirement that head teachers should always submit reports

The findings showed that the other ad hoc mechanism for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools was the requirement that secondary schools

should always submit reports to the MoEST. It transpired that during management meetings, head teachers were asked to give reports on different issues including discipline which mostly addressed conflict. In addition, whenever a conflict occurred, schools were supposed to submit a written report to the MoEST through the Division. Through such reports, education officials were kept in the loop in as far as conflict management in the secondary schools was concerned although as per the observation by MoEST (2014), some cases were handled at school level. However, for effective conflict management, there could be need for deliberate mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary school.

5.9 Proposed measures for ensuring effective conflict management in secondary schools

The study engaged participants to find out what they thought could be done if conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi were to be managed successfully. Guided by the managed conflict view by Robbins & Judge (2013), proposals of what could be done were made at three levels; before, during and after the occurrence of the conflict. In this regard, their responses are discussed at three levels; measures to be taken before conflict has erupted, measures to be taken during the conflict and measures to be taken after the conflict.

5.9.1 Proposed measures to be taken before the conflict

Different views were given on what measures could be taken before a conflict erupted. The findings proposed a number of things. First, it was proposed that the MoEST should make sure that head teachers, teachers, and education officials are trained in conflict management. This was in total agreement with the recommendations by Majola (2013) and Msila (2012) that school principals and teachers should be inducted in conflict management and be subjected to CPD in the field so that they are equipped with the necessary skills. The expectations of the proposal are that the training in question, which should include induction, CPD and seminars, would come over and above what is covered in pre-service teacher education.

The findings further proposed that all students should be studying the carrier subjects for conflict management; Social Studies and Life Skills. Among other ways,

this could be achieved by making the carrier subjects compulsory so that every school offers them and every child studies them. Alternatively, this could be achieved by making conflict management a cross cutting content spread in all the subjects. The practice would not be new as literature shows that in the USA, it is a fully fledged initiative in which students learn how to engage with conflicts in constructive, nonviolent, and democratic ways (Jones & Kmatta 2001).

After noting that most conflicts were a result of poor or lack of communication in the secondary schools, the findings proposed that schools should put in place proper channels of communication. Participants observed that this would assist in ensuring transparency in the way schools were run thereby reducing cases of students acting on speculation just because of lack of information. Such a measure was very important more especially in a democratic dispensation where access to information was a constitutional right. The proposal is in tandem with studies by Abaasa (2005), Ramani and Zhimin (2010) and Turay (2001) among others which identified poor or lack of communication as a trigger of conflict.

The findings showed that another proposal made was that schools should have clear rules and regulations which should be known to all and owned by students. Fortunately, the findings of the current study showed that rules and regulations were there in all the schools and that they were read by students and their parents after which they (the students) signed them while their parents co-signed. May be what would be necessary is to engage students in the formulation of the rules so that there is ownership and ensure that they are enforced. This is very important as advised by Malenya (2016) who says for students to follow rules and regulations in a meaningful way; they should understand them not only in terms of what they (the rules) require of them but also, how they (the students) stand to benefit by complying with them

Participants observed that some conflicts became violent just because there was lack of tolerance between students and staff. This means that both parties approached conflict with a win-lose mentality and in the end, nobody won. Fisher (2000) explains that in win-lose, the assumption is that what one party gains, the other loses. As a result, there is a deliberate effort to force the other side to

capitulate. In view of this, it was proposed that there should be tolerance between students and staff. If this is embraced, the parties will open up to win-win and in the end, they will be able to management of conflict successfully.

Having noted that a number of conflicts were due to lack of resources, another measure that participants proposed was to ensure that schools have the necessary resources. Looked at from the human needs theory, which argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs (Kok, 2007), expansion of resources – advanced by Robbins and Judge (2013) – might be the most viable option. However, knowing this may not be an easy thing, it is further proposed that where resources cannot be provided, having made all the efforts, students should be informed so that they are aware of what is happening.

The findings also showed that some conflicts were a result of influence by rejects; students who had been expelled from other schools and were admitted into a school. The proposal that participants made is that the MoEST should stop admitting such students. On a positive note, it transpired that the practice had been stopped and that the only entry into the system was selection based on examinations results. However, noting the proposal may always serve as a reminder that the practice did not amuses stakeholders in the education system.

The other measure that participants mentioned was to prepare students for conflict management through guidance and counselling. The general thinking was that through it, students would be modelled into upright citizens capable of making informed decisions. This was in agreement with the observations by Afful-Broni (2012) who says that guidance and counselling is very important in conflict management in schools as students get involved in conflict mostly out of mischief or fun. In view of this, participants proposed that counselling should be strengthened so that students are able to act rationally.

5.9.2 Proposed measures to be taken during the conflict

Participants were also asked to suggest measures that could ensure effective conflict management during the actual conflict. On the overall, the measures

centered on the need for concerted effort among all stakeholders namely; head teachers, teachers, students, parents and education officials. In this regard, participants suggested what each one of the stakeholders would be expected to do.

Participants observed that head teachers would have to play a central role in the whole process. In agreement, Kochhar (1988 in Ramani & Zhimin, 2010) asserts that a school principal should be a group leader who knows how to arrange conditions, initiate processes and involve people in such a way that he/she gets the best from them. Consequently, it was proposed that head teachers should lead the process by diplomatically and timely engaging prefects or the larger students' body with the support of teachers. It was further proposed that teachers would have to engage students so as to reason with them more especially that most of them including class teachers, command respect among students. However, Martinez (2004 in Msila, 2012) advises school principals to create collegial school environment if teachers are to render their support in the management of conflict.

Participants made it clear that students too would have to play an active role by engaging head teachers and other stakeholders to find solutions to the conflicts instead of rushing into vandalizing the school. To this effect, a proposal was made that to engage head teachers and other stakeholders, students would have to work through prefects. Participants further suggested that if students were not satisfied with the results of the engagement with staff, there was need to refer the issue to the DEM, or EDM or MoEST. However, participants emphasized the need for education officials to act with speed if they got wind of the eruption of a conflict.

Participants further proposed that during the conflict, parents would have to come in to engage and counsel their children so that they act properly. In addition, it was observed that parents could also assist in mediating between students and staff. As for education officials, participants indicated that their main role during a conflict would be to mediate between the parties and facilitate negotiations. Where the conflict was based on lack of resources, the education officials would be expected to assist through expansion of resources as advised by Robbins and Judge (2013). More importantly, the MoEST would have to act with urgency if told that a conflict had arisen.

5.9.3 Proposed measures to be taken after the conflict

Guided by the managed conflict view (Robbins & Judge, 2013) which advocates that for successful management of conflict there is need to manage the whole context in which it occurs – before, during and after its occurrence, the study asked participants to propose what they thought could be done after. A proposal was made that stakeholders should conduct a post-mortem in order to establish its causes and map the way forward. If the conflict was violent, a proposal made was that damages caused should be assessed and paid for by students who took part in the violence not every student. It was further proposed that conflicting parties would have to forget the past and start afresh by reconciling and creating an environment of tolerance and improved interaction between them.

Bearing in mind that post conflict period becomes the pre conflict period for the next one, participants emphasized that parties would have to go back to the proposed measures for handling conflict before its occurrence such as ensuring that there is communication, transparency, rules and regulations are enforced and guidance and counselling services are offered to students.

The findings of the study established that after a violent conflict, the MoEST usually implemented a skill called altering structural variable (Robbins & Judge, 2013) in which conflicting parties get separated through such mechanisms as postings which mostly affected head teachers. The findings therefore, proposed that as part of reconciliation, the MoEST should desist from posting head teachers whose schools have been involved in violence away. This was mentioned after it was observed that at times students engaged in violence as a means to get rid of a head teacher they did not want because precedence had been set.

5.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study in accordance with the study objectives. Following the advice by Bannerman (2012) that to understand conflict, there is need to examine its causes first, the first objective was to identify causes of conflict in secondary schools and it has been discussed first. To put the discussion in context, under the same objective, effects of conflict and reasons for conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi to be ending in violence mostly have been discussed.

This has been followed by a discussion on the second objective which was to analyse processes that were followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools. It has transpired that there were two approaches which secondary schools in Malawi used in the management of conflict. In the first approach, staff engaged students while in the second approach; staff would call for police intervention. The discussion has revealed that in the process of managing conflict, students and staff had difficulties to develop expectation for win-win and combining options into a win-win solution due to failure to accommodate contrary views. Under the third objective which was to assess how stakeholders were involved in the process of managing conflict in secondary schools, the study has discussed the different ways in which stakeholders were involved in the management of conflict. It transpired that head teachers' involvement was twofold; engaging students and other stakeholders and calling for police intervention. As for students, the discussions showed that their involvement was rather superficial as they could not engage in serious discussion with staff to try to find peaceful ways of managing conflict. Education officials too were involved in different ways. One of the ways was training head teachers and their deputies in school management which they claimed covered conflict management although it transpired that mostly, they covered issues of discipline. Parents' involvement was mainly through counselling students, mediating between students and staff and expansion of resources. Under the fourth objective; examine skills and strategies that stakeholders knew and used respectively in the management of conflict in secondary schools, the study has discussed different skills which participants knew including effective listening, contact and dialogue, timely communication, problem solving, impartiality and critical thinking. Different strategies that stakeholders used in the management of conflict have also been discussed. For the fifth objective; evaluate support and monitoring mechanisms that education officials and other stakeholders had put in place for managing conflict in secondary schools, the discussion has shown that support was at two levels; school level and system level. The last objective was to develop an alternative framework for conflict management that could be recommended to improve conflict management in secondary schools. The study has discussed different views of participants on what measures they thought could be taken before, during and after the conflict. The next chapter presents summary, conclusions and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study in accordance with the research objectives. Therefore, highlighted are causes of conflict in secondary schools, processes which secondary schools followed in the management of conflict, how stakeholders were involved in the management of conflict, the skills that stakeholders knew and the strategies they used in the management of conflict, mechanisms that were in place for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools and proposed measures for ensuring successful conflict management in secondary schools. To put the study in context, under causes of conflict in secondary schools, the summary also highlights effects of conflicts to secondary schools in Malawi and why conflicts in secondary schools mostly ended in violence. After presenting the summary of the results, the chapter presents conclusions which have been drawn from the study. The chapter then presents recommendations based on the findings of the study which include a proposed alternative framework for conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi.

6.2 Summary of the findings

The purpose of the study was to examine how strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi, were implemented. To achieve this, the study proceeded in line with its objectives. Consequently, the summary is presented in accordance with the study objectives. The summary also presents the implication of the findings for theory and a justification of methodology.

6.2.1. Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi, their effects and why conflicts mostly ended in violence

The first objective of the study was to identify causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. However, to put the study in context, under the same objective, the study looked at the effects of conflict to secondary schools in Malawi and why conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi mostly ended in violence. The summary has taken the same approach and is presented here below starting with the causes.

6.2.1.1 Causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi

After analysing the data which were collected, the study found that there were different causes of conflict. Major among them were: poor diet, misunderstanding of human rights, misunderstanding of school rules and regulations, poor communication, unfair treatment of students by staff, poor school management by head teachers, instigation of students by teachers and parents, students indiscipline, lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them and peer pressure. Other causes were lack of teaching resources, poor teaching, lazy prefects and teachers' failure to maintain social distance.

A further analysis of the causes of conflict found that there were four primary causes namely, poor management of schools by head teachers, misunderstanding of human rights, instigation of students and lack of professionalism by teachers. The others were largely spin-offs from the primary causes and they were secondary.

6.2.1.2 Positive effects of conflicts to secondary schools

The study found that there were a number of positive effects of conflicts to secondary schools in Malawi. The first one was that it offered schools an opportunity to learn where things were not well and improve the situation. However, the recurrence of violent conflict in secondary schools might be a sign that there was very little learning by the concerned parties if at all anything. The other positive effect which was mentioned was that conflict resulted in improvement of infrastructure in the sense that damages caused were always paid for and schools got maintained. However, it was observed that there were times when despite damages being paid for, schools remained unmaintained. In addition, it was mentioned that there were times when maintenance was done but using poor quality materials or unskilled workmanship.

The third positive effect was that conflict offered students an opportunity to air out their concerns and have them acted upon. The study learnt that it was not easy for students to relay their concerns to staff and have them acted on. However, when a conflict arose and students were violent, communication seemed to be very clear as attention was spontaneously paid to their concerns. Lastly, conflict was said to be a tool for deterring would be offenders. The study learnt that rustication or suspension

or exclusion of students from school after a violent conflict sent a message that violence would not be tolerated thereby deterring others from doing the same. However, an observation was made that some violent conflicts in secondary schools were due to influence of newly admitted students who were expelled from other schools for leading in violent acts. Thus, while rustication and suspension would in a way deter would be offenders, chances were high that upon being readmitted into another school, they would still cause havoc. On a positive note, the MoEST indicated that the practice of admitting such students into the system had been stopped.

6.2.1.3 Negative effects of conflict to secondary schools

The study found that conflict affected secondary schools in a number of ways. First, conflict was a disturbance to teaching and learning. It was observed that most times, when violence had occurred, secondary schools ended up being closed thereby disturbing teaching and learning. In other instances, students ended up being rusticated or suspended or dismissed from school thereby being disturbed in their studies. It was further observed that even if the school was not closed and students were not rusticated or suspended or dismissed, conflict resulted in strained relationships between students and staff thereby destroying the moral of the parties. In the end, productivity was compromised.

Violent conflict usually resulted in damage to infrastructures which in some cases remained unmaintained while in other cases, it was maintained but with low quality materials or poor workmanship. Lastly, it was observed that violent conflict was a danger to lives. One of the schools indicated that there was a time when the school lost a student during a violent conflict. A similar observation was made by MoEST (2014) during a management meeting in 2014 when a mention was made that life was lost in one of the 69 conflicts that occurred in secondary schools between January, 2013 and March, 2014.

6.2.1.4 Why conflicts between students and staff mostly ended in violence in secondary schools in Malawi

The first reason for conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi to be ending in violence most of the times was that both students and staff had a win it all mentality. As a

result, their preferred conflict management strategy was mostly competing. The other reason was the way head teachers handled students. The study learnt that there were times when students got angered because they were poorly handled by head teachers. The reason behind this was that head teachers lacked conflict management skills because they did not receive any specialised training.

The study also learnt that most conflicts ended in violence because precedence had been set that if students behaved violently, their concerns would be addressed promptly. This was complicated further by the fact that there were no alternative avenues where students could take their issues to in case the school did not assist them. Violence was also seen as a tool for getting rid of a head teacher who was not wanted at a school. This was after precedence had also been set that when a school was involved in violence, the head teacher would be posted away. With such precedence, whenever students were not interested in a head teacher, they could resort to violence even on a very small issue. Lastly, it was indicated that violence was a result of poor upbringing of students. The issue was that poorly up brought students would resort to conflict due to mischief and nothing else.

6.2.2 Processes followed in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi

The study found that schools used two different approaches in the management of conflict. In the first approach, when a conflict arose, schools engaged students in order to find a peaceful solution. However, the study established that conflict was mostly treated as an issue of indiscipline and the concerned students were looked at as lacking discipline. Consequently, such students were subjected to disciplinary measures and those found guilty were liable to punishment. In the second approach, instead of engaging students, police would be called to intervene in order to protect life and property from violence which students would likely engage in. However, the study learnt that the involvement of the police at times worsened the situation as students took their intervention for entertainment.

The study further found that in the process of managing conflict, participants followed some steps of the Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004) while

leaving out others. Most participants indicated that while they could define issues and brainstorm creative options, they could hardly develop expectation for win-win and combine options into a win-win solution because for stakeholders like head teachers and teachers, they could be looked at as weak. As for students, they hardly could give room for win-win because to them, their demands were mostly non-negotiable. Such a situation rendered management of conflict between staff and students in secondary schools in Malawi a toll order as both parties aimed at winning it all.

6.2.3 Stakeholder involvement in conflict management in secondary schools

The second objective of the study was to assess how stakeholders were involved in the process of managing conflict in secondary school. It was learnt that head teachers were involved in two ways. The first one was through engagement with students and other stakeholder. Before the conflict, engagement with students was through enforcement of school rules and regulations and through conflict management structures such as guidance and counselling services and discipline committees. Another form of engagement was through interaction in such avenues as meetings and assemblies.

During the actual conflict, head teachers engaged students and staff to influence them on a position taken. If it was a committee handling the conflict, head teachers were supposed to offer guidance. In the same vein, the head teachers were supposed to receive reports from the committee and make recommendations to the MoEST for further direction. After a conflict, their involvement was the same as before the conflict with emphasis on ensuring that conflict management structures were in place and functional.

The second way through which head teachers involved themselves in conflict management was through calling for police intervention. There were head teachers who preferred calling for police intervention even when the conflict was not volatile while others would call for police intervention if dialogue had failed and violence was very likely. However, it was found that police intervention usually provoked more violence.

Teachers too were involved in different ways. The first way was through membership of discipline committees. Class teachers served in the committee if students from their classes were involved in discipline cases while boarding masters/mistresses were involved if the cases involved their department. Teachers were also involved through guidance and counselling services which they offered to students. However, it transpired that teachers were not prepared in any way for handling discipline cases and offering guidance and counselling services. Teachers were also involved in the enforcement of school rules and regulations. During the actual conflict, teachers' involvement was mainly through collaboration with head teachers in the engagement of students. After a conflict, their task was just as before the occurrence of conflict which included membership of discipline committees, offering of guidance and counselling and enforcing school rules and regulations.

Students were also involved in conflict management in different ways. It was established that before the conflict, students could not easily engage staff and that where they could; their concerns were usually not attended to. During the actual conflict, students could engage staff through prefects. They could also be involved in taking issues to appropriate offices such as the boarding master/mistress or class teachers or head teacher depending on the nature of the issue. At times, students could engage parents for advice on how to engage staff more especially on fees related issues.

Education officials were also involved in different ways in the management of conflict. First, they were involved in training head teachers and deputy head teachers in school management which they claimed addressed conflict management as well. However, head teachers indicated that they were not trained in conflict management but they were oriented on the handling of discipline cases. The study further learnt that education officials themselves were not prepared in a way for conflict management.

The other way through which education officials were involved in the management of conflict was said to be the formulation of conflict management guide lines but the study established that they were guidelines for handling discipline cases not conflict. The education officials were also involved in reviewing resolutions by secondary

schools which were forwarded to them for further direction. In addition, they were also involved in mediating between the conflicting parties. Finally, the education officials were involved in assessing damages caused so that students pay for them.

Parents were also involved in different ways; the first being counselling the students. However, not all schools gave them time for that. Furthermore, parents were involved in the evaluation of fees for possible increase. The study learnt that while the recommended fees were very low, parents, through PTAs, came up with their own fees which improved service delivery by schools thereby reducing conflicts. In the same vein, parents assisted secondary schools through expansion of resources as they could raise funds for the purchase of goods or services which schools could not afford. Finally, parents were involved in mediating between the students and staff with the aim of finding peaceful ways of managing conflict.

6.2.4 Skills stakeholders knew and strategies they used in the management of conflict

The third objective of the study was to examine the skills that stakeholders possessed to manage conflict in secondary schools. All participants apart from one education official knew some conflict management skills. Some of the skills they mentioned were effective listening, contact and dialogue, timely communication, problem solving, patience, tolerance, impartiality and critical thinking. The study further established that the most used conflict management strategies for head teachers were collaboration and competing which were used in accordance with the approaches of engaging students and calling for police intervention respectively. However, with the many violent conflicts registered by the secondary schools, the study doubted how effectively they used collaboration.

Students too indicated that competing was the most used strategy while avoiding, compromising and collaborating were used to some extent. Education officials too observed that both staff and students used the strategy of competing mostly. On their part, parents indicated that they mostly used the strategy of collaboration. It might be for this reason that they were able to facilitate the raising of school fees with the approval of students.

On the strategy which they thought could ensure effective conflict management; most participants were of the view that the strategy of collaboration would yield better results than the other strategies. Other participants felt there was no particular strategy which was better than the others and that it all depended on the situation. Few other participants felt accommodation would give better results.

6.2.5 Mechanisms for supporting and monitoring conflict management in secondary schools

The fourth objective was to evaluate support and monitoring mechanisms that education officials and other stakeholders had put in place for managing conflict in secondary schools. The study found that support to secondary schools by education officials was at two levels; school level and system level. At school level, the first mechanism was to ensure that conflict management was taught in subjects such as Social Studies and Life Skills. However, there was a challenge in the sense that not all students studied the subjects. The second mechanism was the requirement that schools should have clear channels of communication. This was a very important aspect in the management of schools such that during supervisory visits, inspectors of schools always checked communication related documents such as time tables and school menu.

The third mechanism for supporting secondary schools in conflict management was the requirement that secondary schools should have discipline committees and guidance and counselling structures. The challenge with discipline committees was that they looked at conflict not just as a difference in opinion but as an issue of indiscipline. With guidance and counselling, the challenge was that most teacher counsellors were not trained while those who were trained were not recognised by the system.

At system level, the first mechanism for supporting conflict management in secondary schools was the teaching of conflict management in teacher education institutions in courses like Education Administration and Management. In addition, education officials supported secondary schools through expansion of resources. It was mentioned that if the cause of conflict was shortage of teachers or unavailability of financial resources, education officials could manage the problem by posting

teachers to the school or providing financial support respectively. Education officials also supported secondary schools by mediating between students and staff whenever a conflict arose. However, students felt that the officials were usually biased and that decisions favoured staff mostly. Apart from education officials, the police, PTA, religious groups and schools' alumni also offered support to secondary schools.

On the issues of monitoring conflict management in secondary schools, the study found that there were no purposefully instituted mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools. However, there were some ad hoc mechanisms in place. The first one was inspection visits during which inspectors of schools paid attention to records related to conflict management such as discipline books, punishment books and communication records among others. The other mechanism was reports which head teachers were required to submit to MoEST from time to time. In addition, whenever a conflict occurred, schools were supposed to submit a written report to the MoEST. Through such reports, education officials were kept in the loop in as far as conflict management in the secondary schools was concerned.

6.2.6 Implications for theory

The study was guided by two theories namely; human needs theory and contingency theory. The human needs theory was employed in order to appreciate the existence of conflict in the secondary schools in Malawi while the contingency theory was employed to appreciate how conflict was managed in secondary schools in Malawi. For the contextualisation of conflict, the study also recognized conflict related scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology.

6.2.6.1 Human needs theory

Human needs theory argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs. The theory is very crucial in conflict management as it focuses on the source of conflict which is unmet needs and looks at how best to meet them for the conflict to be managed. Looking at conflict from such a perspective helps to remove the stereotyped mentality that certain people are aggressive by nature. Consequently, the current study looked at both staff and

students without any prejudice of them being naturally conflictive thereby giving room for an objective investigation.

Using the human needs theory, the study was able to appreciate the different causes of conflict which participants mentioned. The first one was poor diet (poor food) which was not just a human need but a basic human need. The theory clearly stipulates that if people are denied a basic need; they are likely to engage in conflict. Similar other causes of conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi such as poor communication, failure to involve students in decisions that affected them and unfair treatment of students by staff were all human needs related. By not being communicated to, by not being involved in issues of concern, and by being treated unfairly, students were denied love needs and they were likely to engage into a conflict.

The study further established that some stakeholders were involved in conflict management through expansion of resources. For example, parents came in to assist schools by providing resources which were seen to be the cause of the conflict. Likewise, education officials came in to pay utility bills for schools to remain connected to water and electricity supply. The two initiatives were both in tandem with the human needs theory.

Most participants were of the view that the strategy of collaboration could give better results than the others although they did not use it themselves. This is a strategy that strives for win-win by ensuring a balance between concern for self and concern for others. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the strategy satisfies love needs. From the perspective of the human needs theory, conflict in secondary schools could best be managed if parties were aware of their own needs, needs of others and if they strived to meet them.

6.2.6.2 The contingency theory of conflict management

The contingency theory of conflict management was employed in the study in order to appreciate how conflict was managed in secondary schools in Malawi. The theory suggests that different types of interventions are useful at different points during a conflict. Basing on the theory, successful management of conflict largely depends on

the manager's ability to read the situation, understand the issues and interests behind the conflict and implement an appropriate intervention. The theory further states that for successful conflict management, there is need to understand what the conflict is about, why it occurs and how deep it runs.

The findings showed that both staff and students had difficulties using certain strategies. It transpired that staff mostly used competing strategy because traditionally, the other strategies would portray them as weak. As for the students, it transpired that they mostly used competing strategy because their demands were non-negotiable or avoiding strategy so as not to disturb learning.

Using the theory, the researcher was able to appreciate that conflicts in the secondary schools were of different types. For example, those which surfaced as a result of poor diet and lack of resources were both resource based conflicts. Those which resulted from poor communication, failure to involve students in decisions affecting them, unfair treatment, misunderstanding of human rights and similar others were all identity based conflicts. As for those conflicts which resulted from issues like influence by lazy prefects, they were objective based conflicts since the prefects had different vision and mission from those of the school.

Using the theory, the three types of conflict would be managed differently. With resource based conflicts, the solution would be expansion of resources while identity based conflicts and would need a systematic altering of the structure so that it addressed the diversity in identity which was there. As for objectives based conflicts, there would be in for altering human variable so that people share the vision and mission of the school.

6.2.6.3 The scholarly discourses in sociology and psychology

The scholarly discourse in sociology and psychology holds two distinguishable perspectives on conflicts namely; a harmony or consensus perspective, and a conflict perspective. The harmony perspective assumes that social order is established by uniting human beings, their values, norms, and views on reality. In contrast, the conflict perspective assumes that conflicts may facilitate positive change, development, and modification of the existing social order.

Using the conflict perspective of the discourse, the study appreciated the effects of conflict; positive and negative. The revision of fees in secondary schools after a lot of violence was one good example of fruits from the conflict perspective of the discourse. It transpired that due to continued violence emanating from poor diet and lack of resources, parents facilitated the increase of fees to amounts that were better although not adequate. If secondary schools had embraced the harmony perspective, discontentment with poor service delivery could not arise and the situation would have remained what it was at the discomfort of students.

6.2.6.4 Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood (2004)

The study wanted to know if in the process of managing conflict, participants followed Conflict Resolution Model A by Davidson and Wood or any other models which were there. It transpired that participants were able to use two stages of the model only. These are stage two; define issues and stage three; brainstorm creative options. As for stage one; develop expectation for win-win and stage four; combining options into a win-win solution, it came out clear that participants were not comfortable with them and they could not employ them.

6.2.7 Justification of Methodology

The study was located in pragmatism; a paradigm in which both quantitative and qualitative research is very important and is mixed in a single study. As such, the study employed a mixed method approach thereby combining qualitative and quantitative aspects of research. The advantage of the approach was that it allowed one method to compensate the weaknesses or blind spot of the other while maintaining the autonomy of each of the methods. In addition, the approach ensured complementarity of results as numeric trends from quantitative data were fused with specific details from qualitative data.

The study collected descriptive data from the qualitative perspective and numerical data from the quantitative perspective. In the process, samples were subjected to either quantitative approach or qualitative approach but concurrently. Specifically, teachers were subjected to a quantitative approach and data from them were collected through a questionnaire while head teachers, education officials, parents

and some few teachers, were subjected to a qualitative approach and data from them was collected through interviews. Students were also subjected to qualitative approach through use of FGDs.

Data were presented, analysed and discussed concurrently thereby creating room for triangulation of the findings. The analysis of qualitative data yielded descriptions and observations whereas the analysis of quantitative data using SPSS yielded statistics. By interacting with participants from the two perspectives, the researcher was able to collect comprehensive and complementary data which assisted in the realization of the purpose of the study.

6.3 Conclusions drawn from the study

The study endeavoured to examine how strategies used to manage conflict between staff and students in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented. Different conclusions were drawn by the study in line with the objectives which guided it.

The study established that there were different causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi which included poor diet, misunderstanding of human rights by students, misunderstanding of school rules and regulations by students, poor communication, poor management of schools by head teachers and lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them. The study concluded that if conflicts were to be successfully managed in the secondary schools, there was need to understand the different causes first.

The study revealed that conflict in secondary schools in Malawi could be categorised into three; resource based, identity based and objective based. Thus, conflicts which centred on poor diet and lack of resources were resource based while those which were mainly about the desire to be recognized through involvement in issues of concern and similar other issues were identity based. Those conflicts which ensued because certain stakeholders wanted to achieve their own goals such as getting lead of the head teacher were objective based.

The study established that positively, conflicts affected secondary schools in different ways. Among other effects, it was an opportunity for stakeholders to learn and

improve the management of secondary schools. Second, it was an opportunity for students to air out their concerns and have them acted upon by the relevant stakeholders. While appreciating the presence of conflict in secondary schools and its positive effects, in its conclusion, the study bemoaned the practice of waiting for violence for stakeholders to improve the management of secondary schools.

The study concluded that poorly managed conflicts which turned into violence impacted on the schools negatively and they were a menace in different ways. First, they disturbed teaching and learning because of closure of schools, rustication or suspension or dismissal of students from school or because of strained relationships which hindered productivity. Second, they led to damage of property due to the accompanying violence. Finally, violence put peoples' lives in danger.

The study revealed that in secondary schools in Malawi, conflicts ended in violence most of the times for different reasons including the win it all mentality by both staff and students, head teachers' lack of conflict management skills, the precedence that for students to communicate and have their concerns attended to, they needed violence and the precedence that violence was the easiest tool to get rid of a head teacher. The study concluded that stakeholders should be trained in conflict management so that they are aware of the need for win-win strategies in conflict management. In addition, the study concluded that because students had realized that violence was a viable instrument to have their concerns addressed and to have a head teacher they did not want removed, they were just making maximum use of it such that the only way out was for the MoEST to remove the precedence by acting objectively.

The study revealed that there were two approaches in the handling of conflict by secondary schools in Malawi. In the first approach, secondary schools engaged students in order to jointly manage the conflict while in the second approach, secondary schools called for police intervention anytime a conflict broke out. Upon examining different views from participants, the study concluded that calling for police intervention carelessly, exacerbated violence in students. Thus, secondary schools could benefit a lot from students' engagement if properly done.

The study revealed that secondary schools did not have conflict management committees and that instead, its work was performed by discipline committees. However, studies have shown that treating conflict from a discipline perspective demonises it as students with different views are seen as being undisciplined. The study concluded that much as the discipline committees were doing a good job, secondary schools needed conflict management committees which could handle conflict as a difference in opinion and not lack of discipline.

The study revealed that guidance and counselling services were offered in the all secondary schools which were involved in the study. However, the study concluded that the service could not bear much fruits because of the following reasons: (1) teacher counsellors were not trained (2) those teachers counsellors who were trained through personal initiatives were not recognized by the system (3) there were very few teachers counsellors in the secondary schools compared to the number of students and (4) guidance and counselling were not allocated enough time.

In the process of engaging students, staff and students could only fulfil two stages; define issues and brainstorm creative options and not the other two namely develop expectation for win-win and combining options into a win-win solution. The study concluded that it was not easy to manage conflicts in secondary schools in Malawi because both staff and students had more concern for self than the other, thereby opting for competing strategy most of the time.

The study revealed that all stakeholders were involved in different ways in the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi and that the involvement covered the whole context in which conflict occurred; during, before and after the occurrence of the conflict. The study concluded that head teachers were very critical in the management of conflict but they needed the support of teachers with whom they could engage students together.

The study established that head teachers were finding it difficult to run the schools because fees were very low much as some adjustments had been made with parents' involvement. Therefore, the study concluded that by failing to raise the fees to appropriate amounts, the MoEST was putting head teachers in a difficult position.

The study revealed that, through expansion of resources, education officials managed different conflicts including those arising from disconnected utility supplies to the schools. It was also revealed that parents too did a lot in the management of conflicts in secondary schools through expansion of resources. The study, therefore, concluded that stakeholder involvement in conflict management was very crucial and that there was need to exploit it even more.

The study revealed that stakeholders knew conflict management skills which if properly used could assist in successful conflict management. However, with the many violent conflicts that secondary schools witnessed, the study concluded that the stakeholders did not know how to use the skills.

The study further revealed that stakeholders used different strategies when managing conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. However, with the many cases of violence, the study concluded that staff and students mostly used the strategy of competing such that neither could give room to contrary views. In the end, conflict culminated into violence no matter how small the issue under contention was.

The study revealed that schools received support in the management of conflict at two levels; school and system levels. At school level, support included teaching of conflict management in secondary schools in subjects like Social Studies and Life Skills and a requirement that schools should have conflict management structures like guidance and counselling services and discipline committees. At system level, support included teaching of conflict management in teacher training institutions, expansion of resources and mediation. The study concluded that stakeholders were not doing enough to exploit the mechanisms in supporting the management of conflict in the secondary.

The study further revealed that there were no mechanisms put in place for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools by education officials and other stakeholders. However, the study established that there were some ad hoc mechanism in place namely, inspection visits by inspectors of schools and a requirement that head teacher should be submitting reports from time to time. The study concluded that education officials did not realize that it was their responsibility

to monitor conflict management in secondary schools because they they too were not trained in conflict management.

6.4 Recommendations

The study revealed a number of issues which needed to be addressed. Consequently, recommendations are being presented with the aim of improving conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi. The following are the recommendations:

- I. The study found that major causes of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi included poor diet, misunderstanding of human rights by students, misunderstanding of school rules and regulations by students, poor communication, poor management of schools by head teachers and lack of students' involvement in decisions that concerned them. In view of the observations by Bannerman (2012) that to manage conflict well, there is need to understand its causes, the study makes a number of recommendations in line with the different causes.

First, it is recommended that schools should treat the issues of diet seriously and that where they cannot honour a menu, students should be informed well in advance. Second, when they are being taught about human rights, students should also be taught about responsibilities so that they enjoy their rights responsibly. The third recommendation is that schools should involve students in issues that concern them including formulation and enforcement of school rules and regulations so that there is ownership of any position taken by the school. The fourth recommendation is that schools should ensure that there is effective communication which should be two way such that students can originate a dialogue. Lastly, it is recommended that the MoEST should make sure that head teachers, teachers and even education officials themselves are trained in conflict management so that they are able to handle conflicts successfully thereby reducing cases of violence which are a menace to the schools.

- II. It was learnt that in the management of conflict, schools either engaged students or called for police intervention. However, it came out clear that the involvement of the police at times worsened the situation as students did not fear them but instead took their intervention for entertainment. It is therefore recommended that instead of hurriedly calling for police intervention, schools should engage students as much as possible. If at all anything, police intervention should be sought only when dialogue has failed and students have turned violent.
- III. The study found that secondary schools did not have conflict management committees and that their purported work was done by discipline committees. However, as observed by Bickmore (2004 in Hakvoort and Olsson, 2014), when schools address students' conflict as a discipline problem and as perceived insubordination, using control and containment, students get deprived of adequate opportunities to learn about conflict management and/or to appreciate diversity, both of which are essential to the development of democratic values and competencies. It is therefore recommended that schools should have conflict management committees which should handle conflict as a difference in opinion and not an issue of indiscipline. If discipline committees are to continue serving the purpose, then they will have to be oriented in a special way so that they handle conflict as such.
- IV. Literature shows that guidance and counselling services are very crucial in conflict management in secondary schools as students at times get involved in conflict through mischief (Afful-Broni, 2012). However, it was noted that there were a number of challenges associated with the services. First, teacher counsellors were not trained while those who were trained through personal initiatives were not recognized by the system. Second, there weren't enough teachers assigned to the task such that an entire school could have only one teacher counsellor. Third, guidance and counselling were not routine practices. Last, although parents were better placed to counsel students, not all schools gave them time for counselling students. It is therefore, recommended that (1) The post of teacher counsellor should be established, (2) Teacher counsellors should be trained (3) schools should have enough

teacher counsellors (4) Guidance and counselling should be routine practices and (5) schools should make time for parents to counsel students.

- V. The study found that conflict management was taught in teacher training institutions in such courses as Education Administration and Management, Sociology of Education, Psychology of Education and other humanities courses. However, participants had difficulties mentioning the courses in which they covered it implying that with time, may be they had forgotten even the content. In addition, it was learnt that no special training was arranged for the stake holders including the education officials who were supposed to be experts in conflict management. It is therefore recommended that head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers and even education officials should be inducted in conflict management upon assuming office with periodic in-service trainings following.
- VI. The study learnt that one form of support that education officials provided to secondary schools in the management conflict was mediation. However, students complained that the education officials usually engaged them separately from staff and in the end; they seemed to believe what staff said more than the students said. Such a practice led to loss of trust in the officials by the students thereby making mediation not as effective as it was supposed to be. It is therefore, recommended that education officials should make sure that they engage both parties without any prejudice so that they regain students' trust thereby making mediation effective.
- VII. The study found that while students could engage the head teacher and/or teachers when a conflict arose, it was not clear where they could refer the issues to if they were not assisted by MoEST. It is hoped that if students knew where to refer issue to in case of standoff with head teacher, some of the violence could be avoided. It is therefore, recommended that the MoEST should come out clear where students should refer issues to, in case they are not assisted by the head teacher.

- VIII. As for PTA, their major support was in areas of budgeting and expansion of resources. Indications were there that if properly utilized, parents could do a lot in conflict management. It is therefore, recommended that the MoEST should put in place mechanisms for capacitating PTAs including training them in conflict management so that they offer even more in conflict management.
- IX. The study found that there were no clear mechanisms for monitoring conflict management in secondary school. However, literature indicates that monitoring and evaluation in conflict management assist in uncovering root causes of conflict, emerging new problems, and problems arising from imperfect policies (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, 2001). It is therefore, recommended that the MoEST should put in place mechanism for monitoring conflict management in secondary schools in Malawi.
- X. The study learnt that the low fees which students were paying made the running of boarding secondary schools a challenge. It transpired that it was only with support from parents that most schools revised the fees to reasonable amounts although not adequate. It is therefore, recommended that government through the MoEST should come up with realistic fees with which schools can manage to offer good services including diet.
- XI. The study further learnt that after violent conflict, damages caused were assessed and students paid for them. However, of concern to the students was that the assessment was mostly punitive such that the amounts of money they paid were usually on the higher side compared to the damage caused and that in most instances; all students were asked to pay for the damages even those who were not involved in the violence. It is therefore, recommended that when violence has led to damage of school property, assessment should be objective, the amounts of money to be paid should be realistic and only those students involved in the violence should be asked to pay for the damages.
- XII. The study found that when a violent conflict had been managed, the MoEST usually posted the concerned head teachers away. With such precedence, students and (even parents) concluded that if they did not want a head

teacher, the easiest way to get rid of him/her was to go on rampage as by all means, the MoEST would post him/her away. It is therefore recommended that after a violent conflict, the MoEST should as much as possible maintain the head teacher at the secondary school unless the situation is hostile. Otherwise, posting the head teacher away, serves as reward to students' violence.

- XIII. The study learnt that students considered their concerns as being non-negotiable thereby making competing a preferred strategies. As a result, most conflicts ended in violence. It is therefore, recommended that students should always engage staff whenever they have issues so as to ensure peaceful conflict management
- XIV. The study learnt of a scenario where a teacher could not teach a topic which was not taught because it coincided with students' violence saying the topic was damaged together with the property. This was an indication of failure to forgive and forget. It is therefore, recommended that that when a conflict has been managed, staff, students, parents and education officials should forgive, forget and start afresh

6.5 Proposed alternative framework for conflict management

The purpose of the study was to examine how strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi were implemented. This was after literature had shown that schools were registering violent conflicts from time to time despite having structures for conflict management in place. After analysing, discussing and summarising its findings, the study drew conclusions which formed a basis for proposing an alternative framework for the management of conflict in secondary schools in Malawi. It is hoped that through the framework, the study will make a contribution to knowledge as secondary schools in Malawi will be guided in the management of conflict. Table 6.1 below presents the alternative framework for conflict management in parts; A, B and C featuring what should be done before, during and after the conflict respectively.

Table 6-1: Proposed alternative framework for the management of conflict in secondary schools

Conflict management strategies identified from literature	Implemented strategies in CWED	Proposed alternative strategies
Part A: Measures to be taken before the occurrence of conflict		
1. Training of stakeholders in conflict management		
According to Aja (2013) and Snodgrass & Blunt (2009), one way through which education officials can support schools in conflict management is by facilitating training of head teachers, teachers, education officials and even PTAs in the field so that they are well informed about best practices. The training can be pre-service for teachers undergoing initial training or in-service for the others (Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003 and Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2012). Msila (2012) adds that newly appointed head teachers should undergo an induction before they assume office while the serving ones needed CPD.	While the MoEST (2000) indicates that head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and teachers have been trained in school management addressing such issues as counselling, the study found that the Head teachers, the teachers, and the education officials were not trained in conflict management apart from the pre-service training they went through. If at all anything, they were oriented in the handling of discipline cases and not conflict management.	Head teachers, teachers, education officials and even parents should be trained in conflict management as follows: ○ Pre-service training for teachers should address conflict management adequately so that upon graduating, teachers should be well equipped with conflict management skills. Those teachers who will become head teachers or education officials will use the skills at that level. ○ On assuming office, head teachers, teachers, education

		officials and even parents should all undergo an induction which should address conflict management adequately ○ From time to time, there should be in-service training for head teachers, teachers, education officials and even parents so that they are refreshed in as far as conflict management is concerned in secondary schools is concerned.
2. Teaching of conflict management in secondary schools		
Shahmohammedi (2014) says teaching students' conflict management skills may provide them with necessary tools to solve their own conflict in a productive and practical way. According to Jones & Kmatta (2001), in the United States of America, schools offer Conflict management	Conflict management is explicitly covered in all forms in two subjects namely, Social Studies and Life Skills. It is also impliedly covered in Bible Knowledge, English Literature, Chichewa Literature and other humanities subjects. However,	The system should make sure that all students learn conflict management by putting in place the following steps: ○ One of the two subjects; Social Studies or Life Skills should be compulsory so that every secondary

Education through which students learn how to engage with conflicts in constructive, nonviolent, and democratic ways. In addition, Zariski & Styles (2004) observe that in Western Australia there are different programmes aimed at equipping students with conflict management skills right in school	Social Studies and Life Skills are not offered by all secondary schools and where they are offered, not all students study them. As for the other subjects, conflict management is only implied such that it might not be a point of emphasis in the teaching process	school should be offering it and to all students. ○ The subjects which impliedly cover the topic should have clear themes on conflict management through which teachers can emphasise on conflict management for students to grasp conflict management skills, principals and values.
---	---	--

3. Improving communication

Mayer (2001) says communication is one of the constellational forces that can generate and define conflict. Mayer further observes that conflicts escalate because people act on assumptions resulting from inaccurate or wrong information that is usually interpreted as an act in bad faith. Thus, with proper communication, conflicts can be properly managed. Johdi & Apitree (2012) found that	Channels of communication are there but they are not efficiently utilized such that students stressed that on some issues, staff never communicates. The students further observed that when they communicate issues to staff, no attention is paid unless they embark on violence. As a result, precedence has been	Communication should be clear and two-way such that it can originate from either way. Where the school cannot provide certain services, students should be communicated to clearly and well in advance. In addition, when students raise issues, staff should pay the necessary attention so as to remove the misconception that violence is the most effective way to get attention of staff. This
---	--	---

in Thailand, poor communication contributed a lot to conflicts due to the consequent misunderstandings which allowed barriers to be erected	set that staff responds to students' concerns, only when they turn violent. In this regard, when students have an issue and they want a quick response from staff, the fastest way to achieve that is by turning violent	will ensure that students do not act on assumptions. In this regard, the MoEST should clearly stipulate channels of communication which schools should put in place and head teachers, teachers, students and other stakeholders should be oriented on the use of the same.
---	--	---

4. Making school rules and regulations effective

Ramani & Zhimin (2010) observe that students' failure to adhere to school rules and regulations is another cause of conflict in secondary schools. Adeyami (2009) observes that failure to involve students when executing school policies results in conflict. This might mean that students should be involved right from the formulation of rules and regulations to their implementation	School rules and regulations are mostly formulated by staff with very minimal students' involvement. Students go through them after which they sign them. Parents too go through them and counter sign. However, some head teachers do not properly enforce them such that if a new head teacher tries to enforce the rules and regulations, he or she meets resentments and conflict ensues	Students should be fully involved in the formulation of schools rules and regulations. In addition, they should be made to appreciate what the rules require of them and how they stand to benefit if they abide by them. Instead of just asking students to read the rules and regulations and sign them while parents counter sign them, head teachers and teachers should discuss the rules and regulations with the students and their parents after which the signing should be done. MoEST should make sure that head
--	--	---

		teachers enforce school rules and regulations collaboratively with teachers, prefects, parents and the students themselves.
5. Need for tolerance between staff and students		
According to Fisher (2000), in conflict management, parties should work collaboratively in order to achieve a common and superordinate goal that can only be attained by both of them pulling together. Thus, parties should always strive to achieve a win-win	There is no tolerance between staff and students such that they cannot work collaboratively and win-win remains farfetched	Staff and students should become tolerant to each other so that they give room to win-win by working collaboratively. To achieve this, head teachers and teachers will have to remove the feeling that opening up to win-win to students is a sign of weakness while students will have to make their demands negotiable. To achieve this, schools should create forums for continued and effective engagement and collaboration with students
6. Need to address students' concerns in time		
The human needs theory argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs	Some conflicts are a result of delays in addressing students' concerns. A good example is a report by	Students' concerns should be addressed in time by the school. This can be achieved if there is collaboration between staff

(Kok, 2007). In this regard, there is need that concerns raised by an individual should be address without delay so that there is some sort of gratification.	<i>The Nyasa Times</i> of 15th November, 2013 which said that students at a secondary school in Malawi destroyed property in reaction to the delay in addressing their concerns over poor sanitation by the school management's. In addition, the study found that one of the reasons for conflicts in Malawi to be ending in violence most of the times was that precedence had been set that for staff to act on students' concerns, there was need for violence	and students. Therefore, head teachers and teachers should make sure that they do not distance themselves very much from students so that the latter should be free to engage the former when need arises. If a school cannot address students' concerns, there should be clear communication so that students do not work on speculations. The MoEST should come out clear on the chain of command in an event that students are not satisfied with the way their concerns have been handled at school level. In this regard, students should be encouraged to refer their concerns to DEMs who should in turn act with speed and tact
7. Need to strengthen guidance and counselling		
Afful-Broni (2012) says guidance and counselling is very important in conflict management in schools as most people, especially students, get involved in	Guidance and counselling is not fully utilised as teacher counsellors are not trained, the few who got trained through own	Guidance and counselling should be integral in secondary school education and the following should be done: ○ The post of school

conflict simply out of mischief or fun. In addition, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) say that guidance and counselling programmes instil in students a spirit of tolerance and coexistence. Thus, if guidance and counselling services are intensified, conflict management might improve	initiatives are not recognized and schools have very few teacher counsellors. While parents also offer counselling, not all schools create time for them	counsellor should be established so that the system recognizes the holders of the post ○ Teacher counsellors and should be trained so that they get equipped with the necessary skills ○ Schools should have enough counsellors who can reach out to students all students in need of their services ○ Parents should be given time to counsel students from time to time. However, the parents themselves should also be oriented in counselling.
8. Measures to avoid instigation of students by teachers and parents		
Instigation is one of the major causes of conflict. A study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008) found that at times, students who had been withdrawn from school	Instigation is done in the following ways: ○ Teachers or parents at times instigate students to revolt against	The following is proposed in order to address the problem: ○ Head teachers should ensure that there is collaboration

due to poor performance instigated others to strike and hell had been created in such cases	the head teacher especially if they do not want him or her. This is because, there is a precedence that after violence, the head teacher gets removed ○ Students expelled from one school and admitted into a new school influence others to revolt against staff just as was done elsewhere (education officials indicated that the practice of admitting students into schools had stopped)	with teachers and parents so that they work as a team. ○ The MoEST should not rush to remove a head teacher after a conflict. instead, the MoEST should work with the head teacher and the other stakeholders to try to normalize the situation ○ The practice of admitting vandals expelled from elsewhere should stop. If it is indeed true that the practice was stopped, education officials may wish to stand by that regardless of the pressure which may be there to reintroduce the practice
9. Monitoring of conflict management in secondary schools by education officials and other stakeholders		
The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (2001) observes that monitoring and evaluation in conflict	The study found that there weren't any purposefully instituted mechanisms for the	The MoEST should ensure that conflict management in secondary schools is monitored by:

management assists in uncovering root causes of conflict, emerging new problems, and problems arising from imperfect policies. In this regard, Ramani & Zhimin (2010) contend that conflict management as a process entails an ensemble of activities of planning and monitoring the performance of a process so as to ensure efficiency.	monitoring of conflict management by education officials. Ad hoc mechanisms which were found were inspection visits and a requirement that head teachers should be submitting reports to the MoEST though the EDM from time to time	○ Putting in place deliberate mechanism for monitoring conflict management ○ Formalizing the ad hoc mechanisms so that inspection visits and reports by head teachers should take conflict management as a core business
---	---	---

Part B: Measures to be taken during the conflict

10. Measures to ensure collaboration in the management of a conflict that has ensued

For a win-win result in conflict management, schools need to embrace collaborating strategy which Rahim (2001) calls “integrating” strategy and says it results from high concern for self and high concern for others. Thus staff and students should each balance between concern for self and concern for the other party	When a conflict arises, both staff and students mostly use competing strategy. To staff, if they use collaborating strategy, they would be seen to be weak while to students, their concerns are non-negotiable	Schools should be assessing the situation and using the most appropriate conflict management strategy. However, where possible, they should be using the strategy of collaboration so that students are free to engage head teachers, teachers and where need be, DEMs, EDMs or even education officials for win-win results.
--	---	---

		Head teachers should make sure they work in collaboration with teachers in the engagement of students. Teachers should utilise all avenues for handling the situation including their positions as class teachers, boarding masters/mistresses etc.
11. Involvement of parents when a conflict has ensued		
Just like the other stakeholders, PTAs are very crucial in the management of a conflict that has just occurred. For example, Majola (2013) observes that in South Africa, SGBs are obliged to see to it that conflict in the school is well managed by applying effective conflict resolution strategies	In Malawi, PTAs have a very crucial role to play in conflict management which they fulfil by counselling students and providing resources where need be	When a conflict arises, schools should not hesitate to inform PTAs who should in turn make themselves available. The parents should always assist through: ○ Counselling of the students ○ Expansion of resources ○ Mediating
12. Fair mediation by education officials		
When a conflict has a risen between staff and students, Education officials play a crucial role in its management through mediation. For example, Okotoni & Okotoni say that in	Education officials mediate but meet staff and students separately. Students have shown concern over the practice as in the end; it is views of staff that are	Education should not be prejudiced when mediating conflict between staff and students. As such, they should observe the following: ○ Engaging both

Nigeria, it is the Ministry of Education that gets involved in its management by sending inspectors of schools to the concerned schools to mediate.	taken into consideration. In addition, education officials take so long before they come in to mediate thereby making students to lose their cool and go on rampage.	parties together ○ Making objective decisions without looking at who gave the views. ○ Act timely so that students do not lose their cool
Part C: Measures to be taken after conflict has been managed		
13.Reconciliation		
Jhonson & Jhonson (1996 in Ghaffar, 2009) give three indicators of a properly managed conflict two of which are that the relationship between the disputants should be improved and their ability to resolve future conflicts in a constructive manner should be improved as well	After conflict, relationships did not improve. A good example was a scenario at one school where a teacher could not teach a topic claiming it had been broken together with school property during violence. Not only that, head teachers usually got posted when their schools were involved in violence; a practice which was more of a reward to students who became violent because they did not want a head teacher. In addition, violent conflicts	After a conflict, parties should reconcile and ensure the following: ○ Parties should forgive each other and proceed as a team ○ A post-mortem should be conducted to understand what went wrong ○ The MoEST should not move concerned head teachers because that denies the school an opportunity to reconcile but instead it sets precedence that to get rid of a

	usually reoccurred in the secondary schools showing that the ability to manage subsequent conflicts was not improved	head teacher, students should become violent. Parties should also put in place mechanisms for handling future conflicts so that violence does not reoccur
14. Payment for damages <i>In the same spirit of reconciliation, payment for damages has to be done in a way that will enhance unity among stakeholders and should proceed as proposed here below</i>		
Different studies indicate that conflict in secondary schools usually leads to damage of school property. Abaasa (2005) gives an example of two high schools in Kenya where students destroyed property worth millions of shillings	Most conflicts are violent and they usually result in damage of property. The damage is assessed but the amount of money is usually exaggerated. Furthermore, in most cases, all students are asked to pay for the damage even those who were not involved in the violence	In the spirit of reconciliation, it is proposed that: - Assessment should be objective - Only those students who were involved in the violence should be asked to pay for the damages - Money paid for damages should be used for its purpose
15. Enforcement of measures that are in Part A <i>In recognition of the fact that the same period that is there after the occurrence of a conflict becomes the period before the next conflict, the study proposes that after reconciliation, measures which were presented in Part A, should be repeated in Part C in a more or less cycle manner</i>		
As observed by Aja (2013) and Snodgrass & Blunt (2009), education officials	Head teachers, the teachers, and the education officials were	Conflict management should be adequately covered in pre-service

should support schools in conflict management by facilitating training of stakeholders	not trained in conflict management apart from the pre-service training they went through.	training, stakeholders should undergo induction on conflict management and there should be provision for in-service training for stakeholders.
Shahmohammedi (2014) says teaching students conflict management and resolution skills may provide them with necessary tools to solve their own conflict in a productive and practical way.	The subjects which cover conflict management are not offered by all secondary schools. In addition, not all students take the subjects	One of the two subjects which cover conflict management explicitly should be compulsory. In addition, the subjects which impliedly cover conflict management should have clear themes which teachers can emphasise
Mayer (2001) observes that conflicts escalate because people act on assumptions resulting from inaccurate or wrong information that is usually interpreted as an act in bad faith.	Channels of communication are there but they are not properly utilized such that students complained that on some issues, staff never communicated to them	Communication should be clear and two-way such that it can originate from either way. Where the school cannot provide certain services, students should be communicated to clearly and well in advance so that they do not act on speculations
Adeyami (2009) observes that failure to involve students when executing school policies (including school rules and regulations) results in conflict.	Although students get introduced to school rules and regulations together with their parents, they are not adequately involved in the process of formulated	Students should be fully involved in the formulation of schools rules and regulations so that there is ownership which can make implementation simple

Fisher (2000) says in conflict management, parties should work collaboratively in order to achieve a common and superordinate goal that can only be attained by both of them pulling together.	There is no tolerance between staff and students such that win-win remains farfetched	Staff and students should become tolerant to each other so that they give room to win-win by working collaboratively
The human needs theory argues that conflicts occur when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their needs (Kok, 2007).	Some conflicts are a result of delays in addressing students' needs.	Students' needs and concerns should be addressed in time and where the school cannot do so, there should be clear explanation so that students do not act on speculations
Afful-Broni (2012) says guidance and counselling is very important in conflict management in schools as most people, especially students, get involved in conflict simply out of mischief or fun.	Guidance and counselling is not fully utilized because teacher counsellors are not trained, those who got trained through own initiatives are not recognized, schools have very few teacher counsellors and there is limited time for counselling	The post of school counsellor should be established, teacher counsellors should be trained, there should be enough counsellors at every school and parents should be given time to counsel students from time to time
Tumwesigye & Basheka (2008) found that some conflicts were due to instigation by students who had been withdrawn from other schools due to poor performance and other	Instigation was done by teachers, parents and students who joined the school after being withdrawn from other secondary schools	Head teachers should ensure that there is collaboration while the MoEST should not remove a head teacher just because a school has registered violence. In addition, the

reasons		MoEST should not continue with admission of students rejected from elsewhere into a school
The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (2001) observes that monitoring and evaluation in conflict management assists in uncovering root causes of conflict, emerging new problems, and problems arising from imperfect policies	There aren't any purposefully instituted mechanisms for the monitoring of conflict management by education officials. Ad hoc mechanisms which were found were inspection visits and a requirement that head teachers should be submitting reports to the MoEST through the EDM	The following should be done: ○ Deliberate mechanism for monitoring conflict management should be put in place ○ The ad hoc mechanisms should be formalized so that inspection visits and reports by head teachers take conflict management as a core business

6.6 Proposed areas for further studies

- I. The study found that conflict was handled from a discipline perspective where concerned students are not looked as having different opinions but as being misbehaved. This researcher therefore, recommends that another study be conducted to establish the effects of such an approach on the students themselves and the whole conflict management process with the aim of generating recommendations on how best to proceed.
- II. While most secondary schools in Malawi were involved in violent conflict at one point or another, there were some which were able to manage conflicts without spilling over into violence. It is proposed therefore, that an independent study could be conducted to find out what mechanisms had been

put in place in those secondary schools for conflict not to be spilling into violence.

- III. The study established that due to the precedence that head teachers got posted away any time their schools were involved in violence, students could turn violent on very simple issues just to get rid of a head teacher. It is proposed that a study could be conducted to establish the extent to which the precedence has impacted on the management of secondary schools in Malawi.
- IV. It came out clear in the study that conflict disturbs learning through closures of the school or through rustication or suspension or dismissal of students or through strained relationships which impacted on the productivity of both staff and students. It is proposed that a study could be conducted to establish the impact of conflict on students' performance
- V. The study established that there were two approaches in the management of conflict in secondary schools; engaging students to try to find a solution together and calling for police intervention. However, the general observation was that police intervention usually worsened the situation. It is therefore recommended that a study could be conducted to establish how best the police could be engaged so that they do not worsen the situation

REFERENCES:

- Abaasa, Fiona (2005). *Views from Fiona: Strikes in Uganda's Schools*. Accessed on 26th May, 2014 at <http://www.ugpulse.com/education/views-from-fiona-strikes-in-uganda-s-schools/153/ug.aspx1>
- Adeyami, T. O. (2009). *Principals' Management of Conflict in Public Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria: A Critical Survey*. Educational Research and Review Vol. 4 (9), pp418-426, Sep 2009
- Aja, S. N. (2013). *Conflict Management Approaches Principals Adopt for Effective Administration of Secondary Schools in Ebonyi Estate*. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR). Volume 4 Issue 12
- Afful-Broni, A. (2012). *Conflict Management in Ghanaian Schools: A Case Study of the Role of Leadership of Winneba Senior High School*. International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration. ISSN 2249-3093 Volume 2, Number 2 (2012), pp.65-76 <http://www.ripublication.com/ijepa.htm>
- Agabu, Y. (2014). *Student's Book 1: Social Studies Junior Secondary School Course*. Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Company Limited
- Agabu, Y. (2014). *Student's Book 2: Social Studies Junior Secondary School Course*. Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Company Limited
- Arthur A. and Hancock B. (2007). *Introduction to the Research Process*. The NIHR RDS for the East Midlands / Yorkshire & the Humber,
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C. K., and Walker, D, A. (2014). *Introduction to Research in Education (9th ed)*. Wradsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Baginsky, W. (2004). *Peer Mediation in the UK: A Guide for Schools*. London: SPCC Publications and Information Unit,
- Balay, R. (2006). *Conflict Management Strategies of Administrators and Teachers*. Asian Journal of Management Cases, 3 (1). London: SAGE Publication.
- Bannerman, N. R. (2012). *Causes of Conflict within Organizations*. Ryan Bannerman Associates. www.ryanbannerman.com
- Benedek, W. (2012) ed. *Understanding Human Rights: Manual on Human Rights Education*. Berlin: European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC).

- Bhattacharya, H. (2008). *Research Setting: Sage Research Methods*. Accessed from: <https://srmo.sagepub.com/view/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods/SAGE.xml> on 1st October, 2015.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*. Textbooks Collection. Book 3. http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (200). *How to Research* (2nd ed). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. and Crosby, B. L. (2002). *Managing Policy Reform: Concepts and Tools for Decision – Makers in Developing Countries*. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, Inc.
- Cameron, R. (2011). *Mixed Methods Research: The Five Ps Framework*. The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods Volume 9 Issue 2 2011 (pp 96-108), available online at www.ejbrm.com
- Center for Bioethics (2003). *A guide to Research Ethics*. University of Minnesota. Accessed on www.bioethics.umn.edu on 20th may, 2016.
- Chaundhry, A. M. & Asif, R. (2015). *Organizational Conflict and Conflict Management: A Synthesis of Literature*. Journal of Business and Management Research, 9(2015) 238 -244. Accessed on www.knowledgejournals.com on 6/06/16
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Connolly, P. (2003). *Ethical Principles for Researching Vulnerable Groups*. University of Ulster: Central Print Unit. Accessed on www.victimsnri.gov.uk on 11th May, 2016.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Constitution of the Republic of Malawi* (1994). Zomba: Government print
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed). London: Pearson.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Curry, L. A., Nembhard, I M. and Bradley, E. H. (2009). *Qualitative and Mixed Methods Provide Unique Contributions to Outcomes Research*. Yale School of Public Health; New Haven. *Circulation*. 2009; 119: 1442-1452 doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.107.742775
- Danielsen, G. (2005). *Meeting Human Needs, Preventing Violence: Applying Human Needs Theory to the Conflict in Sri Lanka*. Buenos Aires: USAL
- Davidson, J. and Wood, C. (2011). *A Conflict Resolution Model*. Tylor and Francis Ltd. *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 43. No. 1
- Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical Research Methods: A User-friendly Guide to Mastering Research*. Oxford: How To Books Ltd.
- De Leeuw, E. D., Hox, J. J., and Dillman, D. A. (2008). *The cornerstones of survey research: International Handbook of Survey Methodology*.
- De Lisle, J. (2011). *The Benefits and Challenges of Mixing Methods and Methodologies: Lessons Learnt From Implementing Qualitatively Led Mixed Methods Research Designs in Trinidad and Tobago*. *Caribbean Curriculum*; Vol. 18, 2011, 87–120
- Department of Education (2005). *School Counselling Services, Standards and Guidelines: Handbook for School Counsellors*. Prince Edward Island: Department of Education. Accessed on 30th January, 2016 on www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/ed_couns_svcs.pdf
- Doucey, M. (2011). *Understanding the root Causes of conflicts: Why it Matters for International Crisis Management*. *International Affairs Review*. volume xx, number 2. Fall 2011.
- Everard, K. B., Morris, G., and Wilson, I. (2004). *Effective School Management*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing
- Fatile, J. O., and Adejuwon, K. D. (2011). *Conflict and Conflict Management in Tertiary Institutions: The Case of Nigerian Universities*. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol 7, No 1(Special Issue)

- Fisher, R. (2000). *Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution*. The American University: International Peace and Conflict Resolution School of International Services.
- Fisher, R. J. and Keashly, L. (1991). *The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation within a Contingency Model of Third Party Intervention*, in: Journal of Peace Research, 28, 1, 29-42.
- Ghaffar, A. (2009). *Conflict in Schools: Its Causes and Management Strategies*. Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology. Journal of Managerial Sciences. Volume III Number II
- Gallo, G. (2012). *Conflict Theory, Complexity and Systems Approach*. *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*. Willey on line Library,([wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com)).
- Gamage, D. T., and Pang, N. S. K. (2003). *Leadership and Management in Education: Developing Essential Skills and Competences*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Garner, N. E. (2008). *Conflict Resolution Programmes in Schools*. American Counselling Association: Professional Counselling Digest
- Glowacki, A. (2011). *Perception is at the Root of Conflict*. CCER Working Paper Series. Washington DC: George Mason University
- Golafshani, N. (2003) *Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research: The Qualitative Report* Volume 8 Number 4 December 2003 597-607
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf> Toronto: University of Toronto
- Grant, C. and Osanloo, A. (2014). *Understanding, Selecting and Integrating a Theoretical Framework in Dissertation Research: Creating the Blueprint for Your House*. Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice and Research. volume 4, Issue 2
- Gray, E. (2009). *Doing Research in the Real World*. (2nd ed). London: SAGE.
- Green, S. (2008). *Business Research Methods*. Ventus Publishing ApS. ISBN 978-87-7681-421-2
- Gyan, E. K. and Tandoh-Offin, P. (2014). *Conflict Resolution in the Senior High School in Ghana and its Implications for Educational Administration: A Case Study of Ashanti Region, Ghana*. Journal of Education and Vocational Research. Vol. 5, No3, pp119-124, September 2014
- Haddad, W. D. (1995). *Education Policy-Planning Process: An Applied Framework*. Paris: UNESCO.

- Hakvoort, I. and Elizabeth, O. (2014). *The School's Democratic Mission and Conflict Resolution: Voices of Swedish Educators*. ILSE University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden.
- Halai, A. (2006). *Ethics in Research: Issues and Challenges*. Karachi: Aga Khan University, Institute of Educational Development.
- Harrell, M. C., Bradley, M. A. (2009). *Data Collection Methods Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups*. Arlington: The RAND Corporation.
- Herrera, F. A. (2013). *Pastoralist Conflict in the Horn of Africa: The Turkane-Dassenech Case*. Nairobi; The Paulines Publications Africa.
- Hodgkin, R. and Newell, P. (2007). *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Prepared for UNICEF*. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Europe.
- Holtzhauser N. (2001). *Triangulation as a powerful tool to strengthen the qualitative research design: The Resource- based Learning Career Preparation Programme (RBLCPP) as a Case study*. Lancaster University.
- Hong, J. (2005). *Conflict Management in an Age of Globalization: A Comparison of Intracultural and Intercultural Conflict Management Strategies between Koreans and Americans*. Carbondale: Southern University
- Howitt, D. & Gramer, D. (2011). *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology (3rd ed)*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Huan, L. J., and Yazdanifard, R. (2012). *The Difference of Conflict Management Styles and Conflict Resolution in Work Place*. Business and Entrepreneurship Vol. 1, No 1: Scienpress Ltd.
- Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Clark, V. L. P., Petska, K. S. and Creswell, J. D. (2005). *Mixed Method Research Design in Counselling Psychology*. Journal of Counselling Psychology 2005, Vol. 52, No. 2. 224-135.
- Jerome, N. (2013). *Application of the Maslow's hierarchy of need theory; impacts and implications on organizational culture, human resource and employee's performance*. International Journal of Business and Management Invention ISSN (Online): 2319 – 8028, ISSN (Print): 2319 – 801X www.ijbmi.org Volume 2 Issue 3 || March. 2013|| PP.39-45
- Johdai, S. M. and Apitree, A. (2012). *Causes of Conflict and Effective Methods to Conflict Management at Islamic Secondary Schools in Yala, Thailand*. International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education – February 2012, Volume 1, Issue 1
- Johnson, B. and Christensen, L. (2011). *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*. (4th Edition). New Delhi: Sage Publications.

- Johnson, G., Scholes, K. and Whittington, R. (2008). *Exploring Cooperative Strategy*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Johnson, R. B. and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). *Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come*. Downloaded from <http://er.aera.net> at FORT HARE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY on November 5, 2015
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Turner, L. A. (2007). *Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research*. SAGE Publication; Journal of Mixed Methods Research 2007; 1; 112
- Jones, T. S. and Kmatta, D. (2001). *School Conflict Management: Evaluating Your Conflict Resolution Education Program: A Guide for Educators and Evaluators prepared for the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management*. Columbus
- Kabir, A. H. and Akter, F. (2014). *Parental Involvement in the Secondary Schools in Bangladesh: Challenges and a Way Forward*. International Journal of Whole Schooling. Vol. 10, No (1), 1-18.
- Kadyoma, F., Mukachi, R., and Mumbi, M. (2012). *Excel & Succeed: Junior Secondary Life Skills Education – Student's Book One*. Nairobi; Longhorn Publishers
- Kadyoma, F., Ndung'u, A., Omae, E., and Mumbi, M. (2012). *Excel & Succeed: Junior Secondary Life Skills Education – Student's Book Two*. Nairobi; Longhorn Publishers
- Kadyoma, F., Muraya, F., and Magoka, F. (2012). *Excel & Succeed: Senior Secondary Life Skills Education – Student's Book Three*. Nairobi; Longhorn Publishers
- Kadyoma, F., Gunyali, A. and Owiti, P. (2012). *Excel & Succeed: Senior Secondary Life Skills Education – Student's Book Four*. Nairobi; Longhorn Publishers
- Kibui, A., Kibera, L and Bradshaw (2014). *Conflict Management as a Tool for Restoring Discipline in Kenyan Public Secondary Schools*. International Journal of Scientific Research and Innovative Technology. Vol. 1 No. 3; October 2014.
- Kibui, A., Kibera, L and Bradshaw (2014). *Conflict Management as a Tool for Restoring Discipline in Kenyan Public Secondary Schools*. International Journal of Scientific Research and Innovative Technology. Vol. 1 No. 3; October 2014.
- Kipkemboi, S. F. and Kipruto, K. I. (2013). *Assessment of Factors Influencing Management of Conflicts in Church Sponsored Public Secondary Schools in Kenya*. International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research; Vol. 2 Issue 6.

- Kipyego, L. B. (2013). *Conflict Management Methods Used by Secondary School Head Teachers: A Case of Nandi Central District, Nandi County, Kenya*. A Project Report Submitted to the School of Education in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement of the Degree of Master of Education (Administration), at Kenyatta University.
- Kok, H. (2007). *Reducing Violence: Applying the Human Needs Theory to the Conflict in Chechnya*. Hacettepe University. Accessed on 16th July, 2015 on <http://onlinelibrary.wiley/doi/10.1111/1.1745-6622.1996.tbco295.x/pdf>
- Kothari. C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. Mumbai: New Age International (P) Limited, Publishers.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. London: SAGE Publications Limited.
- Kuthemba Mwale, J.B., Hauya, R., and Tizifa, J. (1996). *Secondary School Discipline Study Final Report*. Zomba: University of Malawi.
- Leffel, A., Hallam, C. and Darling, J. (2012). *Enhancement of Entrepreneurial Leadership: A Case Focusing on a Model of Successful Conflict Management Skills*. The University of Texas at San Antonio. Volume 2, Issue 2.
- Lester, F. K. (2005). *On the Theoretical, Conceptual and Philosophical Foundations for Research in Mathematics Education*. Bloomington: Indiana University, School of Education. ZDM 2005, Vol. 37 (6).
- Loh, Jason (2013). *Inquiry into Issues of Trustworthiness and Quality in Narrative Studies: A Perspective*. Singapore: National Institute of Education/Nanyang Technological University.
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2010). *Communication: The Process, Barriers and Improving Effectiveness*. San House State University: Schooling; Volume 1, Number 1, 2010
- Malawi News of 14 – 20 December, 2014; CSOs Bemoan Demos Increase in Schools*
- Malenya, F.L. (2016). *Students, Violent Protests and the Process of Self-Realization in Kenyan Secondary Schools*. CICE Hiroshima University, Journal of International Cooperation in Education, Vol.18 No.2 (2016) pp.67 ~ 82
- Malunda, H., Mpinganjira, M. (2010). *Social and Development Studies; Book 3*. Blantyre; Jhango Publishers Limited
- Manroop L, McKenna, S., Richardson L. (2011). *Alternative paradigms and the Study and Practice of Performance Management and Evaluation*. Human Resources Management Review, 21: 148-157.

- Mapolisa, T. and Tshabalala, T. (2012). *An Investigation into the Causes of Conflict in Zimbabwean Schools. A Case Study of Nkayi South Circuit*. Nova Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol. 1 (1), 2012: 1-6
- Martens, D. M. (20120). *What Comes First? The Paradigm or the Approach?* Sage: Journal of Mixed Methods Research.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). *A Theory of Human Motivation*. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.
- Mayer, B. S. (2001). *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*.
- Mcconnon S. and Mcconnon, M. (2008). *Conflict Management in the Workplace: How to Manage Disagreements and Develop Trust and Understanding* (3 ed). Oxford.
- McKerchar, M (2008). *Philosophical paradigms, inquiry strategies and knowledge claims: Applying the principles of research design and conduct to taxation*. *EJournal of Tax Research*, 6(1): 5-22.
- Meer, H. (2013). *3 Different Views on Organizational Conflict*. Study OB; Organizational Behaviour Studies.
- Mhlanga, A. S., Chiziwa, S. E., Maluwa- Banda, D. (2007). *Junior Secondary Life Skills Education: Student's Book 1 and 2*. Blantyre: Macmillan Malawi
- Mhlanga A. S., Maluwa-Banda, D., Chiziwa, S. E., Mphande, D. K. (2002). *Senior Secondary Life Skills Education: Student's Book 3 and 4*. Blantyre: Macmillan Malawi Limited
- Miall, H. (2004). *Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task*. Berghof Research Centrs for Constructive Conflict Management. Accessed on <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Circular, Ref. No. C31/1/1 of 18th June, 2014. *Riots and Vandalism by Students in Secondary Schools*.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Circular, Ref. No. C1/31/1 of 14th July, 2014. *Abolition of Admission of students Through Applications in Public Secondary School*.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2008). *Child-Friendly Schools Handbook for Malawi*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2000). *Classroom Organisation and Management*. Zomba: Malawi Institute of Education.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2016). *Education Management Information System (EMIS) Statistics*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2000). *Guidance and Counselling*. Zomba: Malawi Institute of Education.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2014). *Secondary School Management Handbook: A Practical Guide for Secondary Schools in Malawi*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology – Secondary School Directorate; *Discussion Paper on Discipline in Public Secondary Schools for Management Meeting to be Held on 14th March, 2014*.
- Mlalazi, L. (2015). *Implementation of Strategies Used to Maintain Positive Discipline in Secondary School in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe: Towards a Holistic Positive Discipline Management Model*. A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education – Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare.
- Mncube, V. and Harber, C. (2013). *The Dynamics of Violence in South African Schools: Report*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Morake, N. M., Monobe, R. J. and Dingwe, S. (2011). *Challenges Facing Managers in Managing Conflict in Schools in South and South Central Regions of Botswana*. US-Chine Education Review BS; David Publishing
- Msila, V. (2012). *Conflict Management and School Leadership*. University of South Africa; Kamla-Raj 2012. Jcommunication.
- Mugo, F. W. (2002). Sampling in Research. Reterived 25/4/2014 from http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:V_vWov8iW5MJ:https://profiles.uonbi.ac.ke/fridah_mugo/files/mugo02sampling.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=my&client=firefox-a
- Mulwa, D. M, Kimosop, M. K. and Kasivu, G. M. (2015). Participatory Governance in Secondary Schools. The Students' View Point in Eastern Region of Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practices*. Vol. 6, No. 30
- Northouse, P. G. (2015). *Introduction to Leadership: Concepts and Practices*. London: SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Oboegbulem, A. and Alfa, I. A. (2013). *Conflict Resolution Strategies in Non-government Secondary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria*. David Publishing: US-China Education Review B, ISSN 2161-6248: February 2013, Vol. 3, No. 2, 91-102
- Oguzie, S. N. (2014). *Guidance and Counselling Services as a Coping Strategy for Inculcating the Consciousness of Peace, Conflict Resolution and National Security among Secondary School Youths in Anambra State, Nigeria*. *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia: Vol. 8 (2), Serial No. 33, April, 2014:256-279

- Okotoni, O. and Okotoni, A. (2003). *Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria*. Nordic Journal of African Studies 12(1): 23-38 (2003); Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Collins, K. M. T. (2007). *A Typology of Mixed Methods Sampling Designs in Social Science Research: The Qualitative Report* Volume 12 Number 2 June 2007 281-316
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR12-2/onwuegbuzie2.pdf>. Huntsville: Sam Houston State University
- Owusu-Mensah M. (2007). *Conflict in Primary School and its Effects on Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of Ejisu-Juaben District. A Thesis for the Degree of Master Of Arts (Art Education) Submitted to The School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University Of Science And Technology*. Nairobi.
- Phillips, D. C., and Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Postpositivism and Educational Research*. Lanham, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Ponterotto, J. G. (2006). *Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept "Thick Description."* *The Qualitative Report* Volume 11 Number 3 September 2006 538-549
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR11-3/ponterotto.pdf> . New York: Fordham University
- Ponterotto, J. G., Mathew, J. T. and Brigid, R. (2013). *The Value of Mixed Methods Designs to Social Justice Research in Counselling and Psychology*. *Journal of Social Action in Counselling and Psychology*: Volume 5; Number2
- Poulson, B. (2005). *Interpersonal Conflict and Relational Models Theory. A structural Approach to Justice*. *Representative Research in Social Psychology* 2005, vol. 28, 8-21
- Ramani, K. and Zhimin, L. (2010). *A survey on conflict resolution mechanisms in publicsecondary schools: A case of Nairobi province, Kenya*. College of Public Management, Nanjing Agricultural University P.R. China.
- Rahim, M. A. (2001). *Managing Conflict in Organizations* (3rd ed.). London: Quorum Books
- Rahim, M. A. (2002). *Toward a Theory of Managing Organizational Conflict*. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*. Vol. 13. No 3.
- Ross, K. N. (2005) (ed). *Education Research. Some Basic Concepts and Terminology*. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Accessed on <http://www.sacmeg.org> on 24 April, 2016.

- Rothman, J. (2014). *Conflict Engagement: A Contingency Model in Theory and Practice*, *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 21: No. 2, Article 2. Available at: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol21/iss2/2>
- Saiti, A. (2015). *Conflicts in Schools, Conflict Management Styles and the Role of the School Leader: A study of Greek Primary School Educators*. SAGE; Educational Management Administration & Leadership 2015, Vol. 43(4) 582–609
- Sarpkaya, P. Y. (2014). *Conflict Management Strategies of Lecturers and Administrators Working in Physical Training and Sports Academy (PTSA)*. Adnan Minderes University; Kamla-Raj 2014.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thorhill, A. (2007). *Research Methods for Business Students (4th ed)*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Scannell, M. (2010). *The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games. Quick, Effective Activities to Improve Communication, Trust, and Collaboration*. New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Scott, V. (2010). *Workplace Conflict Resolution Essentials for Dummies*. Milton: Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd.
- Shahmohammadi, N. (2014). *Conflict Management among Secondary school Students*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences* 159 (2014) 630 – 635. Accessed on www.sciencedirect.com on 16 March, 2016.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). *Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Northumbria University.
- Sinclair, M. (2007) (ed). *A guide to understanding theoretical and conceptual frameworks*. The Royal College of Midwives: *Evidence Based Midwifery* 5(2): 39
- Snodgrass, L. and Blunt R. (2009). *The Value of Play for Conflict Management: a Case Study*. *South African Journal of Education*. Vol9:53:vol; 29:53 – 67.
- Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (2001). *Designing Integrated Conflict Management Systems: Guidelines for Practitioners and Decision Makers in Organisations*. Cornell University ILR School: Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution
- Spaho, K. (2013). *Organisational Communication and Conflict Management*. Sarajevo: Energoinvest d.d. Management, VOL. 18, 2013, 1 pp. 103-118.
- Swanström, N. L. P and Weissmann, M. S. (2005). *Conflict, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management and beyond: A Conceptual Exploration*. Washington, D.C. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program – A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. www.silkroadstudies.org

Suri, H. (2011). *Purposeful Sampling in Qualitative Research Synthesis*. Qualitative Research Journal, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 63-75. DOI 10.3316/QRJ1102063. A peer-reviewed article.

The Nation of Tuesday, 4 January, 2011: *Court Acquits Viphya Private Secondary School Students Suspected of initiating a Strike*

The Nation of November 17, 201: *Police Arrest Students at St. John Bosco Secondary School over Riots*

The Nyasa Times of 15 November, 2013; *Police Secondary School Students Destroy Property*

The Nyasa Times of September 28, 2014; *Students set ablaze Ntcheu Secondary School*.

The Nyasa Times of October 2, 2014; *Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Warns Students*

The U.S. Department of Interior, (2010). *Getting to the Core of Conflict 1: Conflict Management Skills*. Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution. Accessed on www.resolutions.com on 22nd April, 2016

Thorne, A. (2012). *Management Communication: Student's Book*. Cresta: Troupant Publishers (Pty) Ltd.

Tumwesigye, G. and Basheka, B. (2008). *Conflict Management Strategies of Head Teachers and their Influence on Teachers' and Students' Satisfaction with School Climate: An Analytical Survey of Secondary Schools in Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Management Institute

Turay, T. M. (2001). *An Examination of Intra-Secondary School Conflict in Complex Emergencies: The Case of Sierra Leone*. A Thesis for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. University of Toronto

UNICEF, (2007). *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. (Fully Revised Third Edition). Geneva: United Nations Children's Fund.

UNICEF (2009). *Child Friendly Schools*. New York: UNICEF

Wani, H.A. (2011). *Understanding Conflict Resolution*. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 1 No. 2; February 2011

Wikipedia, (2009). *The Free Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved on 28th July, 2009 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/quantitativeresearch> Williman, N. (2011). *Research Methods: The Basics*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group

Yokl, G. (2013). *Leadership in Organizations*. Boston; Pearson Education Limited,
The SCRAM

Yount, R. (2006). *Research Design and Statistical Analysis for Christian Ministries*.
Texas: South-western Baptist Theological Seminary.

Zariski, A. and Styles. I (2004). *The SCRAM Program for Conflict Resolution
Education in Western Australian Secondary Schools*. Murdoch: Murdoch
University

Zimpita, V. T. (2008). *Equity and Special Education: The Case of the Visually
Impaired and their Involvement in Physical Education and Sporting Activities*.
A Dissertation for the Degree of Master of Master of Education; Chancellor
College: Zomba.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: REM301SZIM01

Project title: **Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi: Towards a comprehensive framework.**

Nature of Project PhD in Education

Principal Researcher: Valentino Tipitan Zimpita

Supervisor: Prof S Rembe

Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely



Professor Lindelwa Majova-Songca
Acting Dean of Research

10 November 2017

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

**Faculty of Education
School of Further and Continuing
Education**

Stewart Hall, Alice

Phone: Alice: 040602412

| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za |



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

25 November 2016

The Secretary for Education, Science and Technology,
Private Bag 328
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Dear Sir,

Re: Permission to Collect Data: Mr V. T. Zimpita (Student Number 201506882)

This is to confirm that Mr Zimpita is pursuing PhD degree at the University of Fort Hare. His research title is **"Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi"**. He is supposed to collect data from the Head Office, Education Division Office and Schools. Kindly grant him permission. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide him with documents that may assist with information regarding the area of his study.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no names of participants will be disclosed. Mr Zimpita will ensure that he does not disrupt ongoing activities during the period he will be collecting data.

Sincerely

Prof. S. Rembe

**Coordinator of MEd and PhD Programmes Alice Campus,
Faculty of Education,
University of Fort Hare**

APPENDIX C: A LETTER REQUESTING FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology,
Private Bag 328,
Lilongwe 3.

6th December, 2016.

The Secretary for Education, Science and Technology,
Private Bag 328,
Lilongwe 3.

Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM THE MINISTRY HEAD OFFICE, CENTRAL WEST EDUCATION DIVISION OFFICE AND 5 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I write to request for permission to collect data from the Ministry head office, Central West Education Division office and 5 secondary schools in the same division.

I am studying for a PhD in Education with University of Fort Hare and I am at data collection stage. As such, there is need that I visit the institutions for the exercise hence this request.

You may wish to note that before collecting data in the 5 secondary schools, I will have to pilot the tools at a sixth secondary school.

Kindly, find attached here to, a letter from University of Fort Hare requesting for your consideration that I be given permission to collect data from the mentioned institutions.

I look forward to your usual support.

Yours faithfully,


Valentino Zimpita

**APPENDIX D: A LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
GRANTING PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA**

Ref.No. C3/1/1

13th December, 2016

**FROM : THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, PRIVATE BAG 328, LILONGWE 3.**

TO : Mr. V.T. Zimpita
Chief Education Officer for Higher Education
Private Bag 328, Lilongwe.

CC : The Central West Education Division Manager
Private Bag 98, Lilongwe.

CC : The Head teachers;

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.
- vi.

**RE: CLEARANCE TO COLLECT DATA IN SIX SELECTED SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN CWED.**

Reference is made to your letter in which you asked for permission to collect data in the six selected secondary schools in CWED as indicated above.

Ministerial approval has been granted for you, Mr. V. T. Zimpita to collect data in the six requested secondary schools. However, the

ministry would like to advise you not to disrupt ongoing end of term one examinations during the period of your data collection.

By copy of this letter, the Education Division Manager for Central West Education Division is advised to take note.



Felix Ungapembe

For: **SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**



APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding **“Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi: Towards a comprehensive framework.”**

I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....
Signature of participant

Date:

.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....
Signature of participant

Date:

.....

APPENDIX F: EDITOR'S DECLARATION

VICE CHANCELLOR

Prof. G. Y. Kanyama Phiri

Our Ref:



Knowledge Innovation and Excellence

BUNDA COLLEGE CAMPUS

P. O. Box 219, Lilongwe, MALAWI

Tel: (265) 01 277 222/260

Fax: (265) 01 277 364

Email: vc@bunda.luanar.mw

23th January 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I write to confirm that I have intensively proofread and edited the thesis entitled: Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi: Towards a comprehensive framework by Valentino Tipitana Zimpita. Among other things; I have looked at language use and I have made collections in punctuation, spellings and grammar. I have also rewritten some sentences where necessary so as to ensure a logical flow of the paper both syntactically and semantically.

It is my hope that the candidate will accept the changes which were proposed before submitting the paper.

Felix Maulidi (PhD)

Academic Editor, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

fmaulidi@luanar.ac.mw

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

Felix K. Maulidi, PhD.

Head: Agriculture Education and Development Communication Department

felix.maulidi@bunda.luanar.mw

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN'S LEGAL GUARDIANS



University of Fort Hare *Together in Excellence*

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM FOR USE BY PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi

REFERENCE NUMBER:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Valentino T. Zimpita

ADDRESS: Private Bag 328, Lilongwe 3

CONTACT NUMBER: +265 999413 138/+265 881 781 647

Your child (*or ward, if applicable*) is being invited to take part in a research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the study staff or doctor any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how your child could be involved. Also, your child's participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you or your child negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw him/her from the study at any point, even if you do initially agree to let him/her take part.

This study has been approved by the **University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Fort Hare** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and the Medical Research Council (MRC) Ethical Guidelines for Research.

What is this research study all about?

This research is trying to find out more about the many conflicts which taking place in secondary schools with the aim of coming up with a way of managing them. The

study will involve collecting data from head teachers, teachers, parents, students and education officials

Why has your child been invited to participate?

To solicit the views of the child on how to manage conflict in secondary schools so that cases of vandalism are reduced

What will your responsibilities be?

To take note of any complaints the child may raise in line with his or her involvement in the study

Will your child benefit from taking part in this research?

The benefits of the study include undisturbed learning when schools begin to manage conflict effectively

Are there any risks involved in your child taking part in this research?

Since the study involves discussions only, there aren't any risks for the child. However, if there are any challenges, the child can withdraw from the study

If you do not agree to allow your child to take part, what alternatives does your child have?

If you do not agree to allow your child to participate, you are free to withdraw him/her. Nobody can force you.

Who will have access to your child's medical records?

This study is purely for academic purposes and the information your child will give will be handled with all the necessary confidentiality – it will not be revealed to anybody

What will happen in the unlikely event of your child getting injured in any way, as a direct result of taking part in this research study?

Since the child will be involved in discussions only, there aren't any risks. However, if you notice any challenges, you should come back to me for the way forward

Will you or your child be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

You or your child will not be paid to take part in the study and there will be no costs involved for you if your child does take part

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by parent/legal guardian

By signing below, I (*name of parent/legal guardian*)
agree to allow my child (*name of child*) who is years
old, to take part in a research study entitled (*insert title of study*)

Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and that it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- If my child is older than 7 years, he/she must agree to take part in the study and his/her ASSENT must be recorded on this form.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to let my child take part.
- I may choose to withdraw my child from the study at any time and my child will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- My child may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my child's best interests, or if my child do not follow the study plan as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*)

.....
Signature of parent/legal guardian

.....
Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I (*name*) **VALENTINO T. ZIMPITA** declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to **THE GUARDIN**
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understand all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use a interpreter (*if a interpreter is used, then the interpreter must sign the declaration below*).

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*)

.....
Signature of investigator

APPENDIX H: ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Implementation of strategies used to manage conflict between students and staff in secondary schools in Malawi

RESEARCHERS NAME(S): Valentino T. Zimpita

ADDRESS: Private Bag 328, Capital City, Lilongwe 3

CONTACT NUMBER: +265 999 413 138/+265 881 781 647

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about disease or illness. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping, or treating children who are sick.

What is this research project all about?

This research is trying to find out more about the many conflicts which taking place in secondary schools with the aim of coming up with a way of managing them

The duration of the research project

The project runs up to December, 2017 when results are expected to be out

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

I would like to solicit your views on how to manage conflict in secondary schools so that cases of vandalism are reduced

Confidentiality

This study is purely for academic purposes and the information you will give will be handled with all the necessary confidentiality – it will not be revealed to anybody

If a sponsor is to be involved

There is no sponsor involved

Who is doing the research?

The research is conducted by me, Valentino Zimpita, Chief Education Officer for Higher Education in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. I am studying for a PhD at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting the study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

What will happen to me in this study?

If you agree to participate in the study, you will sign this form to show that you have assented. After that you will be requested to provide some information through focus group discussions. When the findings are out, I will come again for you to verify that the information you will give has not been misrepresented.

Can anything bad happen to me?

Since the study involves discussions only, there aren't any risks. However, if you notice any challenges, you should notify your parents

Who else is involved in the study?

The study involves head teachers, teachers, parents, students and education officials. In total, the study involves 121 people

Can anything good happen to me?

The benefits of the study include undisturbed learning when schools begin to manage conflict effectively

Will anyone know I am in the study?

Your participation will remain confidential; nobody will know about it

Who can I talk to about the study?

The Secretary for Education, Science and Technology, Private Bag 328, Lilongwe 3; Telephone: 01789422/01788961

What if I do not want to do this?

If you do not want to participate, you are free not to. Nobody can force you.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES

NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

YES

NO

Signature of Child

Date

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

Implementation of Strategies used to Manage Conflict between Students and Staff in Secondary Schools in Malawi: Towards a Comprehensive Framework

An interview guide for Head Teachers

I am Valentino Zimpita, a PhD student at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting a study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This study is purely for academic purposes and the information collected will be treated with all the necessary confidentiality.

Date

School Number

1. General information about the Head Teacher

Sex		Marital status	Age range				Experience in headship			Conflicts last 5 years			Violent conflicts			
F	M		20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	1-5	6-10	11+	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
		Married														
		Single														
		Widowed														

Academic qualification	Current Grade
Diploma in Education	Grade I
Bachelor of Education	Grade H
Master of Education	Grade G
PhD	Grade F
Non-education degree plus UCE	Grade E
Non-education degree	Grade D
Other (specify)	Other (specify)

2. Causes of conflict in secondary schools

- a. What are the major causes of conflict between students and staff at this school?
- b. In what ways does conflict positively affect this school?
- c. In what ways does conflict negatively affect this school?
- d. Why do most conflicts end into violence at this school?
- e. Do you know any skills that can be used in conflict management? If yes, please name them
- f. Does the school teach about conflict management? If yes, in which subjects is it covered?

3. Processes followed in managing conflicts in secondary schools

- a. When a conflict arises between staff and students, what does the school do?
- b. Are you aware of the following conflict management strategies; **competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating?**..... if yes;
 - i. Which one is the most commonly used in this school?
 - ii. Why is it the most commonly used?
 - iii. Which ones do you think can assist in successful management of conflict and Why?
- c. When managing a conflict between students and staff, do the parties including you do the following;
 - i. Develop expectations for a win-win solution?(please explain)
 - ii. Define the issues?
 - iii. Brainstorm creative options? (Please, explain)
 - iv. Combine options into win-win solutions? (Please explain how?)

- d. Are there clear channels of communication at this school? If yes, please name them.
 - e. Does the school offer guidance and counselling services to students? If yes, is conflict management covered? (Please explain)
 - f. Does the school have a discipline committee? If yes, how does it address conflict management? (Please explain)
4. How are you involved in the management of conflict between students and staff at this secondary school?

5. Monitoring mechanism and support provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict

- a. Do education officials provide any of the following support in the management of conflict between students and staff in schools?

No	Area of support
1	Inclusion of conflict management in curriculum
2	Inclusion of conflict management in teacher education
3	Training of head teachers, teachers, students, parents in conflict management
4	Establishment of legal framework to formalize conflict management structures
5	Mediation between conflicting parties
6	Establishment of institutions responsible for conflict management
7	Establishment of conflict management committee
8	Any other support that is provided

- b. How do education officials monitor conflict management in secondary schools?
- c. Apart from education officials, which other stakeholders provide support to schools in the management of conflict and in what form is the support?

6. Proposed conflict management framework for secondary schools in Malawi

- a. What measures should be put in place to ensure effective conflict management in schools? **(Before its occurrence)**
- b. What should each of the following stakeholders do to ensure that a conflict which has erupted in secondary schools is properly managed?

Stakeholder	Steps to be followed
-------------	----------------------

Head teachers	
Teachers	
Students	
Parents	
Education officials	

- c. When a conflict has been managed, what should be done to ensure that there is coexistence and continued effective management of further conflicts?

End of interview guide
Thank You for Participating in the Study

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Implementation of Strategies used to Manage Conflict between Students and Staff in Secondary Schools in Malawi: Towards a Comprehensive Framework

An interview guide for Teachers

I am Valentino Zimpita, a PhD student at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting a study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This study is purely for academic purposes and the information collected will be treated with all the necessary confidentiality.

Date _____

School Number _____

1. General information about the teachers

Sex		Marital status	Age range				Experience in teaching			Conflicts last 5 years			Violent conflicts			
F	M		20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	1-5	6-10	11+	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
		Married														
		Single														
		Widowed														

Academic qualification	Current Grade
Diploma in Education	Grade I
Bachelor of Education	Grade H
Master of Education	Grade G
PhD	Grade F
Non-education degree plus UCE	Grade E
Non-education degree	Grade D
Other (specify)	Other (specify)

2. Causes of conflict in secondary schools

- a. What are the major causes of conflict between students and staff at this school?
- b. In what ways does conflict positively affect this school?
- c. In what ways does conflict negatively affect this school?
- d. Why do most conflicts end into violence at this school?
- e. Do you know any skills that can be used in conflict management? If yes, please name them
- f. Does the school teach about conflict management? If yes, in which subjects is it covered?

3. Processes followed in managing conflicts in secondary schools

- a. When a conflict arises between staff and students, what does the school do?
- b. Are you aware of the following conflict management strategies; **competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating**? if yes; which one is commonly used in this school?
- c. Why is it commonly used?
- d. Which ones do you think can assist in successful management of conflict and Why?
- e. When managing a conflict between students and staff, do the parties including you do the following;
 - i. Develop expectations for a win-win solution?(please explain)
 - ii. Define the issues?
 - iii. Brainstorm creative options? (Please, explain)
 - iv. Combine options into win-win solutions? (Please explain how?)
 - v. Are there clear channels of communication at this school? If yes, please elaborate

- f. Does the school offer guidance and counselling services to students?
If yes, is conflict management covered? (Please explain)
- g. Does the school have a discipline committee? If yes, how does it address conflict management? (Please explain)
4. How are you involved in the management of conflict between students and staff at this secondary school?

5. Monitoring mechanism and support provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict

- a. Do education officials provide any of the following support in the management of conflict between students and staff in schools?

No	Area of support
1	Inclusion of conflict management in curriculum
2	Inclusion of conflict management in teacher education
3	Training of head teachers, teachers, students, parents in conflict management
4	Establishment of legal framework to formalize conflict management structures
5	Mediation between conflicting parties
6	Establishment of institutions responsible for conflict management
7	Establishment of conflict management committee
8	Any other support that is provided

- b. How do education officials monitor conflict management in secondary schools?
- c. Apart from education officials, which other stakeholders provide support to schools in the management of conflict and in what form is the support?

6. Proposed conflict management framework for secondary schools in Malawi

- a. What measures should be put in place to ensure effective conflict management in schools? **(Before its occurrence)**
- b. What should each of the following stakeholders do to ensure that a conflict which has erupted in secondary schools is properly managed?

Stakeholder	Steps to be followed
Head teachers	

Teachers	
Students	
Parents	
Education officials	

- c. When a conflict has been managed, what should be done to ensure that there is coexistence and continued effective management of further conflicts?

End of interview guide
Thank You for Participating in the Study

APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Implementation of Strategies used to Manage Conflict between Students and Staff in Secondary Schools in Malawi: Towards a Comprehensive Framework

An interview guide for education officials

I am Valentino Zimpita, a PhD student at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting a study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This study is purely for academic purposes and the information collected will be treated with all the necessary confidentiality.

Date _____

Official Number _____

1. General information about the official

Sex		Marital status	Age range				Experience at position			Conflicts last 5 years			Violent conflicts			
F	M		20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	1-5	6-10	11+	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015 /16	
		Married														
		Single														
		Widowed														

Highest Qualification	Current grade
Diploma in Education	Grade J
Bachelor of Education	Grade I
Master of Education	Grade H
PhD	Grade G
Non-education degree with UCE	Grade F
Non-education degree without UCE	Grade E
Other (specify)	Grade D
	Other (specify)

2. Conflict and violence in secondary schools

- a. What do you think are the major causes of conflict between students and staff at this secondary school?
- b. In what ways does conflict positively affect this school?
- c. In what ways does conflict negatively affect this school?
- d. Why do most conflicts lead into violence at this secondary school?
- d. Do you know any skills that can be used in conflict management? If yes, please name them
- e. Do schools teach conflict management in class or outside class?
If yes, in which subjects?

3. Processes followed in managing conflicts in secondary schools

- a. When a conflict arises between staff and students, what processes do schools follow?
- b. In the process of managing conflict, do parties observe the following?
 - i. Develop expectations for a win-win solution
 - ii. Define the issues
 - iii. Brainstorm creative options
 - iv. Combine options into win-win solutions
- c. Which of the following strategies is the most commonly used by staff and by students?
 - i. Competing
 - ii. Collaboration
 - iii. Compromise
 - iv. Avoiding
 - v. Accommodation
- d. Are there clear channels of communication in secondary schools in Malawi?If yes, please elaborate
- e. Are there teachers responsible for guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools? If yes, what role do they play in conflict management?

- f. Do secondary schools have discipline committees? If yes, what role do they play in conflict management?

4. How are you involved in managing conflict between students and staff in secondary schools?

5. Monitoring mechanism and support provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict

- a. Do you provide any of the following support in the management of conflict between students and staff in secondary schools?

Area of support	How is it done?
Inclusion of conflict management in curriculum	
Inclusion of conflict management in teacher education	
Training of head teachers, teachers, students, parents in conflict management	
Establishment of legal framework to formalize conflict management structures	
Mediation between conflicting parties	
Establishment of institutions responsible for conflict management	
Establishment of conflict management committee	
Any other support that is provided	

- a. What monitoring mechanisms have been put in place for the management of conflict in secondary schools?
- b. Which other stakeholders provide support to secondary schools in the management of conflict between students and staff?
- c. In what form is the support they provide?

6. Proposed conflict management framework for secondary schools in Malawi

- a. What measures should be put in place to ensure effective conflict management in schools?
- b. What should each of the following stakeholders do to ensure that a conflict which has erupted in a secondary school is properly managed?

Stakeholder	What they should do
Head teachers	
Teachers	
Students	
Parents	
Education officials	

- c. When a conflict has been managed, what should be done to ensure that there is coexistence and continued effective management of further conflicts?

End of interview guide
Thank You for Participating in the Study

APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Implementation of Strategies used to Manage Conflict between Students and Staff in Secondary Schools in Malawi: Towards a Comprehensive Framework

Interview Guide for Parents

I am Valentino Zimpita, a PhD student at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting a study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This study is purely for academic purposes and the information collected will be treated with all the necessary confidentiality.

Date _____

School Number _____

1. General information about parents

Parent Number	Marital status			Sex		Age range				Position in PTA/SMC		Years in office	Violent conflicts witnessed
	married	single	widowed	F	M	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Executive member	Ordinary member		
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													

2. Conflict and violence in secondary schools

- What are the major causes of conflict between students and staff at this school?
- In what ways does conflict positively affect this school?
- In what ways does conflict negatively affect this school?

- d. Why do most conflicts end into violence at this school?
- e. How can students and/or staff avoid the negative effects of a conflict such as violence?
- f. Do you know any skills that can be used in conflict management? If yes, please name them

3. Processes followed in managing conflicts in secondary schools

- a. When a conflict arises between staff and students, what does the school do?
 - b. Which of the following conflict management strategies; **competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating** are the most commonly used in this school?
 - c. Why are they commonly used?
 - d. When managing a conflict between students and staff, do the parties including you do the following:
 - i. Develop expectations for a win-win solution?
 - ii. Define the issues?
 - iii. Brainstorm creative options?
 - iv. Combine options into win-win solutions?
 - e. Are there clear channels of communication at this school? If yes, please elaborate
4. How are you involved in managing conflict between students and staff at this secondary school?
5. **Monitoring mechanism and support provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict**
- a. What support do education officials offer in the management of conflict between students and staff in schools?
 - b. How do education officials monitor the management of conflict in secondary schools?

- c. Apart from education officials, which other stakeholders provide support to schools in the management of conflict and in what form is the support?

7. Proposed conflict management framework for secondary schools in Malawi

- a. What measures should be put in place to ensure effective conflict management in schools?
- b. What should each of the following stakeholders do to ensure that a conflict which has erupted in a secondary school is properly management?

Stakeholder	Steps to be followed
Head teachers	
Teachers	
Students	
Parents	
Education officials	

- c. When a conflict has been managed, what should be done to ensure that there is coexistence and continued effective management of further conflicts?

End of interview guide
Thank You for Participating in the Study

Appendix M: FGD GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

Implementation of Strategies used to Manage Conflict between Students and Staff in Secondary Schools in Malawi: Towards a Comprehensive Framework

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students

I am Valentino Zimpita, a PhD student at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting a study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This study is purely for academic purposes and the information collected will be treated with all the necessary confidentiality.

Date _____

School Number _____

1. General information about students

Student Number	Sex		Age range			Form				Responsibility		
	F	M	9-13	14-18	19+	1	2	3	4	School prefect	Class prefect	Non prefect
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												

2. Conflict and violence in secondary schools

- a. What are the major causes of conflict between students and staff at this school?
- b. In what ways does conflict positively affect this school?
- c. In what ways does conflict negatively affect this school?
- d. Why do most conflicts end into violence at this school?
- e. How can students and/or staff avoid the negative effects of a conflict such as violence?
- f. Do you know any skills that can be used in conflict management?.....If yes, please name them
- g. Do you learn conflict management at this school? If yes, in which subjects?

3. Processes followed in managing conflicts in secondary schools

- a. When a conflict arises between staff and students, what does the school do?
- b. Which of the following conflict management strategies: **competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating** are commonly used in this school?
- c. Why are they commonly used?
- d. Which ones do you think can assist in successful management of conflict? Why?
- e. When managing a conflict between students and staff, do the parties including you do the following;
 - v. Develop expectations for a win-win solution?
 - vi. Define the issues?
 - vii. Brainstorm creative options?
 - viii. Combine options into win-win solutions?
- f. Are there clear channels of communication at this school
- g. Does the school offer guidance and counselling services to students?
- h. If yes, is conflict management covered?

- i. Does the school have a discipline committee?
- j. If yes, how does it address conflict management?

4. Monitoring mechanism and support provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict

- a. How do education officials support the management of conflict between students and staff in schools?
- d. How do education officials monitor conflict management in secondary schools?
- e. Apart from education officials, which other stakeholders provide support to schools in the management of conflict and in what form is the support?

5. Proposed conflict management framework for secondary schools in Malawi

- d. What measures should be put in place to ensure effective conflict management in schools?
- e. What should each of the following stakeholders do to ensure that a conflict which has erupted is properly managed at this secondary school?

Stakeholder	
Head teachers	
Teachers	
Students	
Parents	
Education officials	

- f. After a conflict has been managed, what should be done to ensure that there is coexistence and continued effective management of further conflicts?

End of FGD Guide
Thank You for Participating in the Study

APPENDIX N: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Implementation of Strategies used to Manage Conflict between Students and Staff in Secondary Schools in Malawi: Towards a Comprehensive Framework

A questionnaire for Teachers

I am Valentino Zimpita, a PhD student at University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I am conducting a study in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This study is purely for academic purposes and the information collected will be treated with all the necessary confidentiality.

Date _____ School Number _____ Teacher Number _____

1. General information about the Teacher

(Please tick in the corresponding box for the attribute that applies to you)

sex		Marital status			Age range				Experience in teaching			Number of conflicts last 5 years			Violent conflicts			
F	M	married	single	widowed	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	1-9	10-19	20+	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+

Academic qualification	Tick	Current grade	Tick	Form/s teaching	Tick
Diploma in Education		Grade J		Form 1	
Bachelor of Education		Grade I		Form 2	
Master of Education		Grade H		Form 3	
PhD		Grade G		Form 4	
Non-education degree plus UCE		Grade F			
Non-education degree		Grade D			
Other (specify)		Other (specify)			

2. Conflict and violence in secondary schools (Answer the questions that follow)

- a. Which of the following is the major cause of conflict between students and staff at this school?

#	Cause	Tick
1	Poor communication	
2	Misunderstanding of human rights	
3	Poor diet	
4	Poor school management	
5	Poor teaching	
6	Students indiscipline	
7	Unfair treatment of students by staff	
8	Misunderstanding of school rules and regulations	

- b. In what way does conflict positively affect this school?

i. _____
 ii. _____

- c. Why do most conflicts end into violence (at this school)?

i. _____
 ii. _____

- d. How can students and/or staff avoid the negative effects of a conflict such as violence?

i. _____
 ii. _____

- e. Does the school teach conflict management in class or outside class?

yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

- f. If your answer in **e** above is yes, name the subjects in which it covered.

i. _____
 ii. _____

3. Processes followed in managing conflicts in secondary schools

(Answer questions a to f)

- a. When a conflict arises between staff and students, what does the school do?

- b. Which one of the following conflict management strategies is the most commonly used one at this school?

No	Strategy	Tick
1	Competing	
2	Collaborating	
3	Compromising	
4	Avoiding	
5	Accommodating	
6	It is situational	

- c. Why is it the commonly used strategy?

- d. Which one do you think can assist in successful management of conflict? Why?

- e. When managing conflict between students and staff, do the parties including you do the following:

i. Develop expectations for a win-win solution? Yes ☐ No ☐

ii. Define the issues? Yes ☐ No ☐

iii. Brainstorm creative options? Yes ☐ No ☐

iv. Combine options into win-win solutions? Yes ☐ No ☐

f. Are there clear channels of communication at this school? Yes ☐ No ☐

g. If your answer in **f** above is yes, please most commonly used channel

h. Does the school offer guidance and counselling services to students? Yes ☐ No ☐

i. If your answer in **h** above is yes, is conflict management covered? Yes ☐ No ☐

j. Does the school have a discipline committee? Yes ☐ No ☐

k. If your answer in **j** above is yes, how does the committee address conflict management?

4. How are you involved in managing conflict between students and staff at this secondary school?

5. Which of the following conflict management skills do you know best?

No	Skill	Tick
1	Effective communication	
2	Negotiation and consensus	
3	Mediation	
4	Avoiding	
5	Guidance and counselling	
6	Active listening	
7	Other	

6. **Monitoring mechanism and support provided to schools by education officials and other stakeholders to manage conflict**

a. Do education officials provide any of the following support in the management of conflict between students and staff in schools?

No	Area of support	Yes	No	Explanation
1	Inclusion of conflict management in curriculum			
2	Inclusion of conflict management in teacher education			
3	Training of head teachers, teachers, students, parents in conflict management			
4	Establishment of legal framework to formalize conflict management structures			
5	Mediation between conflicting parties			
6	Establishment of institutions responsible for conflict management			
7	Establishment of conflict management committee			
8	Any other support that is provided (specify)			

- b. How do education officials monitor conflict management in secondary schools?

- c. Apart from education officials, which other stakeholder provides support to schools in the management of conflict and in what form is the support?

- d. With reference to **c** above, in what form is the support?

7. Proposed conflict management framework for secondary schools in Malawi

- a. What measures should be put in place to ensure effective conflict management in schools?

- b. What should each of the following stakeholders do to ensure that a conflict which has erupted in secondary schools is properly managed?

Stakeholder	Steps to be followed
Head teachers	
Teachers	
Students	
Parents	
Education officials	

- c. When a conflict has been managed, what should be done to ensure that there is coexistence and continued effective management of further conflicts?

End of Questionnaire
Thank You for Participating in the Study