

**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Psychology**

**CONFLICT AND ITS MANAGEMENT
IN GUNCHIRE AND MIKE HIGH SCHOOLS**

**By
Tiglu Nano**



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By

Tiglu Nano

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Degree of Master of Arts in
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**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Psychology**



July 2008

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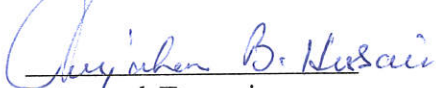
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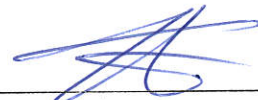
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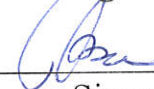
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Acronyms

ADR = Alternative Dispute Resolution

ANOVA = Analysis of Variance

CMS = Conflict Management Styles

MODE = Management -of-Differences Exercise

NGOs = Non-Governmental Organizations

TEFL = Teaching English as Foreign Language

TKI = Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate conflict and its management in Gunchire and Mike high schools. Data were collected from 5 officials, 10 administrative staff, 50 teachers and 140 selected students. The participants responded to questions on the cause, their perception on functions of conflict, their preference of interpersonal conflict management styles, and strategies used by the schools to manage disputes and disagreements.

Respondents were asked to complete an established questionnaire on the issues raised. A semi-structured interview was also held with school directors, supervisor and the chairpersons of disciplinary committees. The responses collected were systematically analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. One way ANOVA and Post Hoc tests were also employed to examine the significance difference in the use of interpersonal conflict management styles (avoiding, competing, collaborating, compromising and accommodating).

The results confirmed that disciplinary problems ranked as a major cause of conflict in the schools. The study also revealed that the majority of them perceive conflict as negative that must be avoided rather than managing it to benefit. A statically significant difference was observed on the choice of styles among the three groups- administrative staff, teachers and students. The multiple comparison tests confirmed a significant difference between teachers and students on the use of the five styles. The study also portrayed that teachers and administrative staff significantly differ only in competing.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

School culture is dynamic, which is built by people who interact and communicate in many different ways. Thus, it is inevitable that in the life of such organization there will be times of disagreement and conflict as a result of the members' interaction and communication at different levels. Emphasizing on the dynamic nature of these conflicts and disagreements, how they arise and how they need to be managed seems to be crucial in institutions to improve the quality of products, create conducive relationships, and provide better services and keep them alive.

These days, there is a growing amount of attention being devoted to investigate organizational conditions associated with conflict. Various researchers have tried to find out the notion of conflict, its causes, positive and negative effects, and develop conflict management techniques in different organizations. Some scholars like Baron (1985) and Rahim (1986) indicate that conflict becomes a common part of life in modern organizations. According to them in these institutions, conflict at various levels i.e. individuals, groups, departments and organizations, as a whole is certain to occur. Therefore, managing the problems and finding appropriate solutions to them related to conflict in such institutions is vital in many aspects. To do so, understanding the nature, its effects and understanding responses to conflict may provide a means to use it productively and solve related problems.

Among several organizations in Ethiopia, schools confront with various challenges and obstacles that hinder them from enormous and varied roles. From these; conflict is the basic threat to this social organization though the extent and repercussion varies from place to place. This condition may have a negative impact on the educational and social aspects of the country. It may also affect the quality of schools.

Obviously, the country needs better and more schools for improved system of education to solve its problems. Fekru (1993) states that the need for better and more schools has become obvious so as to cope with the new social, psychological, and economic problems by producing well-prepared citizens. The fulfillment of this better and more schools may not be achieved due to the destructive outcomes of conflict on educational institutions.

It does not mean that conflicts only result in negative consequences in organizations. They can provide considerable values and benefits to individuals and organizations. Conflicts, if constructively managed, increase creativity and innovation, greater effort, improve organizational commitment, increase cohesion, and reduce tension (Greenberg, 1996). Pondy (1989, p.96) expresses the importance of conflict as "conflict is not only functional for the organization, it is essential to its existence." Therefore, finding ways to promote the positive outcomes and minimize the dysfunctional effects is crucial for the survival of an organization in general and school organizations in particular. As a result, the present study attempts to investigate the nature, cause and managing strategies of conflict in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As mentioned in the previous section, several scholars from different discipline have conducted research on conflict and its management. However, western scholars using their own situations of culture and organizational environments employ those most available studies. Some local studies, on the other hand, do not encompass exhaustively issues of conflict and its management particularly in schools. As far as conflict in schools is concerned, it varies from other conflict situations, which appear in other organizations since various individuals and groups such

as students, teachers, principals, administrative staff members, and other stakeholders involve in school activities. All these stakeholders bring different ideas, goals, values and needs to their schools and primarily these differences affect the relationships and functions of school organizations. These same differences inevitably lead to conflict. Hence, understanding conflicts and managing them is quite essential.

Through the researchers' observation, nowadays, Ethiopian schools have negative and destructive aspects of conflict, which hinders the attainment of intended objectives. Since these institutions have a great role in the socio-psychological and economic growth of individuals as well as the country, protecting them from such challenges may have a great importance to take advantages out from them. However, conflict is disturbing the social behavior and cooperation of these institutions. Though it appears where there is human interaction, the magnitude of the problem is getting worse at schools. Hence, in this study various questions are addressed to find out and understand aspects of conflicts as well as their management. Therefore, to achieve the aim of the study, attempts were made to investigate the following basic questions:

1. What are the major causes of conflict in schools?
2. How do individuals (administrative staff, teachers and students) perceive conflict in the schools?
3. Which conflict management style is prominently used in the schools?
4. Is there a significant difference in the use of conflict management styles among the groups: teachers, administrative staff and students?
5. Which conflict management strategies are being used in schools?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate conflict and its management in the two selected schools.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study was intended to achieve the following specific objectives. It aimed to:

- 1) Identify the major causes of conflict in the schools.
- 2) Find out the perceptions of teachers, students and administrative staff members on the functions of conflict.
- 3) Identify the predominately used conflict management style in schools.
- 4) Examine the differences in the use of conflict management styles among the three groups: teachers, administrative workers and students.
- 5) Assess the strategy applied to manage conflict in the schools.

1.4 Significance of the Study

There is a common belief among scholars that identifying the nature, cause and managing strategies of dysfunctional conflict in organizations enable to improve the quality of outputs, facilitate cooperative work and solving problems. In this regard, the study may help to do so.

This study would, therefore, help achieve the intended objectives of schools as an organization, administrators, teachers, students and the community who take the lion-share of school activities. Moreover, the findings of this study may have also great contribution for governmental and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that concern on conflict and conflict management programs.

This study, apart from serving as a means to manage conflict in schools and creating a smooth relationship among individuals and groups, it may also serve as a reference for those conducting a similar study on the field of conflict.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

Conflict is a universal scene. It is not limited to organizations or schools but it exists in all processes of communication from beginning to end where two or more parties (individuals or groups) interact. However, this study is only devoted to investigate conflict and its management in high schools and more specifically to the two selected schools, namely: Gunchire Preparatory School and Mike High School due to various constraints; to make the study more reliable and manageable; it covers only conflict and its management within the two schools of Gurage Zone.

In the study, an attempt has been made to investigate the causes, individuals' perception on conflicts & its management mostly at interpersonal level. Therefore, it does not encompass intrapersonal, intra and inter group conflicts. The respondents of the study are teachers, administrative staff and randomly selected students. Therefore, students' parents, higher officials of woreda education office & other stakeholders are not included in the study.

1.6 Definitions

Conflict - It is a part of interaction manifested in disagreement, differences and incompatible in interests, desires and wishes between two or more parties within schools.

Conflict Management – refers to management of conflict in a constructive way in order to benefit from it.

Conflict management styles – personal ways of responding to conflict in the dimensions of assertiveness -the desire to satisfy ones own needs and wishes- and cooperativeness- the desire to satisfy another party's needs & concerns.

Conflict Management Strategy- It is a planning, coordinating and implementing procedure in management of conflict.

Collaborating- A desire to satisfy the concerns of all parties in a conflict.

Compromising-A moderate assertiveness and cooperativeness in which each party in a conflict is willing to give up something.

Accommodating- A low assertiveness and high cooperation in a conflict to place the opponent's interest above his or her own

Avoiding – A desire to withdraw from a conflict being low assertive and low cooperative.

Competing- A desire to satisfy one's interest, regardless of the impact on the other.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study comprises of five chapters. The first chapter deals with background, statement of the problem, significance, delimitation & operational definition of terms. The second chapter emphasizes on review of literature related to the problem under study. The third chapter presents research methods employed to conduct the study. The forth chapter subsumes data analysis and interpretation, and the last section contains summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Conflict is a complex and prevalent phenomena that exists in every society. As a result, it has been thoroughly reviewed and studied. Thus, numerous articles, books and research works have investigated and discussed the area of conflict .So far, local and foreign literature at various levels with different research topics considered conflict issues.

A study conducted on 'Disciplinary Problems of Students', Melaku (2007), identified frequently reflected behaviors related to it. These are failure to do home work, absenteeism, not listening to teachers, cheating and indulging in conversation, and sleeping in class. He also found out other problems such as heterosexual activity, use of addictive drugs criticizing, bullying and smoking.

The very recent study has also been undertaken on 'Work Place Conflict Management Styles among the Employees of Debre Berhan Blanket Factory' (Setegn, 2007). In the study awareness of functions of conflict at work, and the relation between demographic variables and conflict management styles were examined. Descriptive statistic, line graphs. T-test and multivariate analysis were employed to compute the data for the study. Participants of the study were a randomly selected 315 employees from a total population of 748 employees. The result of the study showed that employees' awareness of functions of conflict at work was not sufficient. It also revealed that men were found to be avoiders and more competitive than that of female counter parts.

There is also another study on 'A Strategy for Managing conflict in the Primary Teachers' Training Institutes of Ethiopia' (Fekru, 1993). It was conducted to identity the types, causes, resolving and disciplinary mechanisms of conflict. Randomly selected academic and administrative

staffs were the sample of the study. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and compute the data. The findings of the study affirmed that the majority of administrators lack specific knowledge of conflict resolving mechanisms. It also showed that four types of conflict exist: intra personal, interpersonal, intra group and inter group conflicts (Fekru, 1993).

Workayehu (2007) in the study on 'Nature and Methods of Managing Interpersonal Conflict at Neighborhood Level' found out that conflict due to children's affairs, land borders, falsified psychosocial, social and economical effects on the two conflicting parties and the family members. The study was conducted in Shewarobiet town with the participants of 240 selected household heads and 16 people who participated in traditional conflict resolution process. The author in the study indicated that affairs related to children, land borders and falsified information are the main causes of neighbor conflict (p.69).

On the other hand, Grimayesus (2005) conducted a study on 'Organizational Conflict and Its Management'. The study was intended to investigate the type of conflict that exists in Commercial College of Addis Ababa University particularly among different departments and administrators. The findings of the study showed that there exists interdepartmental conflict.

The issue of conflict also has been studied and published in different journals. For example, Robert & James (2001) examined 'Conflict across Organizational Boundaries' specifically between managed care organizations and health care providers using boundary-spanning theory as a framework. They identified three factors that influence conflict:

- ❖ Organizational Power,
- ❖ Personal status difference of the individuals handling the conflict,
- ❖ Previous interactions (p.755).

According to them, these factors affect the individuals' behavioral response or emotions. After developing hypothesis, the author tested the three factors using 109 conflict incidents drawn from different managed care organizations. The results revealed that organizational power affects behavioral responses, where as status differences and negative interactions affect emotions (Roberts & James 2001).

Further journals were published on conflict. Beck & Betz (1975) made a comparative analysis on organizational conflict in schools. They analyzed conflict as a function of the organizational conditions of school size, teaching specialization and the centralization of authority. The inter-relationship among these explanatory variable and two forms of organizational conflict were explored with data from thirty-eight elementary and fifteen secondary schools. The researcher classified conflict as intra and inter-stratum content upon the participants involved in the conflict situation (Beck and Betz 1975, p. 61). They found out that the major determinant of intra- stratum conflict in elementary schools was the centralization of authority where as in secondary schools intra stratum conflict was primarily a function of all variables.

The present study differs from those discussed above for various reasons. It focused on causes and nature of conflict mainly in a high school setting. As opposed to others, the differences in the use of conflict management styles among three groups were analyzed. Attempt has also been made to identify strategies applied in the schools to manage conflict.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations of Conflict

Conflict is an established behavioral phenomenon, and it has been reviewed and researched (Deutsch, 1973; Rahim, 2001). The different approaches to the examination of conflict have changed over times. Rahim (2001) stated that the early organizational theories, Taylor and

Weber, neglected to view conflict as phenomena in itself but as consequences of poor organizational structures and processes being put in place. The first to view conflict as a phenomenon were social psychologists such as those involved with the Hawthorne experiments in the 1920s and 1930s, which saw the beginning of a new way of looking at human behavior (Mayo, 1945).

This earlier work led to more interests in the study of conflict management. Rahim (2001) presented a detailed review of the background history related to managing organizational conflict. Rahim stated that, Mayo, in the 1930s began to view social systems as integrated to the resolution of conflict. Some of the specific seminal empirical work into conflict management began in the late 1940s, and 1950s, and was developed in 1960s and 1970s (Coser, 1956; Deutsch, 1973).

Rahim (2001) further suggested that in the 1950s, with the development of the study of organizational behavior and its mechanism for analysis, conflict was seen more as a significant and unavoidable aspect of organization. Rahim (1983) created approaches to measuring conflict based on self-observations and self-perceptions of ways of behaving in response to conflict situation. The 1990s saw an emergence of ways of looking at emotional aspects of responding to situations such as with the emergence of theories of emotional intelligence (Cooper, 1997).

Therefore, the shift in thinking, regarding conflict, changed from one of conflict as a destructive force that needs to be eliminated to recognition of conflict as being unavoidable. It was then viewed as a phenomenon that requires management through an interactive approach for the benefit of organizations.

2.2.1 Definition of Conflict

Pondy (1967) points out that the word 'conflict' has been used in the literature to describe antecedent conditions of conflict behavior; affective and cognitive states of individuals; and various types of conflict behaviors. Fink (1968) notes that the many different uses of the term conflict in the literature reflect the many different conceptual frameworks for studying conflict. Hence, authors have used and defined the term conflict differently.

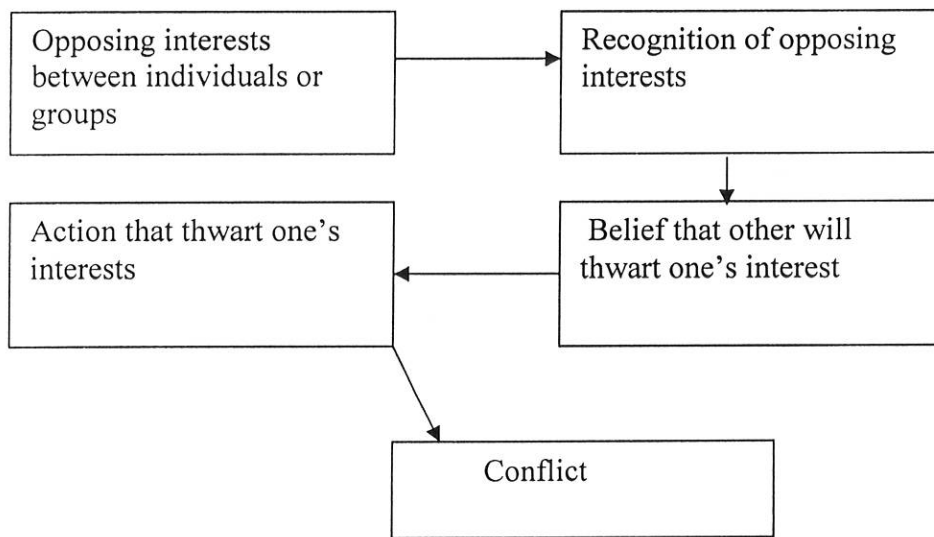
Duetsch (1973), for example, defined conflict as mismatched activities where one party is hindering or diluting effective behaviors in the other party. It has also defined as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims and values, and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals (Putnam & Poole, 1987). This definition highlights three general characters of conflict: interaction, interdependent and incompatible goals. Nye (1973) also defined conflict as a mutual hostility between or among individuals or groups. This definition implies that conflict is an interpersonal or inter group event in which the parties involved exchange hostilities.

Greenberg (1996) included four elements in his definition of conflict- 'it is a process in which one party perceives another has taken some action that will exert negative effects on its major interest' (p.393). The key elements included in the definition are:

- ❖ Opposing interests' opposition;
- ❖ Recognition of such opposition;
- ❖ The belief by each side that the other will thwart these interests;
- ❖ Action that actually produced.

Greenberg (1996) drew a diagram of these four elements given in figure 1.

Figure 1: The nature of conflict



Source: Greenberg (1996, p.392)

The social psychologists, Zanden (1987) defined conflict as a form of interaction in which people (individuals or groups) perceive themselves as being involved in a struggle over scarce resources on social values. Other scholars support this definition. When conflict is viewed from a competitive perspective, the parties to the conflict must be defined as competitors who seek to obtain something that is present in limited supply (Barash & Webel, 2002). The factor which influence conflict in this regard is scarcity because if the resources were in abundance, there would be no competition and therefore, no conflict at all.

In most studies the definitions of conflict contain reasons why it occurs as well as it is seen synonymously with other terms. For example, Dubrin (1994) thinks that conflict is synonymous to terms such as, controversy, strive, battle, quarrel and incompatibility. He continues to define conflict as a condition, which occurs when two or more parties perceive mutually exclusive goals, values or events. According to Dubrin (1994), conflict occurs in organizations due to a number of reasons such as, when there is a competition over limited resources, when parties in the same

organization share different objectives, and when there are some aggressive and abrasive personalities.

2.2.2. Transitions in Conflict Thought

There are different views in the literature regarding conflict. According to Robbins (1991), there are three transitions in school of conflict thought. These are the traditional view, human relations view and interactionists' view. The early approach to conflict assumed it as bad and negative and it is seen synonymously with violence, destruction, and irrationality. This traditional approach also views conflict as dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust between people (Girmayesus, 2005). The proponents of this school of thought argue that conflict is a malfunctioning within groups; therefore, it must be resolved and avoided.

Another school of thought, the human relations view, argues that conflict is a natural and inevitable occurrence in all groups and organizations. According to this view, conflict cannot be avoided and even there are times when conflict may benefit groups or individuals (Robbins, 1989). According to these authors, the third school of thought, the integrationist view, argues that conflict is not only a positive force in a group but also it is necessary for a group to perform effectively. Advocators of this school of thought contend that conflict should be encouraged, keeps the group alive, self-creative, and creative.

From these transitions, conflict resolution and conflict management can be differentiated. There is a debate in the field of conflict as to whether or not all conflicts can be resolved. Thus, making the term conflict resolution is one contention (Aureli & Franc, 2000). Based on these perspectives discussed, above the next section describes the development

and differences among conflict resolution, conflict management and conflict transformation.

2.2.3 Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management

Conflict resolution is the process of attempting to resolve dispute. In the early approach to conflict, conflict management was synonymous with conflict avoidance. Therefore; most managers viewed conflict as something they must eliminate from their organization (Gale, 2006). This avoidance and elimination of conflict is termed as conflict resolution. Conflict practitioners talk about finding the win-win outcome for parties involved, where the win-lose dynamic found in most conflict resolution (Anderson et al. 1999). Conflict resolution engages conflict once it has already started as opposed to conflict prevention, which aims to end conflict before it starts or before it leads to verbal, physical and illegal fighting or violence. Conflict resolution approach is strongly tied to the traditional view of conflict, which considers conflict as something bad and destructive. In relation to this, Gale (2006) says, "avoidance approach to conflict management was prevalent during the latter part of the nineteenth century and continued until the mid-1940s. Nevertheless, conflict avoidance is not a satisfactory strategy for dealing with most conflict."

According to Johnson (1997), Conflict management refers to the long-term management of intractable conflict. In other words, it is the employment of strategies to correct perceived differences in a positive manner.

Conflict management is different from conflict resolution. While the latter refers to resolving dispute to the approval of one or more parties, the former concerns an on going process that may never have a resolution (Johnson, 1997; Gale, 2000). Based on the definitions of the two terms it can be said that the idea of conflict management is related to the

interactions view where as conflict resolution relates to the traditional school of thought. Conflict management is also defined as the principle that not all conflicts can necessarily be resolved; but learning how to manage conflict can decrease the odds of non-productive escalation (Lorenzen, 2006). It involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in ones environment (Stevenson, 1999; Henkin et al., 2000; Kgoma, 2006).

To make clear the difference between conflict management and conflict resolution, the assumptions of conflict thinker and conflict consensus are very crucial. The conflict thinker assumes there will always be conflict, and therefore talks about the need to find ways to benefit from and manage it (Anderson et al., 1999). Where as the conflict consensus assumes that conflict is an aberration and that the aim should be to remove conflict, and therefore talks about the need to resolve conflict. The conflict thinkers' view is related to conflict management whereas the conflict consensus' perspective describes conflict resolution.

2.2.4 Conflict Transformation

According to Johnson (1976), conflict transformation is the process by which conflicts are transformed into peaceful outcomes. It differs from conflict resolution and conflict management approaches in that it recognizes that contemporary conflicts require more than the refraining of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes. The very structures of the practice may be embedded in a pattern of conflict relationships that extend beyond the particular site of conflict. Conflict transformation is, therefore, a process of engaging with and transforming the relationship, interests, discourses and if necessary the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of non-violent conflict" (Miall, 2004).

There is also another reason in that conflict transformation approach differs from those of conflict management or conflict resolution. Where as conflict transformation involves transforming the relationships which support non-violence, conflict management approaches seek to merely manage and contain conflict; and conflict resolution approaches seek to move conflict parties away from 'zero sum' positions towards positive outcomes, often with the help of personal actors (Miall, 2004).

2.3 The Nature of Conflict in Schools

School conflict has been a common phenomenon for along period of time (Fekru, 1993). According to him, the phenomena related to conflict has been thoroughly studied by philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists and psychologists. Management schools were also interested in studying conflict in organizations in recent times (Rahim, 1986, p.11). Thus, school conflict as part of the organization received emphasis. While recent researchers have discovered that organizational conflict is considered as legitimate, inevitable and even a positive indicator of effective organizational management, the classical organizational theorists differ in that conflict can have impacts on organizations (Fekru, 1993; Rahim 1986).

Nowadays, there is a belief that conflict is natural, and that it can have either destructive or constructive results, depending on the circumstance. When conflict is understood in a positive manner, it becomes an opportunity to encourage learning and creativity (Kgomo, 2006). Stader (2000) contends that conflict is part of a maturing process which results in fear, alienation, withdrawal, attendance problems and academic difficulty. Therefore; school conflict by its nature is inevitable and yields both positive and negative functions. The nature and magnitude of conflict in academic setting is well expressed by Fleetwood (1987). "Conflict in academic setting is a daily occurrence because a

consensus of opinion concerning rules governing seldom exists among the participants- administrators, teachers, students, and parents” (p, 1). He further explains that these parties, particularly administrators and students, see one another as adversaries, not as those working toward a common goal, as is generally the case in other organizations. In particular, secondary school principals and assistance principals are expected to deal with conflict situations not only on a daily basis, but frequently on an hourly basis. These administrators are primarily responsible for the management of discipline, frequently spending several hours in conference with students who have been referred to the administrator by teachers, school staff and parents (Fleetwood 1987). According to Schmidt (in Rahim, 1986) theorists have discovered the functional and dysfunctional outcomes of conflict. These issues are discussed in detail below.

2.3.1 Constructive Conflict

From the discussion so far, it should be clear that conflict is not necessarily dysfunctional. The assertions in this section consider how conflict can be productive. Dahrendorf (1959) described constructive conflict as follows:

May we perhaps go so far as to say that conflict is a condition necessary for life to be possible at all? I would suggest, in any case, that all that is creativity, innovation and development in the life of the individual, his group and his society is due, in no small extent, to the operation of conflict between group and group, individuals and individual, emotion and emotion within an individual (p.208).

This basic point seems to justify the judgment that conflict is 'good' and desirable. Hence, conflict is productive which promotes creativity, innovation and development.

Deutsch (1969) also suggests that most of the literature has concentrated on the destructive effects of conflict and has failed to deal adequately with cases where conflict has productive consequence. In his view, its very pervasiveness is indicative of a number of positive functions. "It prevents stagnation, stimulates interest and curiosity; it is a medium through which problems can be aired and solutions arrived at; it is the root of personal and social change" (p. 19).

Thomas (1976) also refers to ways in which the literature on conflict tended to concentrate on its elimination or avoidance, but suggests that there is growing recognition that interpersonal and inter-group conflict often serves useful functions. Based on his review of literature, Thomas (1976, p. 88) listed a number of constructive aspects of conflict:

- Conflict can serve to maintain optimal levels of stimulation in condition of boredom and low tension, where people may welcome divergent opinions, competition, and, at times, overt hostility.
- The confrontation of divergent views can produce new perspective and more comprehensive view, leading to superior decisions. Supporting this view, he cites Hall's (1971) studies of group decision making in which he concluded that 'conflict, effectively managed, is a necessary precondition for creativity'.
- Aggressive behavior is not necessarily irrational or destructive in conflict situations and the aggressive pursuit of apparently conflicting goals by parties may well lead to constructive outcomes.

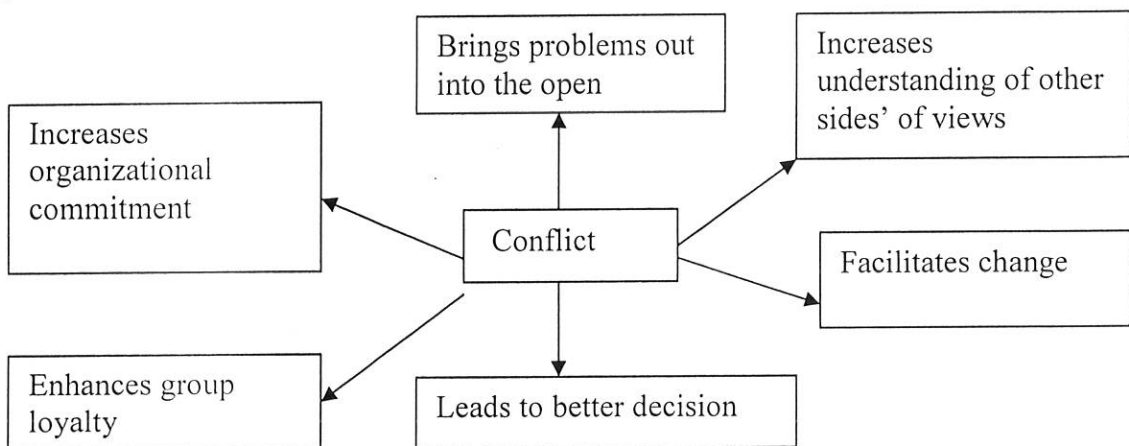
According to Wiley and Sons (1996, p. 241) constructive conflict results in increased creativity and innovation, greater effort, increased cohesion, and reduced tension.

In relation to this Greenberg (1996, p, 400) forwarded six important benefits of conflict for organizations. These include:

- Conflict serves to bring problem that have previously ignored out into the open. Hence it is a necessary first step to their solution;
- Conflict motivates people on both sides to know and understand each other's position more fully. And it fosters open-mindedness.
- Conflict often encourages the consideration of new ideas and approaches, facilitate innovation and change
- Conflict can lead to better decisions;
- Conflict enhances group loyalty, increases motivation and performance with in the groups or units involved;
- Conflict, especially cognitive conflict, enhances organizational com mitment;

These six positive effects of conflict according to Greenberg (1996) are shown below.

Figure 2: Constructive Effects of Conflict



Source, Greenberg (1996, p.400)

Productive conflict in schools is further discussed. Some of its beneficial aspects are listed below. Conflict can be constructive if it...

- Helps the parties to adapt and change;
- Focuses attention on problems that may inhibit performance ;
- Gets the parties re-examine their goals, policies and practices;
- Energizes staff by actively involving them in the life of the school.
- Brings an individual's problems into the open ;
- Provokes an evaluation of organizational structure (Anderson et. al., 1999).

2.3.2 Destructive Effects of Conflict

Although conflict has beneficial effects, it also results in dysfunctional outcomes. Greenberg (1996, p.399) identified three negative effects produced by conflict:

- It often produces strong negative emotions and thus can be quite stressful;
- Conflict frequently interferes with communication between individuals, groups or divisions;
- It diverts attention and need energies a way from major tasks and efforts to attain key organizational goals.

Greenberg (1996) also discussed other negative effects of conflict which are somewhat more subtle and are sometimes easily overlooked. These effects are;

- Conflict between groups often encourages their leaders to shift from participative to authoritarian styles ;
- Conflict increases the tendency of both sides to engage in negative stereotyping;
- Conflict leads each side to close ranks and emphasize loyalty to their own department or group (p.400).

According to Wiley & Sons (1996), any destructive conflict can reduce the effectiveness of individuals, groups and organizations. The disadvantage described may include lost productivity, lower job satisfaction, unnecessary or overpowering stress, and decreased concern for a common goal. In the dysfunctional outcomes of conflict, people may feel defeated; distance between people can be increased, introspective withdrawal and resistance to teamwork (Rahim, 1986).

The negative effects of conflict can reduce the efficiency of individuals, groups or organizations. Conflict can also be destructive if ...

- It continues even after a decision has been reached;
- People remain enemies even when the issues change ;
- Out side parties are drawn in to the debate;
- One person is determined to emerge as a winner which makes the other a loser.
- Discussion never moves from complaints to solutions (Anderson et. al., 1999).

According to Whitfield (1994), dysfunctional conflict is a term, which is applied to a type of conflict that prevents progress, averts achievement and suspends success. It is a destructive conflict. Hence, a dysfunctional conflict can be seen as a condition that purports to disrupt the smooth functioning of organizations.

2.3.3 Stages of Conflict

Deutsch (1973) offered a more detailed typology of conflict, encompassing six categories .Each of them is described as follows.

- 1) Veridical-a conflict scenario that objectively exists and can be accurately perceived.
- 2) Contingent - a non-recognized dependent relationship between two parties.

- 3) Displaced- a situation in which parties argue about the wrong thing.
- 4) Misattributed - a conflict situation between the wrong parties.
- 5) Latent -when conflict should be occurring but is not.
- 6) False - when there is no objective reason for the conflict. It is based on misunderstanding and misperception.

In more recent literature, Duetsch's (1973) six constructs have been narrowed to four phases of conflict. Robbins (1991) viewed the process by which conflict develops as a series of four main stages that is consistent with other literature in this area (Larison, 2001; Pondy, 1980). These four main stages are latent, perceived and felt, manifest, and outcome. Each of these constructs can be described as follows:

Latent conflict-relates to the recognition that potential opposition exists, that is, when conditional factors determine that conflict is about to happen. This type of conflict is linked to the notion of latent conflict (Frazier & Rody, 199; Johansson & et al., 1998; Pondy, 1980; Robbins 1991). Latent conflict can be viewed as an underlying factor of discontent. The casual mechanisms may be in the form of conceptual differences, reward discrepancies; disenchantment with rules and policies, competing for limited resources and power struggles (Henning, 2003, p. 5; Paltridge, 1971, p. 86).

Perceived and felt conflict is related to cognitive a specs of awareness about the situation, and the manner in which the participants personalize this awareness (Johnson & et. al., 1998; Pondy, 1980: Robinns, 1991). This phase of conflict results in perceived and felt, that is the level of awareness and emotion connected with the situation when it comes into existence.

The third stage (Frazier & Rody, 1991; Larison, 2001) is the overt or manifest phase of the conflict when aspects of the situation can be easily measured. The actual manifestation of the conflict situation can occur at different levels: within self, between individuals, groups and between organizations (Duke, 1995).

The final stage of conflict can be viewed as the outcome phase. This stage centers on the resolution of conflict (Frazier & Rody, 1991; Johnson et. al. 1998; Pondy, 1980; Robbins, 1991) .The outcome can be either positive or negative, which is often determined by the perceived level of satisfaction regarding the consequences of the resolution as held by the conflict participants (Weeks, 1994).

2.4 Types of School Conflict

Researchers have classified school conflict differently based on their concern. According to the organizational substructures involved, Beck and Betz (1975) differentiated school conflict into two types as intra-stratum and inter-stratum conflict. According to the authors the former refers to conflict occurring among organizational units of equal units or nearly equal authority within the organizational structure where as the later refers to conflict among organizational units of dissimilar authority over the allocation of control within the organization (p.60).

School conflict was also categorized based on individual, group and organizations at which it occurs. In this respect, Rahim (1986, p.16) identified four types of conflict in organizations. These are intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra group and inter group conflict. Most of the conflict at schools contains a large interpersonal element, but a significant level of conflict can also develop as a result of the way the school operates as an organization i.e., on a structural level (Anderson et. al. 1999). In the public management paradigm, there are four types of conflict, namely,

Intra personal, inter-personal, intra-group and inter-group conflict (Kgoma, 2006). The four types of school conflict are discussed below:

- ❖ Intra-personal conflict: it is conflict within individuals themselves. It occurs when a school member is required to perform certain tasks and roles, which do not match his or her expertise, interests, goals, and values (Fekru, 1993). A person has specific needs and tendencies to act in specific ways. People have selective perception; they only see what their particular background and experiences enable them to see. Sometimes, they have two basic but conflicting needs and they have to make a choice. Internal conflict can cause uncertainty, hesitation, stress, anxiety, sleeplessness and depression (p.25).
- ❖ Inter-personal conflict: it is a conflict between two individuals (Willey and sons, 1996). This is the most common and most visible type of conflict in schools. Yet its causes are not always obvious (Anderson et. al. 1999). It is usually caused by fundamental differences with regard to priorities, activities and policy matters in the school, but it can be purely personal. Fekru (1993) defined it as conflict between two or more school members of the same or different hierarchical levels or units. It can be between fellow educators, educator and learner, director and vice director and so on at school level.
- ❖ Intra-group conflict: it refers to conflict within groups since individuals have differing values, attitudes, behaviors and outlooks, conflict is almost inevitable. Fekru (1993, P.25) expressed it as the conflict among members of a group (department), or between two or more sub-groups within a group because of incompatibilities or disagreements between some or all the members of a group and its leaders.

- ❖ Inter-group conflict: this refers to conflict between two or more units or groups (departments) within a school (Wiley & son, 1996; Fekru, 1993, p.25). It occurs between different groups due to common interest, difference in approaches and so on. Inter group conflicts can arise from factors such as the division of learners into classes, promotions, smoking in the staff room and so on (Anderson et. al. 1999).

On the other hand, Jehn & Mannix (2001, p.338) proposed three types of conflict in work groups in general: relationship, task and process conflict. These are stated as follows:

Relationship conflict: an awareness of interpersonal incompatibilities includes affective components such as feeling tension and friction. This type of conflict involves issues such as dislike among group members, and feelings such as annoyance, frustration, and irritation.

Task Conflict: This is an awareness of differences in viewpoints and opinions pertaining to a group task. Similar to cognitive conflict, it pertains to conflict about ideas and differences of opinion about the task.

Process Conflict: It is defined as an awareness of controversies about aspects of how task accomplishment will proceed (p.339). Process conflict pertains to issues of duty and resource delegation such as who should do what and how much responsibility different people should get. It also relates to how the work gets done.

Further classification of organizational conflicts was made. Two types of conflicts are predominantly studied in organizations. Guetzkow & Gyr (1954) identified that both affective and substantive conflicts exist. Affective conflict refers to conflict in interpersonal relation, while substantive conflict is conflict involving the group's task. Prime and Price (1991) distinguished cognitive task related conflicts and social emotional

conflicts. They asserted that these conflicts are not directly related to the task but characterized by interpersonal disagreements. Coser (1956) proposed goal-oriented conflict, in which individuals pursue specific gains, and emotional conflict, which is projected frustration with interpersonal interactions. As mentioned earlier, though there are numerous classifications of conflict, most of them share common points. The classifications are made based on relationship task interaction, individuals, groups or organizations in which the researchers are interested.

Major research works and previous studies related to causes of conflict in school organizations are the focus of the next section.

2.5 Major Causes of Conflict

Conflicts of any of the previous types may arise for a variety of reasons. There are certain antecedents and conditions present in most school organizations. Most of the time, the conditions make the eventual emergence of these conflicts very likely. Scholars in the field of conflict management discussed major causes of conflict. Some of the most important ones are described here under.

Deutsch (1973) lists the following issues involved in conflicts:

- Control over resource;
- Preferences and nuisances, where the activities of one party impose upon another;
- Values, where there is a claim that a value or set of values should dominate;
- Beliefs, when there is a dispute over it acts, information reality;
- The nature of the relationship between parties;

All these issues are grouped under three categories: communicational, structural and personal factors. Robbins (1989) explained the factors included in each of the categories as follows:

- ❖ **Communicational:** Includes insufficient exchange of information, noise, and the semantic differences that arise from selective perception and differences of background;
- ❖ **Structural :** includes the goal compatibility of members of the group, jurisdictional clarity, and leadership style;
- ❖ **Personal factors:** includes individual value systems and personality characteristics.

Later, Greenberg (1996) divided the major causes of conflict in organizations into two groups: factors relating to organizational structure or functioning, and factors relating to interpersonal relations. Organizational causes of conflicts were stated by Wiley & Son (1996, p.241 and Greenberg (1996, p.395-3985).

- Competition over scarce resource;
- Ambiguity over responsibility and ambiguity over jurisdiction;
- Interdependence and events stemming from it;
- Reward systems ;
- Differentiation within organization;
- Power differentials between organization members.

Most researches on organizational conflict have focused on the type of organizational causes noted above. Recently, however, attention has been drawn to the possibility that in many cases, organizational conflicts stem as much from interpersonal factors (Greenberg 1996, p.397). The factors stated are:

- ▶ Lasting grudges (making people angry and look foolish publicly);
- ▶ Faulty attributions: errors concerning the causes behind others' behavior ;

2.6 Conflict Management Styles (CMS)

2.6.1 Types of CMS

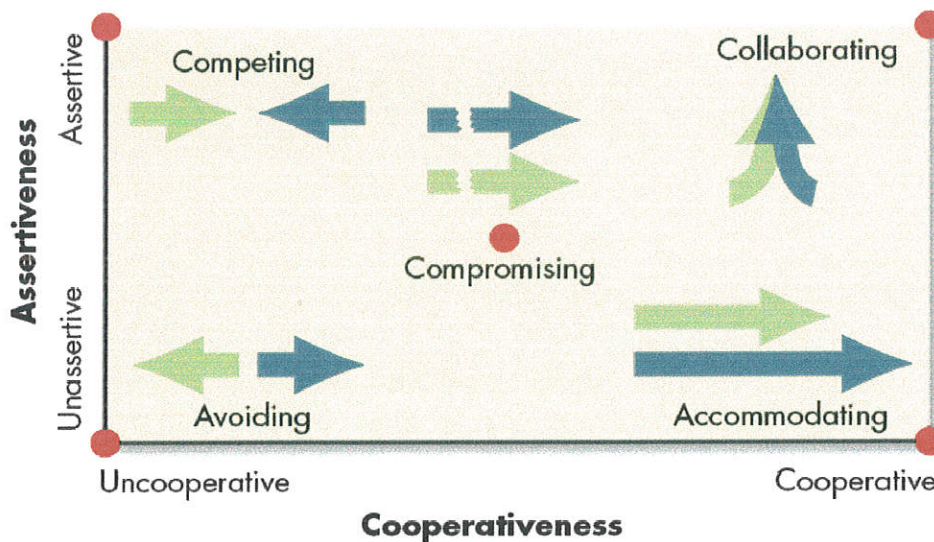
People respond to conflict in different ways. A person's interpersonal style in conflict situations can be described based on two dimensions of behavior (Wiley & Sons 1996). The first dimension is cooperativeness, which is the desire to satisfy another party's needs and concerns. The second dimension is assertiveness, which is the desire to satisfy one's own needs and concerns. The five interpersonal styles of conflict management that result from the combinations of assertiveness and cooperation are stated briefly. The discussion is based on Thomas (1976) and Wiley & Sons (1996).

- 1. Avoiding:** The avoiding mode is low assertiveness and low cooperation. Conflict is recognized to exist but it is suppressed by one or more parties, or handled by withdrawal. It may be useful where an issue is unimportant, where the potential disruption would outweigh the benefits of resolution, or where information gathering is most important. In avoidance, an actual or potential disagreement is ignored or denied.
- 2. Competing:** One participant seeks to dominate the process, with out regard for others. It is characterized by being uncooperative but assertive; and engaging in a win-lose competition. Individuals use the conflict to promote their own goals.
- 3. Collaborating (mutual problem solving):** Participants seek to understand their differences and achieve a mutually beneficial solution. It deals with high assertiveness and high cooperation. This may be appropriate where participants' insights and commitments are important and need to be merged rather than compromised. Its emphasis is bringing together the conflicting parties in order to work out their problem in a joint situation.

4. **Compromising (sharing):** It is characterized by moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperation. Each party makes some concessions in order to reach a compromise. This is most appropriate where temporary settlements or expedient solutions are needed, especially under time pressure.
5. **Accommodating:** it is characterized by low assertiveness and high cooperation. A party becomes self-sacrificing to appease another and places the interests of the other above their own. Times when the accommodating mode is appropriate are to show reasonableness, develop performance, create good will, or keep peace, to build harmony and gain social credits.

The major types of CMS are presented in figure 3 below in terms of their features of assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Figure3. Conflict management Styles



2.6.2 Predominantly Used CMS

Previous studies conducted on the use of conflict management styles indicated that there was no consensus among the results obtained. Some of the results are discussed as follows.

A study conducted to understand the conflict management strategies of administrators and teachers (Balay, 2006), examined Competing, avoiding and compromising. Data for the study was collected from a sample of randomly selected 250 school administrators and teachers working in seventeen primary schools, private and public schools in the Van province of East Anatolia, Turkey. The results showed that administrators were more likely to use avoiding and compromising than teachers. Moreover; both administrators and teachers at private primary schools tend to use compromising, avoiding and competing than their colleagues at public schools.

Another study employed to determine prevalent conflict management styles chosen by students in nursing and to contrast these styles with those chosen by students in allied health professions (Sportsman & Patti, 2007). A convenience sample of 126 students in a comprehensive university completed the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), which requires respondents to choose behaviors most characteristic of their response to conflict and classifies these behaviors as one of the five styles. The result confirmed that there was no significant difference between the prevalent conflict management styles chosen by graduate and undergraduate nursing students and those in allied health. The prevalent style for nursing students was compromising followed by avoiding. In contrast, avoiding, followed by compromising and accommodation, was the prevalent style for allied health students.

Earnest & McCaslin(2000) conducted a research on relationships between CMS preference of District Directors in the Cooperation Extension Service North Central Region, Ohio. The study revealed that the participants perceived their most prominent style to be the integrating style. The next most used CMS was compromising. Obliging,

dominating and avoiding were the third, fourth and fifth CMS used by the participants respectively.

The choice of CMS was found to be different between men and women respondents. Studies revealed that women were more collaborative than their men counterparts (e.g. Habtamu, 1998; Setegn, 2007).

2.7 Conflict Management Strategies

Several authors described strategies in conflict management. However; most of these authors correlate conflict strategy to conflict management styles. In relation to this Fleetwood (1987) says some try to link conflict management strategies to conflict management styles while others focus on strategies as a discrete from styles. The difference lies in the use of the terms strategy and styles.

According to Kgomo (2006), a strategy is an action which involves two or more individuals coordinating, planning, implementing and evaluating an activity in the pursuit of a goal. A strategy can simply be viewed as a plan aimed at achieving something. Lombard (1991) defined a strategy is a predetermined comprehensive course of action which can be taken in order to attain a specific goal or aim. A strategy is, therefore, a well planned action which has been identified and developed as most effective in reducing conflict. Jeong (2000) defined strategy for management as a process and procedure. Fraser and Hipel (1984) refer to a strategy as any set of options that can be taken by a particular participant. Kgomo (2006, p.40) listed a number of strategies to the reduction of conflict. These are:

- Parties point of view;
- Negotiation and mediation;
- Consensus building;
- Separation of people from problems;

- Inventing options for mutual gain.

These strategies are discussed incorporate with other theories of conflict management strategies in the next sub-section.

2.7.1 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Numerous studies have investigated the process of conflict management used in organizations (Thompson & Gooler, 1996). They described the different ways that organizations deal with conflict including persuasion, problem solving and bargaining. These components used in dealing with conflict are considered aspects of mediation, negotiation and arbitration (Warters, 2000).

As a consequence of increasing expense involved in conflict resolution through legal system, different forms of resolution were developed which the components of mediation and negotiation sit under them (Henning 2003). These are Dispute Resolution and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). ADR emphasizes collaborative approach to resolution as opposed to traditional forms that often divided in to win-lose outcomes (Fisher and Ury, 1991). Warters (2000) and Hill (1995) examined three significant elements that are the center of the ADR approach, namely interests, rights and power.

- Interest-based approach- aims to resolve conflicts by promoting critical factors such as vested interests, needs and issues.
- Right-based approach – to conflict management aims to establish the extent of each party’s involvement in to conflict situation and determines which party’s claims have the greater validity. This leads to process involving arbitration and litigation
- Power- based approach- centers on the reality of the situation in terms of who has the greater power.

Warters (2000) and Hill (1995) also suggested that the two most frequently used strategies associated with interest-based approaches are mediation and negotiation. In the former case, parties involved in conflicts can openly decide to contribute to its resolution, where as the later aims to promote communication between disputants. The authors also emphasized on arbitration as a right-based approach where a third party determines decisions regarding the claim.

The issue of negotiation was further focused. Rahim (2001) likened the principled negotiation process to an integrating style of management. Boulle et al., (1998) stated that principled negotiation has made a major impact on modern ways of viewing negotiation. The process of principled negotiation emphasizes four main guidelines:

1. Focusing on the problem not on the people;
2. Considering interests not positions;
3. Creating numerous solutions before making a decision;
4. Ensuring any agreement is based up on certain objective criteria.

2.7.2 Steps for Managing Conflict

Conflict management is a process that uses a strategy or series of strategies to support individuals or groups in learning about conflict situations so that transformative action can take place (Tschannen, 2001). As such conflict management is the integral process in creating programs that can disseminate ideas and skills for averting, overseeing and resolving conflicts (Warters, 2000). Conflict management often consists of different types of prevention or resolution strategies. Consequently, conflict resolution can be viewed as procedures operating within the conflict management model (Henning, 2003). These days, numerous studies have investigated the process of conflict management used by organizations (Rahim, 2001).

and resolving conflicts (Warters, 2000). Conflict management often consists of different types of prevention or resolution strategies. Consequently, conflict resolution can be viewed as procedures operating within the conflict management model (Henning, 2003). These days, numerous studies have investigated the process of conflict management used by organizations (Rahim, 2001).

According to Week (1994), there are eight steps to conflict resolution. These eight steps include:

- ❖ Creating an effective atmosphere: Some essential factors for effective atmosphere: personal preparation, convenient timing of resolution session, a suitable place, and considering sensitive initial comments and openings.
- ❖ Clarifying perception- Deals with minimizing prior and existing assumptions.
- ❖ Focusing on individual and shared needs;
- ❖ Building shared positive power- which creates commitment and trust between participants;
- ❖ Looking to the future and learning from the past;
- ❖ Generating options (free-flowing options);
- ❖ Developing 'Doable'- realistic actions and behaviors used in establishing an organizational culture based on trust and cooperation (Clarke & Lipp, 1988; Hellriegel & et. al., 1999).
- ❖ Making mutual benefit agreements- this concept is consistent with the anecdotal literature on win-win scenarios (Shelton, 1999).

Weeks (1994) also looked at different conflict aspects that often create critical barriers to resolution. The aspects of interpersonal behavior discussed include anger management, denial of conflict, and fixed viewpoints regarding management. Considerations of these affective components of a management strategy are common in the literature

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Research Design

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to investigate the problem under study. The quantitative method was employed to gather and analyze the data through questionnaire from the participants. On the other hand, the qualitative technique was applied to obtain and interpret the information from school principals through interview. This method was used in order to discuss issues of conflict more thoroughly with school principals. Kgomo (2006) contend that qualitative research method is appropriate as people involved in school settings are studied and understood through their own experience they report to the study. The various parts of methods used to conduct the study are discussed below.

3.2 Population of the Study

Population of the study comprised of the two selected high school students, teachers and administrative workers who involve in the institutions. There are 57 teachers, 17 administrative workers including officials, and 1,954 students (1432 males & 522 females) in both schools. 41 students, 2 administrative staff and 7 teachers, who were not included in the main study, filled out the pilot test. Therefore, the target population of the main study was 1,978 (1913 students, 50 teachers, 5 officials and 10 administrative workers).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study covers the two selected schools, namely: Gunchire Preparatory and Mike High Schools. They are found in Gurage Zone in southern region of Ethiopia. From these schools, 205 (149 male and 56 female) respondents were selected for the main study. As mentioned in the previous section, the population of the study was categorized in to three:

administrative staff, teaching staff and students. The sample was then selected from each group separately.

140 students (99 males and 44 females) were selected using stratified random sampling technique, which involves dividing the population into subgroups based on known variables about the groups from grades 9-12. This sampling design was used to ensure the particular grades and sections within the category are adequately represented in the sample, and to gain greater control on the composition of the sample. The students were chosen from 26 sections. The average number of students in each section was 74. Five student respondents were selected from each of 16 sections whereas six were chosen from each of 10 sections.

On the other hand, 50 teachers, 10 administrative workers and 5 officials were included for the study purposively. The reason behind using this sampling method is that teachers, administrative workers and principals are highly involved in the maintenance of a working relationship at schools. Particularly officials are key individuals who play the roles of agent of communication that all other stakeholders in the school management interact through them. They are also a negotiator when conflict occurs among teachers, between teachers and learners, and between other stakeholders. They are leaders, caring individuals toward problems of teachers, learners and others. Moreover; they are encouragers, decision makers and above all, they are conflict managers. Therefore, purposive sampling was employed to get better information from officials, teachers and administrative workers. Thus, stratified purposeful sampling was used to choose samples based on Patton (1990). De Vos, et al. (2002) states purposive sampling as: "it is based entirely on the researcher's decision in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population" (p.207).

3.4 Instruments

Relevant information for the study was collected through questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questions used for interview and self-report questionnaire were prepared based on the review of literature on conflict and its management.

The questionnaire comprised of four parts. The first section contained five questions, which dealt with participants' demographic information such as sex, age, marital status, educational level and work experience. The second part included items related to causes of conflict in school organizations. It has 15 different questions with a five point Likert rating scale system. Under this part of the questionnaire, one open-end question was provided to the participants in order to get other causes of conflict, which were not included in the questions. The third part of the questionnaire consisted of ten items, which were designed to measure the respondents' perception on the functions of managed conflict in schools. The last section comprised of 40 items each of them describing one of the five conflict management styles based on Thomas and Kilmann's (1976) Management-of-Differences Exercise (MODE).

In addition to the questionnaire, an interview was held with the two school principals, a chairperson of disciplinary committee, a supervisor and a vice director. To do so, 6 guiding questions were prepared. The questions were aimed to support the descriptive data obtained from the questionnaire. The interview was employed in Amharic as the questionnaire did.

3.4.1. Demographic Information

Participants of the study were asked to give their background information including sex, age, marital status, work experience and

educational level. The collected information was categorized into groups for analysis. The data regarding sex was categorized as male and female whereas marital status was divided into married and unmarried.

Information on educational level contained degree, diploma, certificate and Secondary education. Information regarding age and experience was also gathered by making the respondents write on the blank space provided. However, the age level is categorized into three ranges based on Havighurst's (1972) developmental task during the life span. The age ranges from 12-20, 21-40, and 41-65 years. The participants' work experience was grouped based on the career ladder structure of teachers and administrative staff which ranges from 0-2, 3-5, 6-10, 11-15 and above 16 years.

3.4.2. Measures of Causes of Conflict

The items that are believed to be causes of conflict were prepared based on the literature. Some of the issues considered as causes of conflict include communication barrier (misunderstanding), personal factors and characteristics, disciplinary problems...and so on (e.g. Deutsch, 1973; Robbins, 1989; Greenberg, 1996; Girard & Koch, 1996; Nye, 1973) were focused. Respondents were requested to rate a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to-strongly disagree (1), to make statistical computations for analysis and interpretation. Administrative and teaching staff completed three items (4, 6 & 8 appendix A) in addition to the twelve questions filled out by students.

3.4.3. Respondents' Perception on Functions of Conflict

Ten questions were designed and distributed to the participants to measure their perception on functions of conflict. The items contained both constructive and destructive aspects of conflict. Three questions (1, 3 & 4) deals with dysfunctional aspects whereas the rest seven (2, 5, 6,7,8,9, and 10) focused on functions of conflict. The whole questions

were a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agrees (5) to strongly disagree (1). The researcher based on Wiley & Sons (1996) developed the items.

3.4.4. Conflict Management Styles (CMS)

The tools used to measure the participants' personal CMS were adapted from Thomas and Kilmann (1976). 40 questions which contain equal number of the five CMS in a five point Likert scale ranging from always (5) to never (1). Items 1,6,11,16,21,26, 31 and 36 are prepared to measure avoiding style where as questions 2, 7, 12, 17,22,27,32 and 37 are designed to measure competing. Moreover, 8 items including 3,8,13,18,23,28,33 and 38 are related to collaborating while other 8 items such as 4, 9, 14,19,24,29,34, and 39 concerned with compromising the rest 8 items (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 40) are related to accommodating (appendix A).

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

To investigate the nature, causes and management of conflict at school level, previous related studies and theories were reviewed. Based on these theories and research works, questionnaires and guiding interview questions were developed to gather data from the selected schools. These tools were revised and translated into Amharic with the intention of gaining information that is more reliable by minimizing language barriers on the side of the participants. The translation was made with the help of TEFL (Teaching English as Foreign Language) and linguistics postgraduate students. Two English teachers further edited it.

Before the questionnaire was administered to the respondents of the main study, it was piloted to check the understandability of the questions. The participants of the pilot test were 41 students (31 males & 10 females), 2 administrative staff and 7 teachers. The responses from

the pilot test were computed to find out the reliability of the items designed to measure causes, individuals' perception on conflict and the prevalent use of CMS using Cronbach Alpha. The result portrayed that the reliability of items on causes of conflict was 0.91 whereas 0.85 was the reliability of items for measures of perception on functions of conflict. The Cronbach Alpha measures for the five CMS, namely: avoiding, competing, collaborating, compromising and accommodating were 0.78, 0.86, 0.88; 0.71 and 0.74. Some modifications were made on items after the pilot test particularly on compromising and accommodating items which were found to be less in reliability. The item correlation coefficients of the modified items for compromising items were 0.52 and 0.54; and 0.50 was found for accommodating item.

The researcher adjusted time to administer and provide orientations to participants with school directors and unit-leaders. The selected students were met in a class to clarify the instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.

Administrative staff and teachers were also told to complete the questionnaire honestly and carefully. With the help of two friends, one from Mike and the other from Gunchire, the questionnaire was collected a day later.

Interview was also employed to obtain further information on the issue under investigation. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the principals to provide their genuine response confidentially. Then the researcher asked the guiding questions to them. The responses were organized for analysis.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

The study's analysis was split into causes of conflict, respondents' perception on functions of conflict and identification of the most prevalent CMS. Under each section the organization of the items were based on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) for the second and third parts of the questionnaire while always (5) to never (1) for its last section. Therefore, the scores were determined counting the frequencies of responses before computing them using Spss (statistical package for social science) program.

The tallied and collected responses were entered into the Spss program for analysis. To interpret the responses obtained from the questionnaire, the following methods were employed:

1. Descriptive statistics was used to show the proportions of demographic variables, the extent of agreement on the cause and perceptions of conflict, and to find out the most prevalent used CMS. The methods used are frequency, percentile, mean and standard deviation.
2. The significance of mean difference among the three categories: administrative staff, teaching staff and students; was computed using one way ANOVA for unequal sample size (Welkowitz et. al. 1991).
3. Since the groups significantly differ in the choice of styles, Post Hoc test was used to see the difference between and among the three categories on each style.
4. Alpha .05 was employed for all significant tests.
5. Responses collected through interview and the open ended were analyzed qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research data which were gathered through the questionnaire and semi-structured interview held with school principals. The issues included in this section are carried out in accordance with the theories and principles raised in the review of literature section.

The research tools were concentrated around five themes which deals with the participants' background information, the causes of conflict in the school environment, participants' perception on functions of conflict, prominently used CMS in the schools, and conflict management strategies used in schools. The result computed through the instruments is presented in five sections.

4.1.1 Respondents' Background Information

This section contains respondents' background information obtained through the questionnaire and interview. The first sections of the questionnaire and the guiding questions focuses on respondents' demographic information such as sex, age, marital status, educational level and work experience. In this sub-section of the chapter, the participants' demographic information is discussed.

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to collect the respondents' general information. Two hundred participants filled out the questionnaire. Their background information is presented in table one below.

Table 1. Respondents' Background Information (N=200)

Variables	Level	Respondents							
		Administrative Staff (N=10)		Teaching Staff(N=50)		Students (N=140)		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	7	3.5	38	19	99	45	144	72
	Female	3	1.5	12	6	41	20.5	56	28
Age	12-20 years	----	---	4	2	126	63	130	65
	21-40 years	6	3	36	18	14	7	56	28
	41-65 years	4	2	10	5	--	---	14	7
Marital Status	Married	8	4	34	17	14	7	56	28
	Unmarried	2	1	16	8	126	63	144	72
Educational Level	Degree	4	2	29	14.5	--	---	33	16.5
	Diploma	5	2.5	21	10.5	--	---	26	13
	Certificate	1	.5	--	---	--	---	1	.5
	Secondary	--	---	--	--	140	70	140	70
Work Experience	0-2 years	--	---	2	1	140	70	142	71
	3-5 years	2	1	13	6.5	---	---	15	7.5
	6-10 years	2	1	6	3	---	---	8	4
	11-15 years	2	1	8	5	---	---	10	5
	Above 16 years	4	2	11	5.5	---	---	15	7.5

The table about respondent's demographic information contains three groups of respondents and their statistics based on the independent variables. It clearly shows that 144 individuals (72%) that provided data were males whereas 56 of them (28%) were females. The majority of respondents in each of the three categories (administrable, teaching staff and students) were males from the whole population compared to females in the schools.

As it can be seen from the table, the age level is divided into three parts. Most of the respondents were in the category of 12-20 years, which is

65% of the sample size. Accordingly, 28% of the participants are fallen in 21-40 years level. Only 4 respondents (2%) from the administrative staff and 10 (5%) from the teaching staff were at the age of 41-65 years.

As far as marital status is concerned, nearly one-third of the respondents (28%) were married. The majority of them (72%) were unmarried. The data also reveals that participants (63%) from students' category were not married.

The educational level of the participants is sub-divided into degree, diploma, certificate and secondary education. As it can be understood from the given table, 16.5% of the sample held degree whereas 13% of the subjects were diploma holders. Only one respondent had certificate in the administrative staff category.

The table portrays that there are five levels of experience based on service years. Most of the respondents from these categories (12.5%) had 16 & above years work experience. One respondent from the teaching group and all student respondents (70%) had 0-2 years work experience. 7.5% of them had less than 6 Years experience in their current position. Average number of the participants employed in the schools over 11 years whereas 4% of them had 6-10 years work experience.

Table 2. Interviewees' Demographic Information (N=5)

Variables	Interviewee				
	A	B	C	D	E
Sex	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	38	30	28	35	26
Marital status	married	unmarried	married	married	unmarried
Educational level	diploma	degree	diploma	degree	diploma
Work experience	18	9	7	7	4

Table 2 above shows demographic information of interviewees. All the interviewees were males. It also illustrates that they were in the age

group of 20-40 based on Havighrurst's development of life span. The majority of the individuals (4) were married. Three of the participants were diploma holders whereas the rest were degree. One of the interviewee was more experienced than others .He had 18 years work experience. The other two of them have 7 years service. Respondent B had 9 years experience who is advanced in 5 years compared to the last interviewee.

4.1.2 Analysis of Causes of Conflict

The responses obtained on causes of conflict are given on table 3 below. Frequency and percentage of scores for each item was computed to examine the extent to which occurrence of the causes of conflict in the schools.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Causes of conflict in schools

No	Cause of Conflict	Strongly Agree		Agree		undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
1	Disciplinary problems	95	47.5	104	52	--	--	1	.5	-	-
2	Reward system	28	46.7	17	28.3	--	--	13	21.7	2	3.3
3	Discrimination	87	43.5	94	47	2	1	12	6	5	2.5
4	Aggressive behavior	86	43	102	51	2	1	6	3	4	2
5	Competition over Scarce resource	77	38.5	116	58	3	1.5	3	1.5	1	0.5
6	Misunderstanding	53	26.5	117	58.5	--	--	13	6.5	17	8.5
7	Individual Personalities	52	25.5	86	43	--	--	48	24	14	7
8	Interdependence	67	33.5	84	42	1	0.5	20	10	28	14
9	Overlapping Responsibility	17	28.3	27	45	1	1.7	13	21.7	2	3.3
10	Sexual attack	46	23	78	39	2	1	74	37	--	--
11	Cultural differences	44	22	76	38	1	0.5	51	25.5	28	14
12	Dominating power	11	18.3	37	61.7	--	--	5	8.3	7	11.7
13	Ethnicity	26	13	77	38.5	--	--	84	38.5	13	6.5
14	Incompatible values, goals, ...	62	31	98	49	--	--	26	13	14	7
15	Distrust	88	44	103	50	2	1	4	2	3	1.5

Note: N=number of respondents; P=percent;

Frequency and percentage of the items in the table show the comparative values of causes of conflict in the schools. 47.5% of the total respondents strongly agree that disciplinary problems contribute as a major source of conflict. 104 individuals (52%) also agree that the issue indicated in item 1 appears to be a cause of dispute in the schools. Thus, 99.5% of the respondents indicated that disciplinary problems are the major causes of conflict.

In item 2, reward system is given as source of disagreement. Responding to the question, 46.7% of the respondents considered it as the second major cause. 28.3% of the participants also agree that it facilitates conflict in their school. On the other hand, for 21.7% of them the item is not a factor, which causes disagreement. Another 3.3% of them strongly disagree with the item as a factor that facilitates conflict. Based on the information provided, it can be said that 75% of the participants agree with the item as a cause of conflict.

Discrimination is also taken as the fifth major cause of conflict. 43.5% of the respondents strongly agree where as 47% of them agree on the item. However, 6% and 2.5% of the participants complained about the existence of conflict due to discrimination. Therefore, 90.5% of the total respondents assure that discrimination creates conflict in the schools.

Moreover, the table indicates that aggressive behavior (43% strongly agree & 51% agree) is the third major cause of conflict as one-hundred and forty-five (94%) respondents agree with the item. Competition over scarce resource (38.5 strongly agree & 58% agree) is the second major case of disagreement between individuals in the schools. 95% of the total respondents affirmed this item aggravates conflict. The table portrays that distrust (44% strongly agree & 50% agree) is the fourth factor, which causes conflict.

Interdependence (33.5% strongly agree & 42% agree), incompatible values goals and beliefs (31% strongly agree & 49% agree), and overlapping responsibility (28.3% strongly agree & 45% agree) are awarded as source of conflict. In addition, misunderstanding (26.5% strongly agree & 58.5% agree), individual personalities (25.5% strongly agree & 43% agree), sexual attack (23% strongly agree & 39% agree), cultural difference (22% strongly agree & 38% agree) and ethnicity (13% strongly agree & 38.5%) are causes of conflict in the schools.

The table reveals that some individuals (1%, 1%, 1.5%, 1.7%, 1%, 0.5% and 1%) are not sure whether discrimination, aggressive behavior, competition, interdependence, ambiguity over responsibility, sexual attack and cultural difference are the cause of conflict or not respectively. Respondents (2.5%, 2%, 0.5%, 8.5%, 14%, 3.3%, 14%) strongly disagree on these variables that cause conflict mentioned above, a number of respondents also disagree that some of the factors indicated in the items except on disciplinary and ethical problems, and overlapping responsibility. However, and options rated as strongly agree and agree in most of the items in the table are much greater than that of strongly disagree and disagree. Therefore, these factors may be taken as the major causes of conflict in schools based on the response given in the table.

Information was also collected through the open-ended question and the interview. The evidence gathered is described below. Some of the factors that cause conflict in the schools are:

- ❖ Competition for authority (department heads', unit leaders' and, etc positions);
- ❖ Lack of respect for others' right;
- ❖ Underestimating others effort;

- ❖ Forcing teachers and administrative works to involve in political activities;
- ❖ Fighting among students;
- ❖ Misinterpretation of rules and principles.
- ❖ Accepting rules, principles and commands from the higher bodies without any modification on the side of school principals;
- ❖ Absenteeism, late for school;
- ❖ Unfair measure of efficiency;
- ❖ Failure to do home works, class works and assignments;
- ❖ Disobedience, cheating, and lack of respect for others.

The interviewee also forwarded some causes of conflict. They reported that conflicts at the school environment occur due to these reasons:

- ❖ Late submission of tasks such as reports, plans and so on;
- ❖ Some teachers students and subordinates late for school;
- ❖ Some learners fight each other;
- ❖ Some teachers and subordinates complain about their results on efficiency;
- ❖ Some teachers and subordinates are not dedicated to their work;
- ❖ Leaving school ground with out permission.

4.1.3 Respondents' Perception on Conflict

Responses regarding the participants' perception on functions of managed conflict were analyzed using frequency and percentage. Since conflict composes elements, positive and negative, the participants were asked to inform how they view it. The items were ten from which three of them indicate negative aspects of conflict and the rest show its constructive aspects. The computed result of descriptive statistics is given in the table below.

Table 4. Respondents' Perception on Conflict

No	Measures of Perception on Conflict	Options									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree.	
		N	P	N	P	N	p	N	P	N	P
1.	I feel that conflict is always a negative experience.	79	39.5	113	56.5	-	-	8	4	-	-
2.	There are times when conflict can be desirable.	13	6.5	43	21.5	3	1.5	126	63	15	7.5
3.	I am afraid to enter into confrontation.	97	48.5	100	50	1	.5	1	.5	1	.5
4.	I feel that in conflict some one will get hurt	78	39	96	48	2	1	23	11.5	1	.5
5.	When I manage a Conflict, it improves my relationship.	3	1.5	49	24.5	1	.5	106	51.5	41	20.5
6.	I think that if conflict is managed it is a necessary precondition for creativity.	5	2.5	44	22	1	.5	118	59	32	16
7.	I believe that conflict is a medium through which problems can be aired and Solutions arrived at.	29	14.5	48	24	-	-	101	50.5	22	11
8.	I think conflict can increase Understanding others' view	10	5	43	21.5	-	-	123	61.5	24	12
9.	I feel that conflict facilitates change.	9	4.5	40	20	1	.5	108	54	42	21
10.	I feel that conflict may increase work commitment.	7	3.5	54	27	-	-	121	60.5	18	9

Note: N = number of respondents, P=percent

As it can be seen form table 4, 39.5% of the respondents perceive conflict as a negative experience where as more than half of the total percent (56.5%) consider that conflict is something unnecessary and bad. Only eight respondents (4%) disagree with the idea indicated in the item. Almost all (96%) of the participants recognize conflict as dysfunctional rather than a functional and positive experience.

The second item in the same table describes the desirability of conflict. Unfortunately, however, 6.5% and 21.5% of the participants indicated the extent of their agreement with the item as 'strongly agree' and 'agree' respectively. Only 1.5% of the participants were in doubt whether conflict can be desirable or not. The table points out that the majority (63% and 7.5%) of the respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' on the essentials of conflict. From this information, one may say that most of the participants (70.5%) do not understand the importance of conflict. Hence, they view it as negative that needs to be eliminated.

On the other hand, item number 3 implies that conflict is harmful and dangerous. 48.5% of the informants are afraid of entering into confrontation while 50% of them support the idea. Surprisingly, 98.5% of the participant view conflict as dysfunctional and destructive.

In the same way, 78 participants strongly agree that in conflict some one will get hurt. Besides, 96 of them (48%) agree with the statement while two respondents are not sure to decide. However, 23 individuals (11.5%) disagree with the issue. Based on the majority of the respondents' response, it might be said that conflict is understood as a negative phenomena.

Item number 5 stresses that managed conflict improve relationship between the parties (individuals) involved in the situation. The response obtained indicates that 51.5 % of the subjects opposed the idea. Moreover, 20.5% of them strongly disagree. Only a few individuals (1.5% strongly agree & 24.5% agree) believe that conflict may improve relationship if it is managed. Based on the majority of the response, it might be concluding that people in schools do not aware of the functions of conflict.

Item 6 asserts that one of the functions of managed conflict provokes creativity. Nevertheless, the response shows that 59% and 16% of the respondents provided their reaction as 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' respectively. 22% of the subjects agreed with the function of conflict where as the other 25% showed strong agreement with the issue in the item. The result obtained in this item clearly indicates the respondents' negative attitude toward conflict.

The functional out come of conflict is shown under item 7 in table 4 above. It affirms that conflict is a medium through which problems can be aired and solutions arrived at. Replying to the item, 14.5% (29) of individuals strongly believe in the idea explained where as 24% (48) agrees with this positive effects of conflict. However, the majority of respondents (61.5%) do not accept conflict as a medium of problem rising to find its solution.

Item 8 addresses conflict as a means to understand others' view. Responding to the question, 61.5% of the participants strictly opposed the sentence. Some others (12%) also disagree with the function of conflict expressed in the item. Although the majority of the participants (73%) refuse conflict as a way to identify others' views, a significant number of them (27%) agree with the benefit of conflict stated under the item.

From the 200 respondents for item 9, 54 percent of them feel that conflict does not facilitate change. Moreover, 21% of the respondent extremely claim the advantage mentioned in the statement. Therefore, 75% of the informants perceived conflict as dysfunctional. 20% of the participants feel that conflict is used to facilitate change. A small number of them (4.5%) also strongly believe that managed dispute in schools is beneficial. Item '10' also shows one of the productive aspects of conflict.

It states that conflict increases organizational commitment on the side of employees or workers. 3.5% of the respondents strongly support the idea where as 27% of them showed their agreement to some extent. Still the majority (69.5%) of the subjects are unable to accept the constructive feature of conflict in their organizations.

As discussed in the review of literature section, conflict composes of both functional and dysfunctional elements; the researcher requested the interviewee to inform how they perceive it. The response obtained from the interview regarding functions of conflict indicated that three of the interviewees were not aware of positive outcomes of conflict. Nevertheless, two of them believe that it may have function. Reporting to how it could serve, they told the researcher that some conflicts are indicator of other serious problems .Therefore; they help to control and find solutions before they reach to the climax.

4.1.4 The Most Frequently used CMS

A person’s score on each style is the number of times he or she selects statements representing that style over other statements. To determine the most prominent used CMS in the schools, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were employed. The computed result is shown in table 5.

Table 5. The Most Frequently used CMS (N=200)

CMS	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. dev.
Avoiding	200	13.00	32.00	26.5100	2.93136
Competing	200	19.00	34.00	27.4250	2.87152
Collaborating	200	24.00	40.00	33.4300	2.88038
Compromising	200	27.00	38.00	31.4400	2.15630
accommodating	200	26.00	34.00	29.5850	1.64203

Note: Std. dev. =Standard deviation, CMS. =Conflict Management Styles, N =Number of respondents

Table 5 shows that there is a difference in the mean of each of the five CMS (avoiding, competing, collaborating compromising and accommodating) As it can be seen from the table, collaborating with the mean value of 33.43 and standard deviation 2.88038 is the most dominantly used style of interpersonal conflict management style in schools. The next most used CMS was compromising with a mean score of 31.44 and std. deviation, 2.156. Accommodating (m=29.585 & std. dev. = 1.64203) and avoiding (m=26.5100) are the third and fourth used styles in the schools respectively. The last frequently used CMS was competing with a mean score of 27.4250 and a standard deviation of 2.87152.

4.1.5 The Use of CMS in the Three Groups

To see the difference among the three groups (administrative staff, teaching staff and students) on the preference of the five CMS, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were employed. The result is provided in table 6 below.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics on the choice of CMS among the groups (N=200)

CMS	Respondents Category					
	Administrative Staff (N=10)		Teaching Staff (N=50)		Students (N=140)	
	mean	Std. dev.	mean	Std. dev.	mean	Std. dev.
Avoiding	27.5	1.64992	27.48	2.41796	26.0929	3.07905
Competing	31.00	1.56347	28.46	2.11129	26.8	2.8943
Collaborating	34.00	2.30940	34.74	2.86292	32.9214	2.78244
Compromising	31.5	1.90029	32.40	2.53144	31.0929	1.92633
Accommodating	31.00	1.41421	29.78	1.5687	29.4143	1.63586

Note: N=number of respondents; std. dev. =standard deviation

Table 7. The Use of CMS among the three groups

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Avoiding	Between Groups	106.682	2	53.341	6.546	.002
	Within Groups	1605.273	197	8.149		
	Total	1711.955	199			
Competing	Between Groups	236.055	2	118.027	16.551	.000
	Within Groups	1404.820	197	7.131		
	Total	1640.875	199			
Collaborating	Between Groups	125.264	2	62.632	8.087	.000
	Within Groups	1525.756	197	7.745		
	Total	1651.020	199			
Compromising	Between Groups	62.987	2	31.494	7.195	.001
	Within Groups	862.293	197	4.377		
	Total	925.280	199			
Accommodating	Between Groups	26.004	2	13.002	5.017	.007
	Within Groups	510.551	197	2.592		
	Total	536.555	199			

* $p < 0.05$ (statically significant among the groups)

Note: sig. = significant, df. =degrees of freedom, ANOVA: Analysis of variance, N= number of respondents

The ANOVA revealed significant mean effect on the use of each of the five CMS among the three groups. The result shows that the choices of the styles vary in the groups with a significance value of .002, .00, .000, .000 and .007 for avoiding (F=6.546), competing (F=16.551), compromising and accommodating (F=5.017) respectively.

The table also asserts that the groups in the choice of competing (F=16.551), collaborating (F=8.087) and compromising (F=7.195) shows significant effect ($P= 0.00$).

Since a significant effect was observed in the ANOVA result, further analysis was made to examine the differences among and between the groups using post Hoc tests. The table below demonstrates the result.

Table 8. Multiple Comparisons the Use of CMS

CMS	(I) Respondents	(J) Respondents	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Avoiding	Administrative staff	Teaching staff	-.12000	.98885	.904	-2.0701	1.8301
		Students	1.49286	.93438	.112	-.3498	3.3355
	Teaching staff	Administrative staff	.12000	.98885	.904	-1.8301	2.0701
		Students	1.61286*	.47029	.001	.6854	2.5403
	Students	Administrative staff	-1.49286	.93438	.112	-3.3355	.3498
		Teaching staff	-1.61286*	.47029	.001	-2.5403	-.6854
Competing	Administrative staff	Teaching staff	2.54000*	.92506	.007	.7157	4.3643
		Students	4.20000*	.87410	.000	2.4762	5.9238
	Teaching staff	Administrative staff	-2.54000*	.92506	.007	-4.3643	-.7157
		Students	1.66000*	.43995	.000	.7924	2.5276
	Students	Administrative staff	-4.20000*	.87410	.000	-5.9238	-2.4762
		Teaching staff	-1.66000*	.43995	.000	-2.5276	-.7924
Collaborating	Administrative staff	Teaching staff	-.74000	.96405	.444	-2.6412	1.1612
		Students	1.07857	.91094	.238	-.7179	2.8750
	Teaching staff	Administrative staff	.74000	.96405	.444	-1.1612	2.6412
		Students	1.81857*	.45850	.000	.9144	2.7228
	Students	Administrative staff	-1.07857	.91094	.238	-2.8750	.7179
		Teaching staff	-1.81857*	.45850	.000	-2.7228	-.9144
Compromising	Administrative staff	Teaching staff	-.90000	.72474	.216	-2.3293	.5293
		Students	.40714	.68482	.553	-.9434	1.7577
	Teaching staff	Administrative staff	.9000	.72474	.216	-.5293	2.3293
		Students	1.30714*	.34468	.000	.6274	1.9869
	Students	Administrative staff	-.40714	.68482	.553	-1.7577	.9434
		Teaching staff	-1.30714*	.34468	.000	-1.9869	-.6274
Accommodating	Administrative staff	Teaching staff	1.22000*	.55767	.030	.1202	2.3198
		Students	1.58571*	.52695	.003	.5465	2.6249
	Teaching staff	Administrative staff	-1.22000*	.55767	.030	-2.3198	-.1202
		Students	.36571	.26522	.169	-.1573	.8888
	Students	Administrative staff	-1.58571*	.52695	.003	-2.6249	-.5465
		Teaching staff	-.36571	.26522	.169	-.8888	.1573

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Note: std. Error = standard Error, sig. = significance

The result obtained from post Hoc tests illustrates the difference on the selection of each style between the groups compared. Table 6 shows a statistically significant difference as indicated in the choice of avoiding style between the teaching staff and students ($P= 0.001$). However, a significant difference is not found in the use of the style between administrative and teaching staffs.

As it can be seen from the table, the use of competing style is found to be significant between the groups. On the other hand, the use of collaborating between teaching and administrative staff ($P= 0.361$) is not significant. Similarly, administrative staff and students are also found to be different in the use of the style. On the contrary, the computed data indicates that students and teaching staff are significantly differing in the use of collaborating. The same difference is observed in the use of compromising in the three groups as collaborating does. The data further reveals that administrative staff and students are different in the use of accommodating style. However, the difference is not shown between administrative and teaching staff regarding the use of accommodating.

In addition to the identification of the prominently preferred CMS, an interview was employed to find out the conflict management strategies used in the schools. The interviewees were asked to indicate how they manage conflict in their school setting. The response is presented as follows:

The supervisor said that the principal usually invites the conflicting parties to discuss on the issue where he acts as a mediator during the discussion. The chairperson of the discipline committee also said that the school director in Gunchire often tries to negotiate the conflicting teachers and other workers in order to maintain good relationship and peace between them.

When asked to explain the role and techniques the discipline committee uses the chairperson replied that the committee makes decisions takes disciplinary measures on individuals committed the problem. He also said that the committee uses the school disciplinary guideline that is a document available at the director's office. He explained that this guideline is applied only for students. As far as other workers and teachers are concerned, the measure is taken by the director together with officials from the woreda education office.

For example, when two students disagree or engage in conflict or if a student involves in such conflict context with any of school workers and teachers, he/she is ordered to come with his/her parent the next time. Then, the two individuals (parties) talk on the issue. The student's parent appears in the discussion session. The mediator (the students' homeroom teacher) creates a structured environment for discussion in order to promote a conflict settlement agreement. This process is held before the student's case is taken to the disciplinary committee.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1. Causes of Conflict

The findings of the study regarding causes of conflict in schools confirms that disciplinary problems such as leaving school grounds without permission, violation of school rules and regulations, disruption of school environment are its major sources. The majority of the respondents (99.5%) rated this item. In replying to the next item i.e. reward system which contains promotion of professional development of teachers and other workers, 75% of the respondents responded as strongly agree and agree.

Concerning discrimination as a factor, which affects the relationship between individuals in the schools, 43.5% of the total participants showed their strong agreement. Other 47% of them agreed with the factor as a source of conflict. Therefore, it can be taken as a cause of dispute based on the evidence gathered. Aggressive behavior is ranked third. 43% of the subject strongly agreed on aggressive behavior as a source of conflict where as 51% of them simply agreed on the same issue. Nye (1973) has noted that aggression and domination can lead to conflict in any human relations. This study also revealed that aggressive behavior (94%) and dominating power (80%) are found to be causes of conflict between individuals in the two selected schools.

The result suggested that incompatible values, interests, beliefs and goals (80%) cause conflict. The findings and responses are in line with Greenberg (1996), Wiley & Sons (1996) and Deutsch (1973). They assert that difference in beliefs; values and goals lead to conflict. Other factors identified as conflict-generating factors include misunderstanding (85%), competition over scarce resources (96.5%), distrust (94%), individual personalities (68.5%), and interdependence (75.5%) are the cause of

conflict in the schools. As the authors mentioned above pointed out, these variables should be stressed as a source of dispute. For example, Wiley & Sons (1996), and Greenberg (1996) indicated six causes of conflict in organizations and at interpersonal level:

- ◆ Competition over scarce resource;
- ◆ Reward systems;
- ◆ Power differentials;
- ◆ Interdependence;
- ◆ Ambiguity over responsibility;
- ◆ Differentiation in organizations.

These factors are also determined as a cause of conflict in the study. Greenberg (1996) also considered faulty communication, distrust, personal characteristics etc. as factors that create disagreement and conflict in organizations. The responses collected from participants of the study indicated that the factors exist in the two selected schools.

5.2 Perceptions on Functions of Conflict

The participants' response on their perception of functions of conflict supports the view that conflict is destructive. The majority of the respondents perceived conflict as a negative experience that is not beneficial. When replying to the item, which describes productive aspects of conflict, such as 'sometimes conflict is desirable' (70.5%), managed conflict can improve relationship with the party' (72%); 'conflict can be used as problem raising and finding solutions to it (61.5%); the majority of respondents did not agree. On the other hand, most of the participants support items that describe destructive aspects of conflict such as 'conflict is a negative experience' (96%); 'in conflict someone will get hurt' (87%) and 'I am afraid to enter into confrontation'(98.5%). The result obtained is similar to a study conducted on managing conflict at work

(Setegn, 2007). His study found out that employees' perceive conflict as harmful.

The present study is also consistent with Zanden (1987) who emphasizes on that people want a free of human friction of work environment. He also stressed having such environment is impossible. The respondents in the two schools have a similar view of with that of Zanden (1987) described.

5.3 The Most Prevalent Used CMS

The descriptive statistics computed identified collaborating ($m= 33.43$) as a predominately used conflict management style among Gurchire and Mike secondary school students, teachers and administrative workers. The next frequently used style is compromising with the score value of 31.44 and 2.1563 mean and standard deviation respectively. Accommodating is found to be the third where as avoiding and competing are selected as the fourth and fifth styles.

Previous studies also showed somewhat similar result on the use of conflict management styles. For example, Setegn (2007) indicated that collaborating is used as a major conflict management style at Debre Berhan Blanket factory. This study is also consistent with the one conducted by Earnest & McCaslin (2000). Their study revealed that the participants perceived their most prominent style to be the integrating (collaborating) style. The next most used CMS was compromising. Obliging, dominating, and avoiding were the third, forth and fifth CMS used by the participants respectively.

5.4 The Choice of CMS among Administrative Staff, Teaching Staff and Students

The computed data using one-way ANOVA revealed that teaching, administrative staff and students are significantly differing in the use of conflict management styles. The ANOVA result indicated that the three groups are different at $p < 0.05$ level of significant. To see the difference more clearly Post Hoc test was used. The result obtained confirmed no significant different between teaching and administrative staff in the choice of avoiding ($M = .12000$; $p = 0.904$), collaborating ($M = -.74000$; $p = 0.444$) and compromising ($M = .90000$; $p = 0.216$). However, they are significantly differ in the use of accommodating ($M = 1.22000$; $p = 0.030$) and competing ($M = 2.5400$; $p = 0.007$). In relation to this Fekru (1993) found out that academic staff and management staff were found to be insignificant on the management of conflict. His study identified that the respondents were similar in the use of avoiding, problem solving and compromising where as they were significantly differ in the use of integrating, obligating and dominating methods.

On the other hand, in this study a comparison was also made between students and teachers. A statistically significant effect was found between the two groups in the use of avoiding ($M = 1.61286$; $p = 0.001$), competing ($M = 1.66000$; $p = 0.000$), compromising ($M = 1.30714$; $p = 0.000$), and collaborating ($M = 1.81857$; $p = 0.000$). However, significant difference was not obtained in the use of accommodating ($M = 0.36571$; $p = 0.169$) style between teachers and students.

5.5 Ways of Conflict Management in the Schools

The interview result confirmed that disagreements and conflicts are managed in two ways. The first method is related to mediation in which the two parties (individuals) discuss in the issue with the help of the mediator. For example, when two students disagree or engage in conflict or if a student involves in such conflict context with any of school workers and teachers, he/she is ordered to come with his/her parent the next time. Then, the two individuals (parties) talk on the issue. The student's parent appears in the discussion session. The mediator (the students' homeroom teacher) creates a structured environment for discussion in order to promote a conflict settlement agreement. This process is held before the student's case is taken to the disciplinary committee.

The second method of conflict management used in the schools as obtained from the interview is taking disciplinary measures. To avoid conflict, disciplinary measures are taken based on guiding principles in the schools. The disciplinary committee, which comprises of different representatives appointed by the director, investigates cases to take measure. The measure may range from written warning to dismissal from the schools. However, if the conflict is between or among teachers and workers, the case is usually sent to higher officials of woreda education office. This approach seems consistent with the methods and steps of conflict management forwarded by Week (1994).

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

After a review of the theoretical and conceptual considerations of conflict and its management in schools, instruments were developed to measure causes of conflict, perceptions of individuals on the functions of conflict, conflict management styles and ways of conflict management strategies implemented in the two selected schools. The tools for measures of causes and perception of conflict in schools were developed based on Greenberg (1996), Wiley & Sons, (1996); Deutsch (1973), Nye (1973) and Girard & Susan (1996). The instruments used to assess the predominantly conflict management styles were designed and adapted from Thomas and Kilmann (1976) which analyze conflict behaviors using assertiveness and cooperativeness dimensions. With the help of all these instruments, the study was aimed to find solutions to the basic questions presented below:

1. What are the major causes of conflict in the schools?
2. How do individuals (administrative staff, teachers and students) perceive functions of conflict in their school setting?
3. Which conflict management style is predominately used in the schools?
4. Is there a significant difference in the use of conflict management styles between the three groups: teachers, administrative staff and students?
5. Which conflict management strategies are applied in the schools?

These questions are answered assessing and collecting data from 205 respondents (10 administrative staff, 50 teaching staff, 140 students and 5 officials) in Gunchire and Mike Secondary Schools. To interpret the information descriptive and qualitative approaches were used. The study

answered the questions presented above. The findings of the study are given below.

- Disciplinary problems (47.5% strongly agree & 52 % agree) are found to be the major cause of conflict followed by competition over scarce resources (38.5% strongly agree & 58 % agree). Aggressive behavior (43% strongly agree & 51% agree) is the third major cause of conflict. Distrust (44 % strongly agree & 50 % agree) to each other is the forth cause of conflict. Misunderstanding (26.5 % strongly agree & 58.5 % agree) and discrimination (43.5% strongly agree & 47% agree) due to ethnicity, religions and friendship and reward system (46.5% strongly agree & 28.3% agree) are the fifth and sixth sources of conflict in the schools. Other factors that create conflict in the schools include individual personalities, dominating others, and interdependence.
- Respondents perceive conflict as destructive and dysfunctional. Most of the participants of the study did not recognize its positive outcomes.
- Collaborating ($m = 33.43$) is the most prominently used conflict management style in the schools. The mean values of other styles revealed that compromising (mean =31.44 and std.dev. =2.1563), accommodating (mean = 29.58 and std.dev. =1.64203), competing (mean = 27.425 and std.dev. =2.87152) and avoiding (mean = 26.51 and std.dev. =2.93136) are found to be the second, third, fourth & fifth ranked styles of conflict management.
- The ANOVA result illustrated that there is a significant difference in the use of the five CMS among administrative workers, teachers and students. The multiple comparisons Post Hoc test result also revealed a significant effect between teachers and students in the selection of styles but the difference is not obtained between teachers and administrative staff except in competing ($p=.007$) style.

The results of administrative staff and students on the choice of CMS were not significant.

- ◆ From the review of literature and interview, the following main conflict management strategies were identified:
 - Mediation and negotiation based on interest, right approach, and power approaches;
 - Taking disciplinary measures;
 - Inventing options for mutual gain;
 - Focusing on problems rather than position;

These strategies can be implemented if managers follow certain procedures such as creating conducive atmosphere; clarifying perceptions of parties; building shared positive power; generating options; and looking to the future.

6.2 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to examine conflict and its management in schools. The investigation was begun by reviewing the literature to find responses for the designed basic questions.

The result analyzed from the data and the literature revealed that various factors aggravated conflicts that arise from interpersonal and organizational level. The study also suggested that students, administrators and teachers seem to feel that conflict is avoidable and, hence, view conflict as unnecessary and destructive. The findings further indicated the two schools use traditional disciplinary practices as a way of conflict management.

Based on the findings, generalization to other settings seems possible since the nature of conflict, and its causes revealed are consistent with other factors believed to be existed in other organizations. The assumption in conflict management is to take advantage out of it and to minimize the disadvantage. To reach this end, schools or individuals should take the lion-share. New methods and strategies to overcome personal and institutional problems

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APPENDICES

5= Always 4= Usually 3= Sometimes 2=Rarely 1=Never

No	When I come across with differences, disagreements or conflict incidents in my school:	5	4	3	2	1
1.	I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.					
2.	I try to dominate the other party.					
3.	I attempt to deal with others' and my concerns.					
4.	I express anger constructively.					
5.	I try not to hurt others' feelings.					
6.	I avoid open discussion of my differences with others.					
7.	I try to show others the logic and benefits of my position.					
8.	I attempt to immediately work through our differences.					
9.	I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.					
10.	If the others position seems important to them, I would try to meet their wishes.					
11.	I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.					
12.	I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.					
13.	I share my positive attitude, hoping they will do the same.					
14.	I propose middle ground.					
15.	If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.					
16.	There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving problem.					
17.	I feel that only my needs are important.					
18.	I Can accept criticism from others.					
19.	I try to reach a common solution in a quarrel.					
20.	Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things up on which we both agree.					
21.	I avoid taking positions that would create controversy.					

ተ.ቁ	የግጭት መንስኤ	5	4	3	2	1
1	በዓሳማ፣ በአመሰንክተ...ወሀተ አስመጣጠም፣					
2	በሴሎች ስራና ውጤት ላይ ጥገኛ መሆን፣					
3	የብሄር ልዩነት፣					
4	የሃሳፊነት መደራረብ፣					
5	የግል ስብዕና (የአስባቢ ዘይቤ፣ ልማዶችና ሱስ... ወዘተ)፣					
6	የስኬት መመዘኛዎች መለየት(የሽልማት፣ የደረጃ ዕድገት... ወዘተ በሚመሰክት ስተመሳሳይ የስራ ዘርፍ በእኩል መመዘኛዎች አስመገምገም)፣					
7	ጾታዊ ትንኮሳ፣					
8	ሎችን በሀይል መጫን፣					
9	የባህል ልዩነት (የአካባቢው ባህል ውስጥ ወይም ውጭ መሆን)፣					
10	የተሳሳተ ግንዛቤ (Misunderstanding) ፣					
11	አስመተማመን (distrust)፣					
12	በውስን ንብረቶች ላይ መፍክር (በጽህፈት መሣሪያዎች፣ መጻሕፍት፣ በት/ቤቱ ንብረቶች...)፣					
13	ማግሰል (በሀይማኖት፣ በብሄር... ወዘተ)፣					
14	የቁጡነት ባህርይ (በቃላት፣ በድርጊት... ወዘተ)፣					
15	የሰነ-ሥርዓት ችግሮች (መታዘን ያስማክበር፣ ማርፈድ፣ ክፍለ ጊዜ ማባከን ...ወዘተ) ፣					

❖ ከላይ ከተዘረዘሩት ተጨማሪ በት/ቤትዎ ውስጥ ላለመግባባቶች፣ ልዩነቶችና ግጭቶች መንስኤ ሲሆን የሚችሉ ነጥቦች ካሉ በተሠጠው ባዶ ቦታ ላይ ይዘርዝሩ።

III. በግጭት ላይ ያለን አመለካከት

ስለ ግጭት ያለዎትን አስተሳሰብ የመለክታሉ ተብለው የታቀዱ አረፍተ ነገሮች ተዘርዝረዋል። ከአያንዳንዱ አረፍተ ነገር ፊት ስፊትና ከመረጡት ቁጥር ስር (✓) ምልክት በማድረግ ምላሽ ይሰጡ። ቁጥሮቻቸው፡-

5. በጣም አስማማሰሁ፤ 4. አስማማሰሁ፤ 3. አልወሰንኩም
 2. አስሰማማም፤ 1. በጣም አልማማም የሚሉትን በቅደም ተከተል ይወክሳሉ፡፡

ተ.ቁ	ስለግጭት ያለዎት አስተሳሰብ በተመሰከተ	5	4	3	2	1
1	ግጭት ሁልጊዜ አሉታዊ ገጠመኝ ይመስለኛል፡፡					
2	ግጭት የሚያሰፈልገበት ጊዜያቶች አሉ፡፡					
3	ወደ ግጭት መግባት ሁሌ ያስፈራኛል፡፡					
4	በግጭት አንድ ሰው ሲገዳ አንደሚችል ይሆማኛል፡፡					
5	ግጭት በአግባቡ ከተፈታ ግንኙነብን ያሻሻልልኛል ሚስ አምነት አለኝ፡፡					
6	ግጭት በአግባቡ ከተቆጣጠርኩት ሰፈጠራ ቅድመ ሆኔታ ይሆናል ብዬ አስባለሁ፡፡					
7	ግጭት ችግሮች ይፋ የሚሆኑበትና መፍትሄዎቻቸው የሚፈልገበት መንገድ ሲሆን ይችላል ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡					
8	ግጭት የሴሎችን አመሰካከት የመገንዘብ ደረጃን ከፍ ያደርጋል ብዬ አስባለሁ፡፡					
9	ግጭት ሰውጥን ያመታታል የሚል አምነት አለኝ፡፡					
10	ግጭት የሰራ ተነሳሽነትን ከፍ ያደርጋል የሚል አምነት አለኝ፡፡					

III. የግጭት አፈታት ስልቶች (Conflict Management Styles)

ቀጥሎ ስግጭት አስተቶች ምሳሌ ይሆናሉተብሰው የታመነባቸው የግጭት አፈታት ስልቶች የያዙ በርካታ አረፍተ ነገሮች ተሠጥተዋል፡፡ ከእያንዳንዱ አረፍተ ነገር ፊት ሰፊትና ከመረጡት ቀጥሮ ስር የ(✓) ምልክት በማድረግ ግጭትን አንዲት አንደሚፈቱ ያመልክቱ፡፡ ቁጥሮቻቸው፡- 5. ሁልጊዜ፤ 4. አብዛኛው ጊዜ፤ 3. አንዳንድ፤ 2. በጣም አልፎ አልፎ፤ 1. በፍጹም፤ የሚሉትን በቅደም ተከተል ይወክሳሉ፡፡

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that Conflict and Its Management in Gunchire and Mike High Schools is my own work, and that all the sources and materials, I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of completed references.

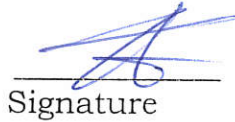
Tiglu Namo
Name


Signature

06/16/08
Date

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Camille A.
Name


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