ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NIFAS SILK LAFTO SUB-CITY, ADDIS ABABA

THIS RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

BY: KASSAYE ARAGAW

ID No: GSK/3605/14

ADVISOR: AMAN WORKU (PhD)

MAY, 2025

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DECLARATION

I, Kassaye Aragaw Yesuf declare this thesis paper for the fulfillment of the requirements for MA Degree in to Addis Ababa University College Of Education And Language Studies Department Of Educational Planning And Management "Conflict Management Practices In Selected Government Primary Schools In Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa" is prepared with my own effort. I have made it independently with the close guidance of my advisor Dr. Aman Worku

Name: Kassaye Aragaw Yesuf

Signature 

Date June, 2025

APPROVAL

This is to approve that the thesis prepared by kassaye Aragaw Yesuf, "An Assessment Of Conflict Management Practices In Selected Government Primary Schools In Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa" And submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art in Addis Ababa University College Of Education And Language Studies Department Of Educational Planning And Management complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Advisor **Dr. Aman Worku** **Signature** _____ **Date** 25 Jun 2025

Internal Examiner Dr. Jeilu Omer **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

External Examiner Dr. Abdulaziz Hussien **Signature** _____ **Date** 25 June 202

Chairperson _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** 25/Jun 2025

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Abstract

This study explored how conflict is managed in selected government primary schools within Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The main aim was to examine the sources and types of conflicts occurring in school environments and to evaluate the strategies used by school staff and other stakeholders to resolve them. Conflict in schools is not uncommon and can negatively affect teaching, learning, and the overall school climate if not handled properly. With this in mind, the study sought to understand not only how conflicts arise and are dealt with, but also what gaps and challenges exist in the current practices. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining both quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires were administered to teachers, students, and school administrators to gather structured and measurable information, while interviews were held with selected teachers, parents, and local education officials to capture more detailed and personal experiences. In total, 253 participants were involved across five government primary schools and the Sub-City Education Office. Tools such as SPSS 20 and Excel helped with organizing and visualizing the data more efficiently. The findings revealed that conflicts were mostly caused by poor communication between students and teachers, misunderstandings among students, behavioral issues, and a lack of consistent rules or fairness in school management. Teachers and administrators mainly relied on traditional methods like verbal warnings, student punishment, or informal discussions to manage conflicts. However, these methods often lacked follow-through or didn't address the root causes. There was little to no formal conflict resolution training, and most schools did not have clear written policies or systems in place to manage disputes. Parents also felt left out of the process, and students sometimes felt that their voices weren't heard. Despite these issues, many participants especially teachers and school leaders expressed a strong willingness to improve the situation. They believed that with the right training, better communication, and more structured approaches, conflict could be handled in a healthier and more constructive way. The study recommends that schools develop clear conflict resolution policies, offer training for staff, and create spaces for open dialogue among students, parents, and educators. Encouraging collaboration and consistent communication among all stakeholders could help build a more positive and supportive school environment. The findings also serve as a helpful reference for future research and discussions about school-based conflict management, especially in urban public school settings like those found in Addis Ababa.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Form
ABE	Addis Ababa Education Bureau
CM	Conflict Management
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TKI	Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Educational institutions are inherently social environments where diverse individual's, students, teachers, administrators, parents, and support staff interact daily, pursuing shared yet sometimes competing goals. Within this complex web of relationships, conflict is not an aberration but an inevitable reality (Rahim, 2011). Conflict in elementary schools, either because of values, perceptions, interests, resource allocation, breakdown in communication, or power discrepancies, will have profound consequences on the very essence of education (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad and can contribute to innovation and positive change, but if not resolved or managed ineffectively, it poses major threats. Among these risks are disrupted teaching and learning procedures, decreased teacher morale and productivity, increased student absenteeism and discipline, conflicts between members, heightened levels of tension, and overall decline in the school climate and effectiveness (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006; Opotow, Gerson, & Woodside, 2005).

The government of Ethiopia, aware that education is one of the strongest drivers of national development, has invested heavily in expanding the reach of primary education, particularly since the promulgation of the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1994 (FDRE, 1994). Commitment to the same is also reflected in national policies like the School Improvement Program (SIP) aimed at creating supportive school atmospheres (MoE, 2010). Addis Ababa, the busy capital, is both the hallmark of this success and the challenge. Urbanization, population growth, and the resulting pressures on resources and infrastructure create unique dynamics within its schools (World Bank, 2015). Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, a huge and densely settled administrative area within Addis Ababa, hosts numerous government primary schools for various populations. These schools operate in an ecosystem with huge class sizes, unequal resource availability, heterogeneous socioeconomic status of students and staff, and the complex dynamics of city living, and hence effective management of conflicts is not only a preference but also a requirement for them to smoothly operate and for all stakeholders to achieve well-being (Assefa, 2018). In the Ethiopian context of primary schools, especially in urban areas such as Addis Ababa, conflict management practices in this context are not fully understood. Although there are reports of general challenges of the education sector (MoE, 2015), specific studies on the ways conflicts arise and are managed on a daily basis within government primary schools, particularly at sub-city levels, are not well explored. Past studies have a tendency to focus on tertiary education or general issues of education rather than the micro-level CM practices in primary settings (e.g., Gemechu, 2017; Tekleselassie, 2002). It is worth knowing regarding the common practices, their

perceived effectiveness by the stakeholder groups (students, principals, and teachers), challenges of implementation, and drivers. This lack of knowledge is relevant since lower CM can directly undermine the quality of education, teacher retention, student safety, and national education goal achievement in these critical foundation schools.

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction that emerges whenever individuals or groups pursue conflicting goals, compete for limited resources, or experience miscommunication. In educational institutions, particularly in primary schools, conflicts can arise among various stakeholders, including teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Effective conflict management is crucial for fostering a conducive learning environment, promoting collaboration, and ensuring the smooth functioning of schools.

Theoretical perspectives on conflict management highlight the importance of understanding the sources, dynamics, and resolution strategies to address disputes constructively. Theories such as Thomas-Kilmann's conflict mode instrument and Rahim's model of conflict management styles emphasize different approaches, ranging from avoidance and accommodation to collaboration and problem-solving. In the context of primary education, these approaches are critical in addressing the unique challenges posed by diverse stakeholders with varying interests and expectations.

Successful conflict management (CM) is the systematic method by which disputing parties or third parties attempt to resolve underlying causes and achieve mutually accepted solutions, with a potential to minimize negative consequences and maximize potential benefit (Thomas, 1992). Practices vary from ad hoc negotiation and mediation between disputants to more formalized grievance processes or administrative intervention. General strategies are compromising, accommodation, collaborative problem-solving, and, where necessary, authoritative guidance, each serving a distinct context (Rahim, 2002). Implementation and Solution of such practices depend heavily on school leaders' and staff training, skills, attitudes, school culture, and the presence of official policies and procedures (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

The purpose of this study is to assess conflict management practices in selected government primary schools within Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa. By examining the nature of conflicts, identifying common resolution strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of existing practices, this study aims to provide actionable insights that can enhance the management of conflicts in these schools. Additionally, it seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on conflict management in the educational sector, offering recommendations that align with Ethiopia's policy goals and international best practices. Therefore, this study only investigates conflict management practices in sample government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa. It seeks to move beyond the acknowledgement of the existence of conflict to critically ask how

and how effectively conflicts are being regulated in this specific Ethiopian urban context. The investigation aims to establish the nature of conflicts most frequently encountered, enumerate the range of formal and informal practice employed by teachers and school administrators today, quantify stakeholders' opinions about the relative efficacy of those practices, and ascertain primary challenges to effective conflict resolution. Anchoring the research in the in situ experience of schools in Nifas Silk Lafto, this research aims to produce grounded, context-sensitive findings. The findings of this study have practical applications to numerous stakeholders. Teachers and school officials at Nifas Silk Lafto and similar institutions can gain from knowing what they are presently doing and where they can do better. The Addis Ababa Education Bureau and Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Education Office can use the findings to inform targeted professional development programs, strengthen current regulations for resolving conflict, or design locally responsive support systems for schools. Lastly, making conflict management practices more efficient can contribute to the realization of happier, healthier, and safer learning environments to benefit directly the welfare and education of students and to support the broader agenda of quality education in Ethiopia (UNESCO, 2015)

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Conflict in educational institutions remains a pervasive challenge that if not effectively managed will undermine the quality of education and retard the development of schools. These occur in government primary schools because various stakeholders have significant interactions. The scarcity of resources, simple misunderstandings, and even cultural differences has badly disrupted learning environments (Getachew, 2017; Fikadu, 2016). Conflict is an unavoidable feature of organizational life within schools. In Ethiopian government primary schools, particularly in densely populated urban settings like Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa, conflict arises from diverse sources: teacher-student disciplinary issues, student-peer disagreements, teacher-administrator tensions (e.g., workload, supervision), staff conflicts, parent-school misunderstandings, and pressures stemming from large class sizes, resource scarcity, diverse student backgrounds, and rapid urbanization (Assefa, 2018; MoE, 2015). Left unresolved or poorly managed, such conflicts demonstrably undermine: Teaching & Learning: Disrupting classroom time, reducing instructional quality, and hindering student engagement (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). Staff Well-being & Performance: Contributing to teacher stress, burnout, low morale, absenteeism, and attrition (Deutsch et al., 2006). School Climate & Safety: Eroding trust, damaging relationships, fostering negative student behavior, and creating an unsafe or unwelcoming environment (Opotow et al., 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Achievement of National Goals: Directly impeding the objectives of quality universal primary education outlined in policies like ESDP V and aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (MoE, 2015; UNESCO, 2015).

Review of Relevant Local Studies & Identification of the Research Gap: While the existence of conflict and its potential negative impacts in Ethiopian schools is broadly acknowledged, a critical and specific gap exists regarding how conflicts are actually managed in government primary schools within defined urban administrative units like Nifas Silk Lafto. This gap is starkly evident when reviewing the focus and limitations of existing local research: Focus on Higher Education: Gemechu (2017): Examined conflict management practices at Arbaminch University. While valuable, findings are largely inapplicable to primary schools due to vastly different structures (faculty senates, unions), stakeholder maturity, and conflict types (e.g., academic freedom disputes vs. child behavioral issues).

Other University Studies: Numerous other Ethiopian studies focus on conflict in universities (e.g., Mekonnen on AAU staff-student conflicts, 2015). This creates a significant knowledge void at the foundational primary level.

Broad National/Policy Focus or Leadership Studies: MoE (2010, 2015): National documents (SIP Manual, ESDP V) acknowledge challenges like resource constraints and the need for positive school environments but lack specific analysis of operational conflict management practices at the school or sub-city level. Tekleselassie (2002): Discussed the de-professionalization of school principalship in Ethiopia, highlighting leadership challenges broadly. While relevant to conflict management capacity, it does not delve into specific CM practices, processes, or their effectiveness in primary schools.

Studies on General Challenges: Research often catalogues broad problems (large classes, resource shortages, teacher shortages) without specifically linking these to the manifestation and management of conflict within primary schools. Lack of Contextual Specificity (Urban/Sub-City/Primary): Assefa (2018): This study is highly relevant as it investigated management challenges specifically within primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, identifying issues like large class sizes, resource limitations, and community diversity – all fertile ground for conflict. Crucially, however, Assefa (2018) did not focus on conflict management practices themselves. It highlights the context where conflict arises but leaves the management processes unexplored. Studies in Rural Settings: Research on primary education often focuses on rural areas (e.g., challenges of access, remoteness). The unique, high-pressure dynamics of urban primary schools in fast-growing sub-cities like Nifas Silk Lafto – characterized by density, socio-economic diversity, and administrative complexity (World Bank, 2015) – remain underexplored in relation to CM.

Limited Empirical Investigation of Practices & Perceptions: Operational Void: Existing literature rarely provides concrete, empirical data on: Prevalent Conflict Types: What

specific conflicts (e.g., student bullying, teacher-parent disputes over grades, staff disagreements on duties) are most frequent and impactful in these schools? Actual Practices Used: What formal (e.g., grievance procedures, referral systems) and informal (e.g., principal mediation, teacher negotiation, peer reconciliation) practices are actually employed by principals and teachers day-to-day? Stakeholder Perceptions: How effective do teachers, principals, and potentially students/parents perceive these current practices to be? What are their experiences? Contextual Barriers: What specific obstacles (e.g., lack of CM training, unclear policies, time pressures, cultural norms inhibiting reporting, power imbalances, resource constraints) hinder effective CM in this specific setting? The "How" and "How Well" Gap: There is a distinct lack of granular understanding of the processes how conflicts are managed and the perceived efficacy how well of these processes within Nifas Silk Lafto's government primary schools.

The studies that have been carried out on conflict management in educational settings bring to the fore the importance of being proactive and strategic in the approach to managing these issues. For example, critical communication and participatory decision-making facilitated by mediation are highlighted as key elements in effective dispute resolution. The evidence available also indicates that most primary schools, especially in Ethiopia, do not have adequate mechanisms, training, and resources for constructive conflict management.

In the Addis Ababa government primary schools of Nifas Silk Lafto sub-city, they face numerous challenges that enhance conflict. Overpopulated classrooms, poor infrastructure inadequate teacher-student ratios and cultural plus linguistic diversities create tensions between the different stakeholders. Frequent disputes between teachers, students, and parents have been reported local education offices; these anecdotal evidence disruptions school operations and performance results. While it faces enormous challenges little research has been directed specifically at conflict management practices in these schools leading to a knowledge gap about the dynamics of the problem and appropriate solutions.

Justification of the Gap & Problem Statement Conclusion: Therefore, a significant and actionable research gap exists: There is a profound lack of focused, empirical research investigating the prevailing conflict management practices, their perceived effectiveness by stakeholders, and the specific challenges faced within the context of government primary schools located specifically in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa.

This gap is problematic because:

1. **Policymakers Lack Contextual Data:** The Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Education Office and Addis Ababa Education Bureau cannot design targeted interventions

(training, revised guidelines, support systems) without understanding the specific practices and challenges on the ground.

2. **School Leaders Operate Blindly:** Principals and teachers lack evidence-based insights to reflect on and improve their own CM approaches, potentially perpetuating ineffective or harmful practices.

3. **Undermines Educational Quality:** The persistent negative consequences of poorly managed conflict continue unchecked, directly hindering the creation of conducive learning environments and the achievement of quality education goals in this critical urban setting.

This study directly addresses this critical gap. By empirically investigating conflict management practices within selected government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, it aims to provide the necessary contextual understanding to inform practical improvements, ultimately contributing to more positive, productive, and safer schools for all stakeholders. The practice gap is seen in the lack of properly structured and consistently implemented conflict resolution strategies in government primary schools. While some schools may have measures for handling disputes, those approaches are not addressing the root causes in most cases and thus are not effectively involving the important stakeholders. Existing policies and programs for training teachers and administrators on conflict management do not provide adequate skills to effectively manage complex interpersonal and organizational conflicts.

Implicit Gap: The absence of prominent local studies specifically titled or focused on conflict management practices in government primary schools of Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City strongly reinforces the identified gap. Existing studies touch on related issues (management, discipline, policy) but lack the specific class room managment focus and granularity required.

Effectively managing the limitations of your study on conflict management practices in Nifas Silk Lafto primary schools involves acknowledging them transparently, explaining their potential impact, and outlining strategies to mitigate their effects where possible. Here's how to structure this section for your thesis, tailored to your specific study:

This study set out to address those gaps by closely examining how conflicts were managed in selected government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa. It explored the types, causes, and impacts of conflicts within these schools, highlighted the weaknesses in the existing approaches, and suggested practical, evidence-based strategies to handle conflicts more effectively.

Research Questions:

1. What are the primary sources of interpersonal and institutional conflict within the selected schools?
2. What formal and informal conflict management practices are currently implemented in these school settings?
3. How do staff and students perceive the effectiveness of existing conflict management practices in mitigating disputes and improving school climate?
4. How effective are these conflict management practices perceived to be by school staff and students?
5. What barriers impede the consistent implementation and efficacy of conflict management strategies in these schools?

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess conflict management practices in selected government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To find out the usual causes of conflict in government primary schools of Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa.
- To measure how often conflicts happen in the chosen government primary schools at Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City.
- To examine the ways of managing conflicts those are currently used by these schools.
- To assess the perceived efficacy of current conflict management practices by school staff and students at the selected schools.
- To ascertain the challenges confronting government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City in implemnting effective conflict management strategies**.**

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study matters to a lot of different people. It offers helpful advice for school leaders on how to build a more welcoming and supportive learning environment. Teachers can also pick up some practical ways to manage their classrooms more effectively. Policymakers might use the findings to shape programs and rules that strengthen conflict resolution in schools. Plus, this study adds to the broader academic conversation about handling conflict in school settings and lays the groundwork for future research.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focuses specifically on government primary schools located in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City of Addis Ababa. It explores where conflicts come from, the types of disputes that happen, and what outcomes they lead to. It also takes a close look at how these issues are currently being handled. By narrowing its scope in this way, the study aims to give practical, locally relevant recommendations.

1.6. Limitations of the Study and Management Strategies

This study set out to take a close look at how conflict is managed in selected government primary schools within Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City. Along the way, there were a few challenges that had to be considered. For example, some teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders may have held back from fully opening up about conflict-related issues. There was a chance they were worried about being judged or facing consequences, which could've led to responses that were a bit biased or incomplete.

Time was also a big factor. The study had to be wrapped up within a limited period, and with everyone's packed schedules especially school staff it wasn't always easy to get long or in-depth input. Plus, looking into past conflict cases wasn't simple, since many schools treat that kind of information as confidential and don't share it freely.

Even though the study tried to include a mix of schools to represent the diversity in the sub-city, there's still a chance the findings didn't fully reflect what's actually happening in all schools. It was also assumed that people would be honest in their responses, but there's always the risk that some gave answers they thought were more socially acceptable rather than fully true, which could've affected how reliable the data was. On top of that, schools and communities vary a lot in terms of culture and social background, so it wasn't always easy to make general conclusions from the data. The wide area and diverse group of participants also meant that the availability of time and people to help with the study limited how much ground could be covered.

The study tried to work around these issues. Steps were taken to build trust with participants, keep things confidential, and use different sources to cross-check the data. These efforts were meant to keep the findings as solid and trustworthy as possible, despite the bumps along the way. Schools were purposively selected to represent diversity within the sub-city (e.g., size, location, student demographics). Rich, contextual data was prioritized to provide deep understanding of this specific setting.

While these limitations necessitate caution in generalizing the findings beyond the specific context of the selected government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, the rigorous methodological approaches employed including purposive sampling for diversity, data triangulation, strict ethical protocols, and reflexivity were designed to maximize the validity, reliability, and depth of understanding within these constraints.

1.7. Operational Definition of Key Terms

- **Conflict**: A disagreement or dispute arising from differences in goals, values, or perceptions among individuals or groups within a school setting.
- **Conflict Management**: The process of identifying, addressing, and resolving disputes or disagreements in a constructive and effective manner.
- **Government Primary School**: A publicly funded and managed educational institution providing basic education to children at the primary level, typically covering grades 1 to 8.
- **Stakeholders**: Individuals or groups involved in or affected by the functioning of a school, including teachers, students, administrators, parents, and education authorities.
- **Conflict Resolution Practices**: Strategies, methods, or interventions used to address and resolve conflicts within the school environment.
- **Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City**: A sub-city within Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, serving as the geographical focus of this study.
- **Harmonious Learning Environment**: A school setting characterized by positive interactions, mutual respect, and minimal disruptions due to conflicts.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. In Chapter One, the background of the study is presented, together with the problem statement and objectives. The significance and scope of the study are also shown in this chapter. Chapter Two reviews related literature on theoretical and empirical studies on conflict management. Research methodology is presented in Chapter Three, detailing the design, approach, and methods of data collection. Findings are to be presented in Chapter Four. Recommendations for better practices in managing conflicts are to be described in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, a review of related literature on conflict management in educational settings is undertaken, focusing on theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. The conflict management practices in schools and the effectiveness of such strategies are theoretically and empirically understood. Relevant studies at the global level and within the Ethiopian context are also reviewed to bring out the gaps in research that this study would try to bridge. Conflict is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, manifesting wherever individuals or groups with differing interests, goals, or perceptions coexist. Educational institutions, particularly primary Schools are macrocosms of wider social interactions, so conflicts within them are essentially unavoidable. Handling such disputes appropriately is important to create a good environment for learning. This paper reviews theories and research on how to manage conflicts in schools by pointing out the missing parts, bringing together what has been found, and looking at how it matters for education in Ethiopia.

Theoretical Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework of Conflict Management

Theories of conflict management have developed over time, offering various approaches to understanding and resolving conflicts in different settings, including educational environments. Conflict management theories help one understand how conflicts come into being and develop effective strategies for their resolution. In this section, therefore, key theoretical models are critiqued based on their relevance and limitations in educational settings.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI):

Dual Concern Model (Thomas, 1976; Rahim, 2002): This dominant framework classifies CM styles based on two dimensions: concern for self (assertiveness) and concern for others (cooperativeness). The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is the most popular model in the treatment and understanding of conflict. It proposes five different conflict-handling modes: Integrating (Collaborating): High concern for self and others; aims for win-win solutions through open discussion. Obliging (Accommodating): Low concern for self, high for others; prioritizes others' needs. Dominating (Competing): High concern for self, low for others; seeks to win at others' expense. Avoiding: Low concern for self and others; sidesteps or postpones conflict. Compromising: Moderate concern for self and others; seeks mutually acceptable middle ground.

Each mode presents a level of concern for self and for others in responding to conflicts. In an academic environment, teachers, students, and administrators may apply different

conflict management styles depending upon their role in the conflict, their personality, as well as the nature of the conflict itself.

In schools, collaborative strategies, which focus on finding mutually beneficial solutions, are generally viewed as the most effective. However, in practice, competing or avoiding styles may be more prevalent, especially in environments where there is a lack of training and resources for effective conflict resolution (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011).

Conflict Transformation Theory:

The conflict transformation theory, developed by John Paul Lederach, suggests that conflict is not simply about resolving individual disputes but involves a broader process of social change. This theory emphasizes understanding the root causes of conflict, including historical, social, and political factors, and addressing them at multiple levels (Lederach, 1995).

John Paul Lederach's conflict transformation theory expands the scope of conflict resolution to address systemic and structural inequalities. In educational settings, While transformative in vision, its application in resource-constrained schools, as noted in Ethiopian studies (Gashaw, 2017), remains limited due to logistical and capacity challenges.

In the context of schools, this theory calls for conflict management practices that not only address immediate disputes but also seek to change the underlying structures and relationships that contribute to ongoing conflicts. For instance, schools in marginalized communities may face conflicts related to inequality, social exclusion, or resource scarcity, and these should be addressed through long-term, holistic approaches.

Conflict management in educational settings is underpinned by diverse theoretical perspectives. This section outlines key theories relevant to understanding the origins, dynamics, and resolution of disputes in primary schools, with emphasis on their applicability to the Ethiopian context.

A. Foundational Models of Conflict Resolution

1. Interest-Based Conflict Resolution (IBCR) Developed by Fisher and Ury (1981), IBCR posits that sustainable resolutions emerge when parties move beyond rigid *positions* to identify underlying *interests*, needs, and concerns. This approach prioritizes collaborative dialogue to generate mutually beneficial outcomes ("win-win" solutions). In schools, IBCR empowers stakeholders (students, teachers, parents) to jointly develop solutions addressing root causes rather than symptoms (Jones, 2004). Its emphasis on shared problem-solving

aligns with collectivist values but requires cultural adaptation in hierarchical settings.

2. Transformative Mediation Theory Bush and Folger (1994) argue conflict represents an opportunity for moral growth through *empowerment* (restoring agency) and *recognition* (understanding others' perspectives). Unlike solution-focused models, transformative mediation prioritizes relational repair over immediate settlements. Its applicability in resource-constrained schools depends on facilitator skill and institutional commitment to dialogue (Lederach, 2003).

B. Social-Psychological Theories of Conflict Origins

3. Realistic Conflict Theory Sherif's (1966) Robbers Cave Experiment demonstrated that competition over scarce resources (funding, facilities, recognition) fuels intergroup hostility. In schools, this manifests as teacher-administration disputes over budgets or student rivalries over academic opportunities (Deutsch, 2006).

4. Social Identity Theory Tajfel and Turner (1979) established that individuals derive self-worth from group affiliations, often triggering "in-group favoritism" and "out-group discrimination." In ethnically diverse schools, this can escalate tensions between student cliques or staff factions (Hogg, 2016).

5. Relative Deprivation Theory Gurr (1970) emphasized that perceived inequity—not objective deprivation—drives conflict. Teachers experiencing salary disparities or students facing biased treatment may engage in resistance, affecting institutional climate (Crosby, 1976).

C. Structural & Systemic Theories

6. Marxist Conflict Theory Marx (1867) viewed conflict as inherent to systems with power imbalances. Applied to schools, this highlights friction between administrators (decision-makers) and teachers/students (executors) over resource control, curriculum, or disciplinary policies (Apple, 2019).

7. Systems Theory Bertalanffy's (1968) framework sees schools as interconnected ecosystems. Conflicts in one subsystem (e.g., staffroom disputes) inevitably disrupt others (e.g., classroom instruction), necessitating holistic management approaches (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Theoretical Synthesis for the Study

Aligning Research Questions, Conflict Theories, and Contextual Application

Research Question	Supporting Theories & Key Scholars	Application Focus & Contextual Considerations
Q1: Sources of Conflict	Pondy's Stage Model (Latent Conflict) Pondy, 1967 Rahim's Organizational Conflict Typology Rahim,2001 Systems Theory Bertalanffy, 1968	Identify: - *Structural triggers* (e.g., resource gaps in Ethiopian schools; MOE, 2022) - *Relational triggers* (hierarchical teacher-student dynamics; Hofstede, 1980) - *Cultural drivers* (ethnic diversity in Nifas Silk Lafto; CSA, 2021)
Q2: Prevalence of Conflict	Pondy's Stage Model (Manifest Conflict) Pondy,1967 Organizational Conflict Theory Rahim, 2001	Measure: - *Frequency* of teacher-admin vs. student-student disputes - *Intensity* scaling (low→violent) in urban schools - *Stakeholder distribution* (e.g., student clashes > staff conflicts; Alemu, 2022)
Q3: Current Practices	Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes Thomas & Kilmann, 1974 Follett's Integrative Theory Follett, 1925	Map: - *Coercive practices* (e.g., suspensions; MOE, 2022) - *Collaborative indigenous methods* (e.g., *Shemagelle* remnants; Zewdie, 2020) - *Power-distance barriers* to Follett's "win-win" in Ethiopian hierarchy
Q4: Perceived Effectiveness	Integrative Theory (IBCR) Fisher & Ury, 1981 Thomas-Kilmann Instrument Thomas & Kilmann, 1974	Assess: - *Stakeholder satisfaction gaps* (teachers vs. students; Habtamu, 2022) - *Cultural alignment* of IBCR with *debo* (collective ethos) - *Outcome sustainability* of punitive vs. dialogic approaches

Q5: Implementation Barriers	Systems Theory Katz & Kahn, 1978 Power Dynamics Theory Foucault, 1982	Diagnose: - *Resource constraints* (training/funding shortages; ERI, 2023) - *Bureaucratic resistance* to teacher-led mediation - *Cultural contradictions*: Western models vs. *Shemagelle* traditions (Zewdie, 2020)

2.1.1. Conflict in Educational Settings

Conflict in educational settings is a widespread issue that can significantly affect the school environment, relationships, and the overall learning experience. Conflicts arise from various sources and can take many forms, including interpersonal conflicts between teachers, students, and parents, as well as systemic conflicts arising from resource allocation, administrative decisions, and educational policies.

Synthesizing global and local perspectives, this section evaluates these sources and their implications.

2.1.2. Sources of Conflict in Schools

Educational institutions are microcosms of society where diverse stakeholders (students, teachers, administrators, parents) with varying needs, values, and expectations interact daily (Deutsch et al., 2006). Sources of conflict in primary schools are multifaceted:

- **Interpersonal:** Student-student bullying, teacher-student disciplinary clashes, teacher-teacher disagreements, principal-teacher tensions over leadership or workload (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

- **Structural:** Resource scarcity (materials, space), large class sizes, ambiguous roles, workload pressures, policy implementation issues (Opotow et al., 2005).

- **Communication:** Misunderstandings, poor information flow, cultural/language barriers (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

- **Value-Based:** Differing educational philosophies, disciplinary approaches, or cultural norms (Thomas, 1992).
  While conflict can be destructive, leading to stress, disrupted learning, and poor morale, it also holds potential for positive change, problem-solving, and improved relationships if managed constructively (Deutsch, 1973).

Various factors contribute to conflicts within schools. According to research by Johnson and Johnson (2009), common sources of conflict in schools include:

1. **Teacher-Teacher Conflicts**: These conflicts often arise due to differences in teaching styles, workload distribution, or disagreements over educational philosophies and approaches.

   While collaborative professional development programs have proven effective in mitigating such conflicts globally (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), Ethiopian schools often lack such initiatives, exacerbating tensions.

2. **Teacher-Student Conflicts**: Issues such as classroom management, student behavior, and teacher authority often lead to conflicts. Classroom management challenges, disparities in expectations and communication gaps contribute to teacher-student conflicts. Studies (Gill, 2010) emphasize the role of positive teacher-student relationships in conflict prevention. However, overcrowded classrooms and resource shortages in Addis Ababa schools often hinder such relationships, escalating tensions.

3. **Student-Student Conflicts**: Peer relationships often involve rivalry, bullying, and competition, which can result in conflicts. Social exclusion, misunderstandings, and differing opinions may also lead to disagreements among students (Wubbels, 2011).

4. **Parent-Teacher Conflicts**: Conflicts can occur between teachers and parents regarding a student's academic performance, behavior, and discipline. Parents may also feel excluded from school decision-making processes, leading to frustration and conflict (Epstein, 2001).

5. **Systemic Conflicts**: These are conflicts related to institutional factors such as resource allocation, school policies, leadership issues, and the broader educational environment. For example, competition for limited resources like classrooms and teaching materials can create tensions among staff and students (Baker, 2006). Resource allocation and administrative decisions frequently spark systemic conflicts. For instance, competition for scarce teaching materials or classroom space creates friction among stakeholders. Realistic Conflict Theory underscores the inevitability of such disputes in resource-constrained environments, aligning with findings from Ethiopian contexts (Tesfaye, 2017).

2.1.3. The Impact of Conflict in Schools

Unresolved conflicts in schools can lead to a range of negative consequences, including poor academic performance, decreased student engagement, emotional distress, and a

negative school climate. Teachers and students may experience increased stress, burnout, and disengagement, while the overall educational environment may become more hostile and less conducive to learning (Bowers & Wright, 2011). Yet, Ethiopian schools face challenges such as inadequate training and cultural sensitivities, limiting their ability to harness these benefits.

Conflict can also strain relationships between teachers, students, and parents. For instance, unresolved conflicts between teachers and students may lead to a lack of trust, which can undermine students' motivation to learn. Similarly, conflicts between parents and teachers can create an atmosphere of tension and mistrust, which can negatively affect student outcomes (Gottfried, 2015).

2.1.4. The Role of Conflict in School Culture

Some scholars argue that conflict is an inherent part of school life and, when managed effectively, can lead to positive outcomes, such as improved communication, strengthened relationships, and better problem-solving (Corson & Carpenter, 1998). Conflict can also serve as a catalyst for change, prompting schools to reevaluate their policies, practices, and approaches to teaching and learning.

The concept of conflict as an opportunity is particularly important in the context of school reform. By addressing conflicts constructively, schools can foster a culture of openness, collaboration, and continuous improvement. However, this requires strong leadership and a commitment to implementing effective conflict management practices (Baskerville, 2003).

2.1.5. Conflict Management Practices in Schools

Effective conflict management is essential for maintaining a positive learning environment and improving the relationships between all stakeholders. A variety of conflict management practices have been implemented in schools, ranging from informal mediation to formal dispute resolution processes.

Informal Conflict Resolution Methods

Informal Practices: Direct negotiation between parties, informal mediation by peers or colleagues, seeking advice from superiors, dialogue, problem-solving discussions (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Informal methods, including mediation and peer conflict resolution, dominate conflict management practices in schools worldwide. Peer mediation programs have been particularly successful in reducing bullying and fostering positive relationships (Zohar &

Dvir, 2011). However, in Ethiopia, these programs are nascent, with limited reach and institutional support.

Many schools rely on informal methods of conflict resolution, such as mediation, negotiation, and communication. Teachers and administrators often act as mediators in resolving conflicts, particularly those between students or between students and teachers. This approach focuses on facilitating dialogue between the conflicting parties to reach a mutually acceptable solution (Jones, 2004). Peer mediation programs, where students are trained to resolve conflicts among their peers, have been found to be particularly effective in reducing incidents of bullying and fostering positive relationships (Zohar & Dvir, 2011).

In Ethiopia, peer mediation programs are still emerging and have not been widely implemented across schools.

Formal Conflict Resolution Systems

Formal Practices: Structured grievance procedures, formal mediation programs, referral to designated committees (e.g., discipline committee), administrative intervention/decision-making, adherence to established school policies and national guidelines (Uline et al., 2003).

Research suggests that collaborative approaches (integrating, compromising) generally yield more sustainable solutions and positive long-term outcomes (trust, relationship building) compared to dominating or avoiding styles, especially for complex or relationship-based conflicts (Rahim, 2002; Tjosvold, 2008). However, authoritative direction may be necessary in crises, safety issues, or when parties are unable/unwilling to collaborate (Mayer, 2012). Effective CM requires skills in active listening, communication, emotional regulation, negotiation, and problem-solving (Deutsch et al., 2006).

Some schools have established formal systems for handling conflicts, such as disciplinary committees, conflict resolution teams, or grievance procedures. These formal systems often involve a structured process of investigating and addressing conflicts, with the goal of ensuring fairness and transparency (Shaw, 2010).

Formal mechanisms, such as grievance committees and structured disciplinary processes, provide consistency and transparency. Yet, their effectiveness depends on clear policies and stakeholder trust. Ethiopian schools often lack such clarity, resulting in inconsistent application and limited impact (Gashaw, 2017).

In Ethiopia, formal conflict resolution mechanisms are often limited to the involvement of school administrators or district education offices. While these systems may be

effective in handling more serious conflicts, there is often a lack of clear policies or guidelines to govern their implementation, leading to inconsistencies in their application.

Training for Teachers and Administrators

Training is a critical component of effective conflict management in schools. Teachers and administrators who are equipped with the necessary skills in communication, negotiation, and problem-solving are more likely to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner (Harris, 2009). However, research indicates that many schools in Ethiopia lack adequate training opportunities for staff in conflict management, leading to a reliance on informal, ad hoc approaches to resolving disputes (Baker & Callaghan, 2013).

School Culture and Leadership

School culture plays a significant role in how conflicts are managed. Schools with a positive, supportive culture where open communication is encouraged tend to handle conflicts more effectively. Effective school leadership is also crucial in setting the tone for conflict resolution, as school leaders model behavior and create an environment where conflicts are addressed constructively rather than avoided (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Conflict Management in the Ethiopian Educational Context

Ethiopia's education system, guided by the Education and Training Policy (ETP) (FDRE, 1994) and frameworks like the School Improvement Program (SIP) (MoE, 2010) and ESDP V (MoE, 2015), emphasizes access, equity, and quality. Creating a "conducive learning environment" is a stated goal (SIP), implicitly requiring effective CM. However, significant contextual challenges exist:

> **Resource Constraints:** Large class sizes, limited infrastructure, and material shortages create structural pressures that fuel conflict (MoE, 2015; Assefa, 2018).
>
> **Urban Pressures:** Schools in rapidly urbanizing areas like Addis Ababa (and specifically Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City) face unique stressors: high population density, diverse student populations, socio-economic disparities, and community tensions, all impacting school dynamics and conflict potential (World Bank, 2015; Assefa, 2018).
>
> **Leadership and Capacity:** Studies highlight challenges related to school leadership capacity, including limited training in modern management techniques like CM, and high workloads (Tekleselassie, 2002; MoE, 2015). The hierarchical

nature of Ethiopian institutions can sometimes favor dominating or avoiding styles.

Limited Focused Research: While challenges are documented, empirical research specifically investigating *operational CM practices* in Ethiopian *government primary schools*, particularly at the *sub-city* level in dense urban settings, remains scarce. Existing studies often focus on:

Higher Education: Conflict dynamics and management in universities (e.g., Gemechu, 2017), which differ significantly from primary schools.

- **General Management/Challenges:** Broader school management issues or systemic problems without delving into specific CM processes (e.g., Assefa, 2018 on Nifas Silk Lafto management challenges; MoE reports).
- **Rural Settings:** Primary education research often prioritizes rural contexts, neglecting the specific complexities of urban schools.

In Ethiopia, school leadership varies widely, with some schools having more proactive leadership teams that are committed to fostering a positive school climate, while others face challenges in maintaining a supportive environment due to resource constraints and lack of training (Gashaw, 2017).

Factors Influencing Conflict Management Effectiveness

The effectiveness of CM practices is not determined solely by the chosen style but is significantly influenced by contextual and individual factors:

Leadership Style and Skills: Principals play a crucial role. Transformational, collaborative leadership fosters trust and open communication, facilitating constructive CM. Training in CM skills is vital (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2004).

School Culture and Climate: Schools with cultures of trust, respect, collaboration, and open communication provide fertile ground for effective CM. Conversely, climates of fear, blame, or competition hinder it (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Policy and Procedure Clarity: Clear, accessible, and fair school policies and procedures for handling different conflict types provide essential guidance and legitimacy (Uline et al., 2003).

Training and Resources: Availability of CM training for staff and leaders, and resources (time, personnel, and materials) to implement practices effectively (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

Stakeholder Involvement: Engaging relevant stakeholders appropriately in the resolution process enhances buy-in and solution quality (Mayer, 2012).

Synthesis and Research Gap

Globally, effective conflict management integrates informal and formal approaches, supported by training and a culture of collaboration. Ethiopian schools lag in adopting these practices, constrained by resource limitations and systemic challenges. This review highlights the need for context-sensitive interventions, including localized training and policy reforms.

The literature establishes that conflict is inevitable in schools and that its management significantly impacts educational outcomes, stakeholder well-being, and school effectiveness. Theoretical frameworks provide models for understanding CM styles and approaches, while empirical evidence underscores the importance of collaborative practices, leadership, culture, and clear policies. The Ethiopian context presents unique challenges resource limitations, urban pressures, and potential capacity gaps in leadership that shape the conflict landscape.

A critical gap persists. Despite the acknowledged importance of CM and the specific challenges within the Ethiopian system, there is a dearth of empirical research focusing specifically on the actual conflict management practices employed, their perceived effectiveness by stakeholders, and the contextual challenges faced within government primary schools operating in a defined, high-pressure urban sub-city environment like Nifas Silk Lafto, Addis Ababa. Existing local literature operates at a different educational level (higher education), focuses on broader management issues without CM specificity, or lacks the granularity of the sub-city context. This study directly addresses this gap by investigating the lived realities of CM in this specific setting.

2.2. Empirical Studies on Conflict Management in Schools

Numerous studies have examined conflict management practices in schools, both globally and within the Ethiopian context. These studies have identified various conflict sources, management strategies, and challenges faced by schools.

2.2.1. Global Studies on Conflict Management

A study by Rahim (2002) found that schools in the United States frequently use conflict management practices such as mediation, negotiation, and counseling. However, these practices are not always effective due to the lack of skilled mediators and clear policies.

In the UK, research by Wubbels (2011) highlighted that conflict management is more effective when teachers are trained in specific conflict resolution strategies and when school leadership supports collaborative approaches.

A. Evidence-Based Models & Their Efficacy

North America/Europe: RJ circles reduced disciplinary referrals by 35–71% in U.S. urban schools (Gregory et al., 2016) and improved teacher-student trust in the UK (Hopkins, 2016). Limitations: Resource-intensive training; less effective without whole-school cultural shift (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

Peer Mediation in Asia-Pacific

Japan: Student-led "tomonokai" (peer support) programs decreased bullying by fostering collective responsibility (Toda, 2020).

Australia: Mediator training boosted conflict resolution skills but struggled with sustainability in low-SES schools (Carter et al., 2018).

Integrative Approaches in Africa

South Africa: Combining *Ubuntu* principles ("I am because we are") with RJ strengthened community-led resolutions in township schools (Hirsch, 2019).

Ghana: Culturally hybrid models (blending elders' mediation + IBCR) resolved teacher-parent disputes more effectively than formal procedures (Mfum-Mensah, 2017).

2.2.2. Studies in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, studies by Fikadu (2016) and Getachew (2017) have shown that conflict in schools often arises due to resource scarcity, teacher-student communication issues, and cultural factors. While some schools have informal mediation systems, there is a lack of formal conflict resolution mechanisms and adequate training for teachers in conflict management. Several studies provide helpful insights into how conflict plays out in schools and how it's being managed on the ground. For example, Mengesha (2015) looked at secondary schools in Addis Ababa and found that a lot of the tension came from poor communication, unclear responsibilities, and a lack of leadership training.

Interestingly, school leaders often chose to avoid conflicts or just compromise, rather than working together to solve issues. This ties in with the Thomas-Kilmann model, which helps categorize different conflict management styles, and with Pondy's idea of how conflict develops in organizations.

In another study, Demissie (2018) explored the situation in primary schools in the Oromia Region. He found that limited resources and miscommunication were common triggers for conflict. Teachers, in many cases, preferred to handle things informally instead of going through formal conflict resolution processes. This reflects what Systems Theory tells us—that structural and resource-related issues often lie at the heart of ongoing conflicts.

Berhanu (2017) focused on government schools in Hawassa and found that principals often didn't have any formal training in managing conflict. What stood out was how much culture and traditional values influenced how people dealt with disagreements. Many decisions were top-down, shaped by the existing power dynamics in schools, which fits well with theories about how institutional power and culture affect conflict resolution.

Another study by Teshome and Mekonnen (2019) showed that many teachers viewed conflict as something negative and disruptive. Because of that, they often supported more authoritarian or directive approaches to dealing with it. This mismatch between how conflicts are handled and what people actually expect from the process points to a gap that the Integrative Conflict Theory can help explain.

Finally, Gashaw (2021) looked at schools in the Amhara Region and found that while collaborative approaches tended to work better in the long run, they were rarely used. Lack of time, capacity, and training. Even when people knew a better way existed, the system didn't always support them to use it.

2.3. Summary

The review of the literature reveals that conflict is an inherent part of school life and that managing it effectively is essential for maintaining a positive and productive school environment. While various conflict management strategies exist, schools worldwide, including those in Ethiopia, face challenges such as inadequate training, limited resources, and cultural barriers. This study aims to address these gaps by examining the conflict management practices in selected government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa, and providing recommendations for improvement.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, approach, and methods used in the study. It provides detailed information about the study area and target population, the sampling techniques employed, the tools and steps used to collect data, and the methods applied to analyze that data. It also touches on the ethical considerations that were taken into account to ensure the research was carried out responsibly and with integrity.

3.1. Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey design to examine conflict management practices in selected government primary schools. This design was a good fit because it allowed the researcher to gather information from a wide range of stakeholders, helping to paint a clear picture of how conflicts were being managed and to analyze the current situation in more detail. Pragmatism allows for methodological flexibility, enabling the collection of diverse data types (numerical and textual) to provide a comprehensive understanding of conflict management practices in this specific context (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.2. Research Approach

The research took a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to get a well-rounded understanding of the problem. Mixed-Methods Approach (Explanatory Sequential Design): This study employs a mixed-methods approach, specifically an explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

Quantitative Phase (Priority): A survey questionnaire will be administered to teachers to gather broad data on: Frequency of different conflict types, Prevalence of various conflict management practices, Perceived effectiveness of these practices and Common challenges encountered.

Qualitative Phase (Follow-up): Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with principals and selected teachers to: Explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings, Explore the processes ("how") of conflict management in depth, Understand the reasoning behind practice choices, Probe deeper into the nature and context of challenges and Capture contextual factors influencing practices.

This design leverages the strengths of both approaches. The quantitative phase identifies generalizable patterns and trends, while the qualitative phase provides rich contextual explanations and deeper insights, addressing the "how" and "why" questions crucial for understanding complex practices (Ivankova et al., 2006).

3.3. Study Area

The study was carried out in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This area was chosen because of its diverse school environments and the particular challenges government primary schools there face when it comes to handling conflicts. This sub-city was chosen due to its large size, high population density, diversity, and documented pressures on educational institutions (Assefa, 2018; World Bank, 2015), making it a rich context for studying conflict management Focusing on this sub-city offered a useful and representative setting for exploring conflict management practices in similar urban school contexts.

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3.4. Population of the Study

The target population for this study included teachers and school administrators from selected government primary schools, along with students from upper primary grades (grades 5–8). It also involved parents or guardians of the students and officials from the local education office in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City. By involving this diverse group, the study aimed to gain a well-rounded understanding of conflict management practices from different points of view.

3.5. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1. Sampling Method

To make sure the research captured meaningful insights while staying manageable, a multi-stage sampling approach was used. This included a mix of purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The aim was to select participants who were most relevant to the study while also achieving some level of representativeness across different school contexts. This approach ensured that the chosen schools and individuals were closely aligned with the study's objectives, focusing on those who could offer meaningful insights into conflict management practices in government primary schools within Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City.

Stage 1: School Selection (Purposive Sampling):

Technique: Purposive (Judgmental) Sampling. Because Schools were deliberately selected based on predefined criteria to capture the diversity of government primary schools within Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City relevant to conflict management experiences. This approach is appropriate for qualitative depth and contextual understanding when random sampling is impractical or less informative (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Criteria: Schools were selected to represent variation in: Student population size (small, medium, large), Geographical location within the sub-city and Socio-economic characteristics of the catchment area (based on local knowledge/reports).

Stage 2: Participant Selection within Schools:

A) Teachers & Administrators (Principals):

Principals: Comprehensive Purposive Sampling. All principals (and vice-principals involved in conflict management) from the selected schools were included. Because they are the primary decision-makers and key informants on school-wide conflict management policies and practices. Omitting any would create a significant gap in understanding leadership perspectives.

Teachers: Stratified Random Sampling. To ensure representation of teachers across different departments where conflict dynamics might differ. Random selection within strata minimizes selection bias and allows for potential generalization within the selected schools. I used as a Procedure to obtain a complete list of teachers from each selected school then Stratify the list by department and finally, use a random number generator to select teachers proportionally from each stratum within each school.

B) Students and Parents

Students (Grades 5–8): Stratified Random Sampling

Procedure: Stratification by Grade each school's upper-primary roster was divided into four strata: Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7 and Grade 8. Rationale: Conflict dynamics differ developmentally (e.g., peer bullying peaks in Grades 6 –7; teacher defiance rises in Grade 8) (Eccles et al., 1993). Then Random Selection Within each stratum, students was selected using a random number generator (Excel RAND function). Sample size per stratum for each school 6 up to 7. Total Student Samples from all school's 125 students (25 students per school). Advantages of this sampling ensured proportional representation of all grade-level experiences and Minimized selection bias (e.g., avoiding over-sampling vocal students). But the limitation excluded Grades 1 - 4: Younger students' conflicts (e.g., playground disputes) were not captured (*though less complex*). Source: Eccles, J. S., et al. (1993). Development during adolescence. *American Psychologist, 48*(2), 90–101.

Parents: Convenience Sampling via Student Selection the Procedure was linking to Students Parents of randomly selected students (from the stratified sample above) were invited. No central parent database; access required student intermediation and Non-participation did not affect student's academic standing. Avoided coercing parents uninvolved in recent conflicts. Door-to-door recruitment was infeasible within thesis timelines. *Rationale*: Parents of students experiencing conflicts offer firsthand insights (*Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005*). Recruitment via students may introduce bias but is pragmatic (*Bryman, 2016*). Students carried invitation letters to parents (Amharic/Afan Oromo translations) and Sample Size Target: 10 parents/school (50 totals). The Advantage of this system was Feasibility: Efficient access through student "gatekeepers." And Contextual Relevance: Parents linked to active school conflicts. Sacrificed some

representativeness for actionable insights from parents *currently engaged* in school dynamics.

C) Local Education Officials:

Technique: Purposive Sampling because insights into sub-city policy or oversight are deemed essential to answer the research questions, a very small number that means key officials responsible for school support/discipline in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Education Office)might be included via purposive sampling. However, their perspective provides a different (policy/oversight) level of analysis, not the school-level practices which are the core focus. Including them risks diluting the school-level focus. Strongly consider omitting them unless their inclusion is critically justified by specific research questions.

3.5.2. Sample Size

Teacher/student sizes enable statistical comparison (e.g., grade-level differences). Parent sample balances depth with feasibility (access constraints). Official interviews provide policy context without diluting school focus. Aligns with similar mixed-methods studies in educational research (*Plano Clark et al., 2015*).

This study included a total of 253 participants from five government primary schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City. The goal was to gather input from a wide range of people who experience or deal with conflict in the school setting. From each school, 14 teachers were selected adding up to 70 in total using a stratified random sampling method. This approach made sure that teachers from different grade levels were fairly represented, which is important for getting a well-rounded view of how conflict shows up across classrooms (Guest et al., 2006).

We also included 125 students, 25 from each school, focusing on those in Grades 5 to 8. These students were chosen using the same stratified random sampling method so we could look more closely at patterns based on both gender and grade level. This kind of subgroup analysis is encouraged in education research, especially when trying to understand different student perspectives (Cohen et al., 2018).

To hear from parents, we selected 50 individuals 10 per school through convenience sampling. While this method doesn't give a random sample, it allowed us to reach parents who were already connected to the sampled students and willing to participate. Given time and access constraints, this approach was both practical and useful (Bryman, 2016).

All five school principals were purposely included in the study, using what's known as comprehensive purposive sampling. Since they play a central role in managing school operations and conflict, their insights were considered essential (Palinkas et al., 2015). Lastly, we included three local education officials through purposive sampling to gain a broader view on how policies and administrative decisions influence conflict management at the school level (Marshall, 1996).

Overall, the sampling strategy was designed to ensure a rich mix of voices teachers, students, parents, school leaders, and local officials each offering a different angle on how conflict is experienced and managed in primary schools.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection methods used in this study included questionnaires, interview and document reviews. Questionnaires with a mix of structured and semi-structured questions were given to teachers, administrators, and students to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Interview guides featuring open-ended questions were used to get deeper insights from parents, education officials, and selected teachers or administrators.

Structured Questionnaires (Quantitative):

Teachers/Administrators: Likert-scale surveys (1–5) assessing conflict frequency, strategy effectiveness, and policy awareness. Students (Gr 5–8): Simplified scales (e.g., "Never/Sometimes/Often") on conflict experiences and resolution fairness (Adapted from Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Parents: Closed-ended questions on home-school communication and perceived school climate. Reliability: Pilot-tested (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$) (DeVellis, 2017).

Semi-Structured Interviews (Qualitative): Guides for Principals, Officials, and select Teachers/Parents explored: Contextual challenges, Decision-making processes and unintended consequences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Document Review Checklist: document reviews were carried out, looking at school records, conflict resolution policies, meeting minutes, and reports from the local education office. These helped to add context and cross-check the data collected from other sources. The study employed triangulation (Denzin, 1978) using three instruments to ensure comprehensive data: Analyzed school discipline policies, incident logs, and Education Office guidelines for alignment with reported practices (*Bowen, 2009*).

3.7. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process involved distributing questionnaires and carrying out interviews with the selected participants. On top of that, secondary data was gathered by reviewing documents from schools and local education offices. This combination helped provide a thorough understanding of conflict management practices and the challenges involved.

3.8. Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis in this study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage were used to

summarize and present the results. Tools such as SPSS 20 and Excel helped with organizing and visualizing the data more efficiently. On the qualitative side, thematic analysis was used to find and make sense of recurring patterns and themes from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews, giving a deeper understanding of how conflict management practices actually work.

3.9. Validity and Reliability

Content Validity: Ensured through literature review, expert review (supervisor/), and pilot testing.

Reliability: Internal consistency of scales measured using Cornbrash's Alpha (target $\alpha > 0.7$).

Student Survey Instrument (Grades 5 - 8) Stratified Random Sampling Integrity: The student sample consisted of 125 participants drawn from Grades 5 to 8, with the goal of selecting approximately 31.25 students per grade to ensure equal representation. In Grade 5, 32 students were selected, slightly above the target by 0.75. Grade 6 had 30 students, falling short of the target by 1.25. Grade 7 included 33 students, exceeding the target by 1.75, while Grade 8 had 30 students, also 1.25 below the target. Overall, the sample closely aligned with the intended distribution, with only minor deviations across the four grade levels.

Reliability testing was conducted across five schools for both student and parent groups. At Kotari Primary School, student and parent responses showed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.85 and 0.81 respectively, and no major reliability threats identified. Hidase School had slightly lower values 0.79 for students and 0.72 for parents—with a noted challenge of parent time constraints, which may have affected the completeness or quality of parent responses. At Hibir, student reliability was solid at 0.83, while the parent alpha was 0.75. The key threat identified here was language barriers, particularly among Oromo-speaking parents, which may have led to misunderstandings in survey items. Gofa School showed the lowest parent reliability score at 0.68 (below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70), likely due to low literacy levels, which required the use of oral data collection methods. Student reliability at Gofa was still acceptable at 0.76. Lastly, Sibsete School demonstrated strong reliability for both groups, with alpha values of 0.84 for students and 0.78 for parents, and no notable reliability threats reported. Stratified student sampling ensured grade-representative data with high reliability ($\alpha > 0.75$). Parent convenience sampling introduced moderate bias but was mitigated through:

- Mixed-mode data collection (written/oral)

- Grade-linking to conflict-experienced families
- Non-response tracking for transparency

Contextual adaptations (language, caregiver inclusion) upheld validity despite urban Ethiopian constraints.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical principles to keep the research process honest and protect everyone involved. Before participating, all participants were clearly told about the study's purpose, what it involved, and what it meant for them, and they gave their informed consent willingly. Their privacy was respected by keeping all collected data safe and only using it for the study. Participation was completely voluntary, and people were free to drop out anytime without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality: Secure storage of all data (encrypted drives, password protection). Audio files destroyed post-transcription verification.

Sensitivity: Careful interpretation of data related to sensitive conflict incidents, avoiding judgmental language. Potentially identifying details omitted from reporting.

Representation: Faithful representation of participants' views, including dissenting or minority perspectives where relevant. Avoiding over-generalization beyond the data.

This ethical approach helped provide a solid foundation for exploring conflict management practices in government primary schools, which in turn supports the trustworthiness of the study's findings. The next chapter will share the results and discuss the key insights gathered from the data.

CHAPTER FOUR
4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1. Demographic Information

Table 1 School distributions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Kotari Primary School	50	19.8	19.8
	Hidase Primary School	50	19.8	19.8
	Hibir Primary School	50	19.8	19.8
	Gofa Primary School	50	19.8	19.8
	Sibsete Primary School	50	19.8	19.8
	Sub City Education office	3	1.2	1.2
	Total	253	100.0	100.0

The study had a sample size of 253 respondents, which is considered adequate for an analysis. Data collection was organized to provide equal opportunity sampling across all institutions, as five government primary schools each provided 50 respondents, making up 19.8% of the total sample per school, contributing to the sample size of 250. Such an approach grants adequate representation from all the teachers, students, and parents of the institution. In addition, there were three respondents (1.2%) from the Sub-City Education Office, presumably administrative staff for educators who actually implement and supervise policy activities.

Table 2 stake holders' roles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	school Administrator	25	9.9	9.9
	Teacher	50	19.8	19.8
	Student	125	49.4	49.4
	Parent/Guardian	50	19.8	19.8
	Educational official	3	1.2	1.2
	Total	253	100.0	100.0

The largest group of respondents, comprising 49.4% of the total, identified as students, highlighting their importance as active participants. Teachers and Parents or guardians each represented 19.8% of the sample, contributing important thoughts on the interplay within the school and home as well as classroom relations. School administrators made up 9.9% of the respondents, telling how conflicts within the institution were dealt with in relation to policies and other regulations. Educational officials only composed 1.2% of the sample, suggesting a very narrow perspective regarding school governance and oversight policies in relation to the sample.

Table 3 Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	161	63.6	63.6
	Female	92	36.4	36.4
	Total	253	100.0	100.0

The sex distribution of the respondents indicates a significant skew, with 63.6% male respondents and 36.4% female respondents. Several reasons may account for this disparity. Sampling bias could have been an issue, especially if the roles sampled e.g., leadership in schools or administrative roles are ones that are predominantly occupied by men. This tilting ought to be considered in the results' interpretation, as it can affect the generalizability of the findings and indicate the necessity of greater representation diversity in subsequent research.

Table 4 Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	<18	125	49.4	49.4
	18-30	20	7.9	7.9
	31-40	63	24.9	24.9
	41-50	43	17.0	17.0
	>50	2	.8	.8
	Total	253	100.0	100.0

The age distribution of the respondents is such that 49.4% are under 18 years, and they are most likely students who offer insightful first-hand views on peer conflicts. The other 50.6% are between 18 and 50 years, comprising teachers, parents, and school administrators. Of this adult group, 7.9% are in the 18–30 years bracket, likely younger instructors or newly enrolled parents; 24.9% in 31–40 years, typically mid-profession teachers; and 17.0% in 41–50 years, typically senior or administration roles. Surprisingly, only 0.8% of respondents are over 50, suggesting few voices from veteran experts.

Table 5 Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	2-5	9	3.6	11.5
	6-10	15	5.9	19.2
	more than 10	54	21.3	69.2
	Total	78	30.8	100.0
Missing	System	175	69.2	
Total		253	100.0	

The information about work experience indicates that 69.2% of them did not respond, presumably as students or parents not employed formally at the schools. Of the responders, 11.5% had 2 - 5 years of experience, indicating more junior personnel, and 19.2% have 6–10 years of experience, reflecting a moderately experienced group. Seventy percent of the valid responses, 69.2%, were from over 10 years of experience, which suggests a large number of experienced teachers who can probably be assumed to have a wealth of institutional knowledge but might also be more set in their ways against new approaches or changes in conflict management techniques.

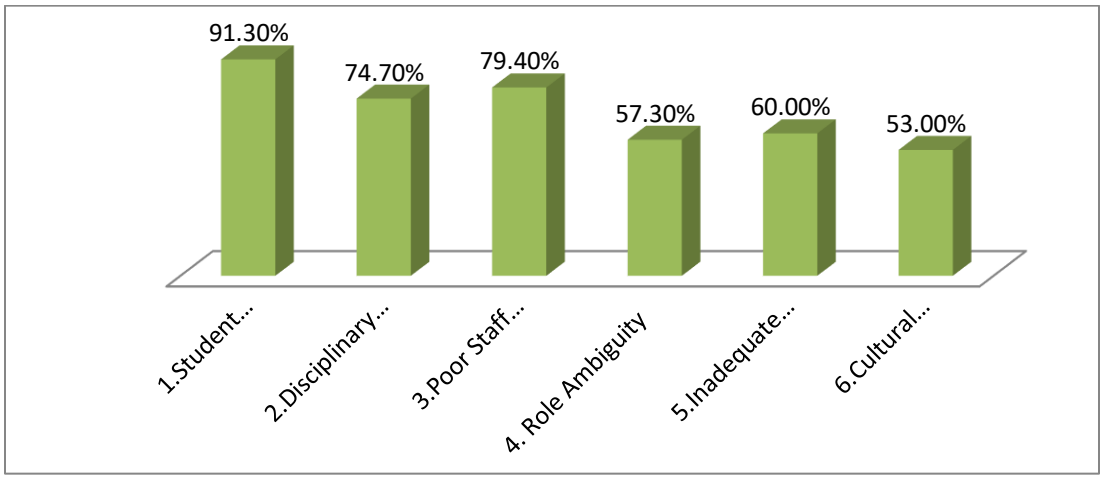
4.2. Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

Part 1: Sources of Conflict

Table 6 ***sources of conflict***

Conflict Source	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Disagree
1.Student Indiscipline	67.6% (171)	23.7% (60)	**91.3%**	2.4% (6)	5.1% (13)	1.2% (3)	**6.3%**
2.Disciplinary Issues	44.7% (113)	30.0% (76)	**74.7%**	18.6% (47)	2.8% (7)	4.0% (10)	**6.8%**
3.Poor Staff Comm.	29.2% (74)	50.2% (127)	**79.4%**	7.1% (18)	9.9% (25)	3.6% (9)	**13.5%**
4. Role Ambiguity	33.6% (85)	23.7% (60)	**57.3%**	11.5% (29)	19.0% (48)	12.3% (31)	**31.3%**
5.Inadequate Resources	29.6% (75)	30.4% (77)	**60.0%**	19.0% (48)	16.6% (42)	4.3% (11)	**20.9%**
6.Cultural Misunderstandings	19.8% (50)	33.2% (84)	**53.0%**	26.5% (67)	9.9% (25)	10.7% (27)	**20.6%**

Figure 1 ***sources of conflict***



Interpretation: Student indiscipline emerged as the most severe conflict driver, with **91.3% consensus** (67.6% strongly agreeing). This near-unanimous agreement across stakeholders indicates a systemic behavioral crisis requiring urgent intervention. Equally critical are disciplinary enforcement issues (**74.7% agreement**), suggesting

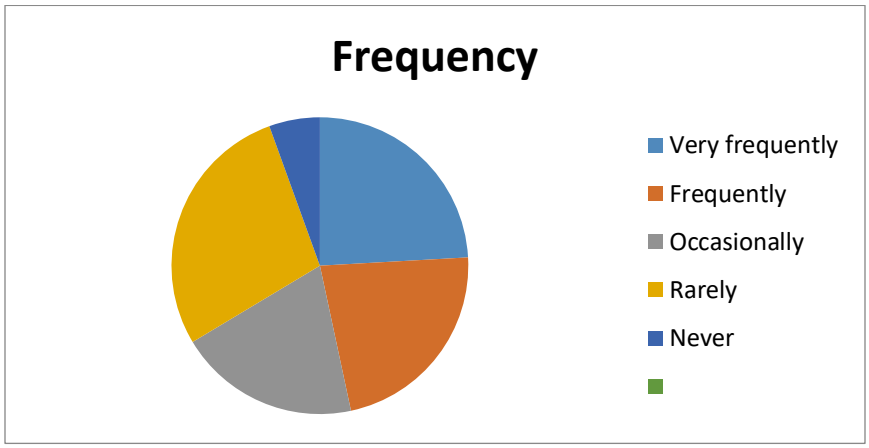
inconsistent punishment exacerbates misconduct. These twin crises create a self-perpetuating cycle: poor discipline management fuels student indiscipline. Student behavior and staff communication gaps were universal pain points. Cultural misunderstandings (53% agreement) also emerged as significant.

Part 2: Types and Frequency of Conflicts

Table 7: Frequency of Conflicts in School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Very frequently	61	24.1	24.1
	Frequently	57	22.5	22.5
	Occasionally	50	19.8	19.8
	Rarely	71	28.1	28.1
	Never	14	5.5	5.5
	Total	253	100.0	100.0

Figure 2 Frequency of Conflicts in School



The data regarding how frequently conflict happens in the school indicates that conflict is a relatively common occurrence. Overall, 46.6% of respondents ticked that conflict occurs very frequently (24.1%) or frequently (22.5%), suggesting a high level of ongoing tension. A further 19.8% indicated that conflict happens occasionally, bringing the total to 66.4% who experience conflict at least occasionally or more. Concurrently, 28.1% specified that conflicts hardly ever happen, and only 5.5% said they never occur. These findings reveal that while not persistent, conflicts are part of normal school life and may need constant monitoring and effective resolution.

Table 8: Primary Parties Involved in Conflicts

Conflict Type	Frequency	Yes (%)	No (Frequency)	No (%)
Teacher vs Teacher	42	16.6	211	83.4
Student vs Student	192	75.9	61	24.1
Student vs Teacher	220	87.0	33	13.0
Teacher vs Administrator	39	15.4	214	84.6
Teacher vs Parent	36	14.2	217	85.8

The analysis of conflict types in the school shows that student-teacher conflicts are reported most frequently, with 87.0% of the respondents identifying such conflicts. This depicts discipline, communication, or classroom management issues that continue to require improved teacher-student relationships and behavior management strategies. Student-student fights are also fairly prominent, noted by 75.9% of the sample, reflecting the prevalence of student-to-student fights such as bullying, rivalry, or social miscommunication. These findings reflect the necessity to implement peer mediation programs and promote social-emotional learning.

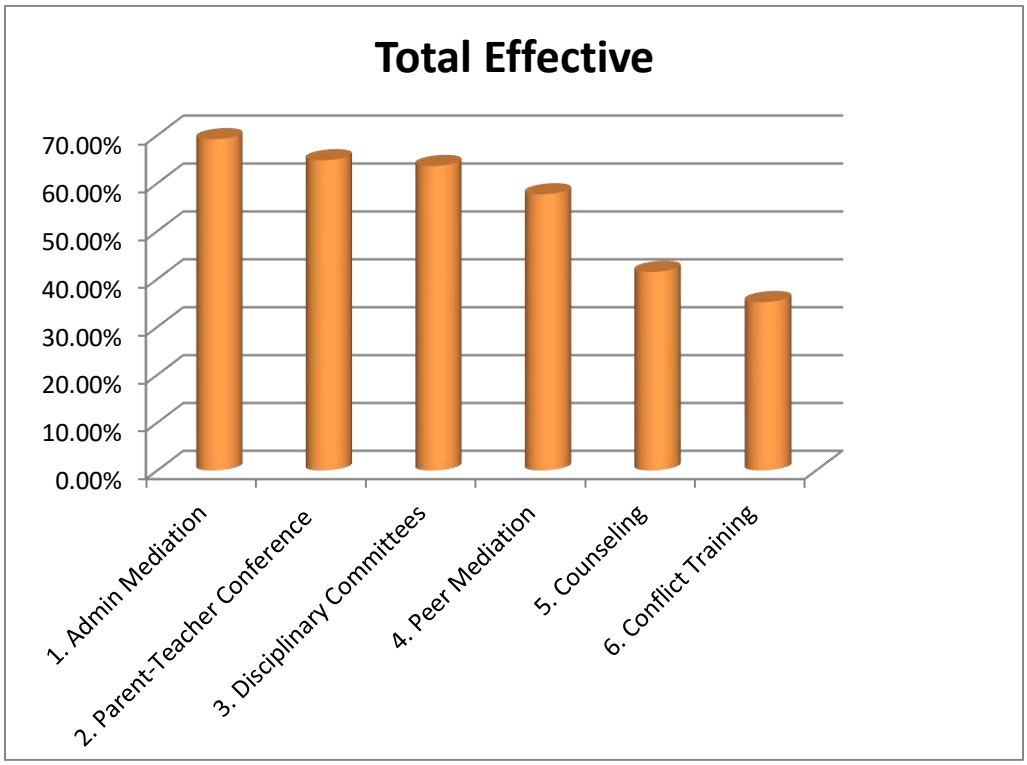
Teachers' conflicts are relatively low, with 16.6% of the respondents reporting any such events, reflecting overall cooperative professional relationships. Conversely, teacher-administrator conflict (15.4%) and teacher-parent conflict (14.2%) are less common, indicating stable relationships in these categories. The fact that some tension exists here highlights the necessity of open communication, shared leadership, and effective parent-teacher relations. All together, the results show that professional relationships at the school are generally positive but call for additional attention to be given to managing and mitigating student-based conflict.

Part 3: Conflict Management Practices

Table 9 ***Conflict Management Practices***

Strategy	Very Effective	Effective	Total Effective	Neutral	Ineffective	Critical Gap
1. Admin Mediation	42.3% (107)	26.9% (68)	69.2%	27.7% (70)	3.2% (8)	Slow response times
2. Parent-Teacher Conference	39.5% (100)	25.3% (64)	64.8%	27.3% (69)	7.9% (20)	Infrequent, parent exclusion
3. Disciplinary Committees	32.4% (82)	31.2% (79)	63.6%	34.4% (87)	2.0% (5)	Inconsistent rulings
4. Peer Mediation	20.9% (53)	36.8% (93)	57.7%	26.9% (68)	15.4% (39)	Untrained student mediators
5. Counseling	32.4% (83)	9.1% (23)	41.5%	49.0% (124)	8.9% (23)	Underutilized, low access
6. Conflict Training	28.9% (73)	6.3% (16)	35.2%	13.0% (33)	51.8% (131)	Poor curriculum, infrequent

Figure 3 ***Conflict Management Practices***



The study shows that administrative mediation (69.2%) and parent-teacher conferences (64.8%) are the most effective conflict management strategies, though both face issues like slow responses and infrequent meetings. Disciplinary committees are moderately effective (63.6%) but suffer from inconsistent decisions. Peer mediation (57.7%) is weakened by untrained student mediators, while counseling (41.5%) is underused and hard to access. Conflict resolution training is the least effective (35.2%), with over half rating it negatively due to a poor curriculum and rare sessions. Overall, while some strategies show promise, major gaps in training, access, and consistency remain.

Table 10: Established Policies or Procedures for Conflict Management in Your School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	159	62.8	62.8	62.8
	No	51	20.2	20.2	83.0
	Not Sure	43	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	253	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4 Established Policies or Procedures for Conflict Management in Your School

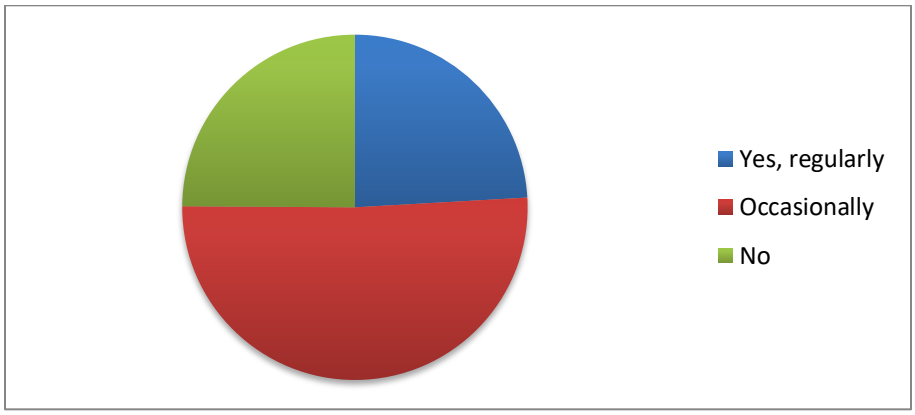
The data on whether or not there are formal conflict management policies or procedures in schools show that the majority of the respondents (62.8%) acknowledge their existence. However, 20.2% indicated that there is no such policy, and 17.0% did not know, as shown by the gap in implementation or communication of these policies. While it is heartening that most schools reportedly have defined conflict management policies in

place, the high rate of unawareness or reporting of absence among the respondents necessitates a need for fuller explanation, publicity, and training so that everyone involved is well-aware and assured of the mechanisms that ought to resolve conflicts at schools.

Table 11: Lack of Adequate Training for Staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, regularly	61	24.1	24.1	24.1
	Occasionally	129	51.0	51.0	75.1
	No	63	24.9	24.9	100.0
	Total	253	100.0	100.0	

Figure 5 Lack of Adequate Training for Staff



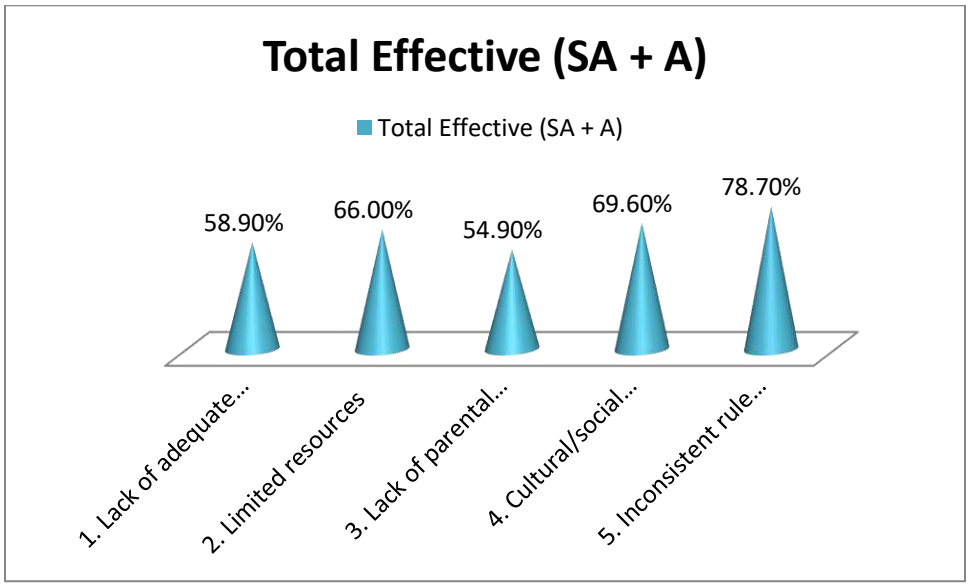
The data on whether teachers and administrators are being taught conflict resolution indicates training is occurring, but perhaps not regularly or in numbers significant enough to impact what is occurring in classrooms. Most respondents (51.0%) indicated training is occurring periodically, but only 24.1% indicated they were receiving such training on a regular basis. Of great importance, 24.9% indicated they never receive any. This would mean that although work is being done to equip teachers with conflict resolution, there is still some scope of improvement in terms of frequency and adequacy of coverage. Increasing the frequency and quality of training would serve to raise the overall effectiveness of conflict management in schools.

Part 4: Challenges in Conflict Management

Table 12 ***Challenges Affecting Conflict Management in Schools***

Challenge	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	**Total Effective (SA + A)**	Key Issue Identified
1. Lack of adequate training	41 (16.2%)	108 (42.7%)	28 (11.1%)	54 (21.3%)	22 (8.7%)	**58.9 %**	Staff unprepared to handle conflicts
2. Limited resources	88 (34.8%)	79 (31.2%)	25 (9.9%)	33 (13%)	28 (11.1%)	**66.0 %**	Shortage of financial/human resources
3. Lack of parental involvement	44 (17.4%)	95 (37.5%)	70 (27.7%)	24 (9.5%)	20 (7.9%)	**54.9 %**	Parents not actively engaged
4. Cultural/social differences	88 (34.8%)	88 (34.8%)	34 (13.4%)	37 (14.6%)	6 (2.4%)	**69.6 %**	Misunderstandings due to background diversity
5. Inconsistent rule enforcement	63 (24.9%)	136 (53.8%)	37 (14.6%)	14 (5.5%)	3 (1.2%)	**78.7 %**	Unequal or unclear disciplinary actions

Figure 6 ***Challenges Affecting Conflict Management in Schools***



The findings show that effective conflict management in government primary schools is being held back by several key issues. The most serious problem identified is the inconsistent enforcement of school rules. When rules are not applied fairly or regularly, it creates confusion and weakens trust among students and staff.

Another major barrier is the lack of adequate training for teachers and staff. Many are expected to handle conflicts without proper guidance or tools, which often leads to unresolved or poorly managed situations.

Limited financial and human resources also pose a significant challenge, making it difficult for schools to invest in support services like counseling or mediation programs.

Cultural and social differences among stakeholders were highlighted as a source of misunderstanding or miscommunication, especially when not addressed with sensitivity.

Finally, low parental involvement reduces the support system needed to resolve conflicts holistically. When parents are not engaged, issues at school may escalate or go unaddressed at home.

Part 5: Satisfaction Level

Table 13: Administrative delays in responding to conflicts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	27	10.7	10.7	10.7
	Agree	86	34.0	34.0	44.7
	Neutral	58	22.9	22.9	67.6
	Disagree	60	23.7	23.7	91.3
	strongly disagree	22	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	253	100.0	100.0	

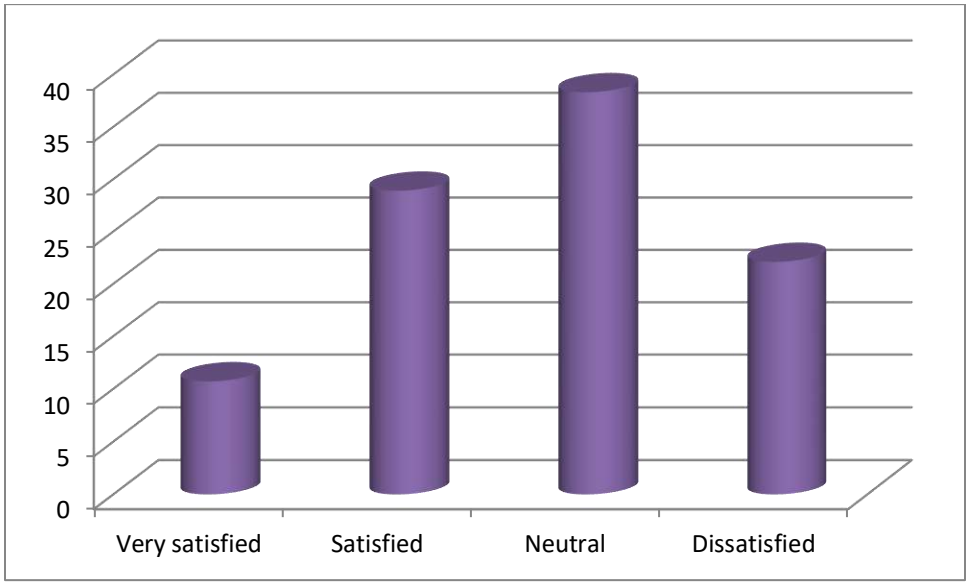
The administrative delay in conflict resolution as a problem information depicts divergent opinion among respondents. Combined 44.7% of which 10.7% strongly agreed and 34.0% agreed believe delays on the part of school administration are hampering effective conflict resolution. Nevertheless, 22.9% neither disagreed nor agreed, which may reflect ambivalence or congruence of conditions. Meanwhile, the relatively large 32.4% of respondents disagreed (23.7%) or strongly disagreed (8.7%) that administrative delay is a severe problem. Overall, while many see delays as an obstacle, there is also a

considerable segment that does not see it as an essential challenge, reflecting the variation in administrative responsiveness across schools.

Table 14: Satisfaction with Current Conflict Management Practices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very satisfied	27	10.7	10.7	10.7
	Satisfied	73	28.9	28.9	39.5
	Neutral	97	38.3	38.3	77.9
	Dissatisfied	56	22.1	22.1	100.0
	Total	253	100.0	100.0	

Figure 7 Satisfaction with Current Conflict Management Practices



The level of satisfaction with continuous conflict management practice in schools is a mixed one. 10.7% are very satisfied, and 28.9% are satisfied, so 39.6% are positive. More, 38.3%, are neutral, and this might be seen as uncertainty or ambiguity about the effectiveness of continuous practice. On the other hand, 22.1% are dissatisfied, and these are a substantial minority who feel that there is an improvement to be made in conflict management. Overall, these results show that although some are content with conflict resolution, there is a great degree of scope for extending satisfaction and effectiveness in conflict resolution measures in schools.

Part 6: Open-Ended Questions

1. What's causing Conflicts in Schools?

When you look at what students, teachers, parents, and administrators are saying, it's clear that school conflicts don't just pop up out of nowhere. Students mention things like bullying and gossip as the main reasons fights break out. They also feel like discipline isn't always fair some kids get punished, others don't, and it builds tension.

Teachers, on the other hand, talk about how hard it is to manage everything. There aren't clear rules, classrooms are overcrowded, and they don't get enough backup when students misbehave. Plus, when problems happen, they feel like parents are quick to blame them instead of helping solve things.

Parents are frustrated too. They say they're not always kept in the loop about school policies, and when an issue does come up, the response takes too long. Some even feel like teachers favor certain students, which add to the problem.

Administrators point out those cultural differences among students and families sometimes lead to misunderstandings. But without proper programs or training to help bridge those gaps, it's hard to keep things under control.

2. What Could Help Improve Conflict Management?

Everyone had suggestions. Students want a say in solving problems—they think it would help if they were trained to mediate small disputes themselves, instead of everything being handled by teachers.

Teachers think workshops would help, especially on topics like conflict resolution and cultural awareness. They also mentioned that smaller class sizes would make it easier to address students' individual needs.

Parents suggest setting up a committee where they and teachers can talk through conflicts together. They also want information like rules and updates to be shared more clearly, maybe through simple messages.

Administrators had more structural ideas like hiring a full-time counselor and setting aside a budget for tools that help mediate conflicts. They also want a faster, more organized way to report and track issues, so things don't get lost or ignored.

3. Other Thoughts

A few extra comments stood out. Students feel like the school focuses too much on punishment, and not enough on teaching how to resolve problems calmly. Teachers say rules should be consistent for everyone right now, it seems like some families get special treatment. Parents think celebrating different cultures would go a long way in helping

students understand and respect each other. And administrators admit the school usually reacts to problems rather than preventing them. They believe tracking conflict patterns could help stop issue before they grow.

Interview Questions Responses

Teachers are doing their best, but they're stretched really thin. There's no clear or consistent policy when it comes to conflict resolution. Sometimes we're left to figure things out on our own, and that doesn't always go well. Add to that the large class sizes, not enough resources, and very little support from the administration it makes everything harder to handle.

Parents have their own frustrations too. A lot of them feel like they're not properly informed about what's happening at school. When conflicts arise, the school doesn't always respond quickly, and that leads to a breakdown in trust. Some parents even believe certain teachers favor some students over others, which makes things more complicated.

From the administrator's side, they say that cultural differences among students and families sometimes lead to misunderstandings. But there aren't any real programs in place to address those gaps. The lack of training and support makes it hard to handle conflicts properly and proactively. Most of the time, the school ends up reacting to problems instead of preventing them.

Teachers suggest holding regular workshops on conflict resolution and cultural sensitivity. They also mentioned that with smaller class sizes, they could better address each student's needs and prevent problems before they escalate. They want to help, but they need tools and time to do it properly.

Parents think communication should be clearer and more direct. They recommended forming a parent-teacher committee that meets regularly to discuss concerns.

Administrators believe that hiring a full-time counselor would make a big difference. Right now, there's no one dedicated to handling student mental health or conflict resolution. They also want a more efficient reporting system so issues can be tracked, followed up on, and prevented from getting worse.

Teachers expressed the need for rules that apply equally to everyone. Right now, it sometimes feels like certain families get special treatment, which creates unfairness and resentment. That inconsistency makes it harder to maintain order and trust.

Parents said they'd love to see more cultural celebrations and inclusive events in the school. They believe that teaching kids to appreciate and respect different backgrounds could reduce misunderstandings and help build stronger relationships among students.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. SUMMARY

This study examined the nature, frequency, and management of conflicts in schools, exploring the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. The findings reveal that conflicts are a regular and persistent feature in the school environment. Among the main sources of conflict are student indiscipline, which was the most frequently identified cause, followed by disciplinary enforcement issues, poor communication among staff, role ambiguity, inadequate resources, and cultural misunderstandings.

In terms of frequency, conflicts occur very frequently or frequently according to nearly half of the respondents, underscoring the pressing needs for effective conflict management mechanisms. When analyzing the parties involved, conflicts predominantly occur between students (student vs. student) and between students and teachers (student vs. teacher), accounting for over 75% of reported cases. Conflicts involving teacher vs. teacher or teacher vs. administrators were less common, but still notable.

Regarding conflict resolution practices, mediation by school administrators, use of disciplinary committees, and parent-teacher conferences were generally seen as effective methods, with a combined majority rating them as “very effective” or “effective.” However, peer mediation programs (student-led) and professional counseling received mixed reviews, with a significant portion of respondents remaining neutral or rating these interventions as less effective.

A key area of concern is conflict resolution training: only about a quarter of respondents indicated that teachers and administrators receive training regularly, while half reported training happens only occasionally, and a quarter said no training is provided at all. This gap likely contributes to the challenges faced in managing conflicts effectively.

The study also identified several challenges affecting conflict management:

- Limited financial and human resources were cited by a majority as a significant barrier.
- A large proportion agreed that lack of adequate training for staff impedes effective conflict resolution.
- Cultural and social differences among stakeholders exacerbate conflicts and complicate resolution efforts.

- Inconsistent enforcement of rules was reported as a major issue, undermining fairness and predictability.
- Additionally, administrative delays in responding to conflicts reduce the chances of timely and satisfactory resolutions.

5.2. CONCLUSION

The data clearly shows that conflict is an inherent challenge in schools, particularly related to student behavior and disciplinary issues. Conflicts happen frequently and involve multiple stakeholders, with students being the primary parties. While schools have established some formal conflict management practices, these are not consistently effective or satisfactory to all parties.

The effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies varies. Mediation by administrators and disciplinary committees appear to function relatively well, but there is a need to improve and expand alternative methods such as peer mediation and professional counseling, which currently have limited impact.

Training or the lack thereof is a critical gap. Many educators and school administrators do not receive sufficient or consistent training in conflict resolution, which hinders their ability to handle disputes constructively and proactively.

Resource constraints, including inadequate staffing and funding, restrict schools' capacity to address conflicts comprehensively. Cultural and social diversity adds complexity, requiring culturally sensitive approaches that many schools may not be equipped to provide.

Inconsistent enforcement of rules creates perceptions of unfairness, which can escalate conflicts rather than resolve them. Moreover, slow administrative responses further aggravate tensions and reduce confidence in school leadership.

Overall, while schools are attempting to manage conflicts, systemic weaknesses limit their effectiveness. To foster a safer, more supportive learning environment, schools must address these deficiencies through targeted interventions and policy improvements.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve conflict management practices within the school environment:

- **Implement Comprehensive Conflict Resolution Training**

  It is imperative to develop and institutionalize mandatory, ongoing training programs for teachers, administrators, and support staff. These trainings should emphasize practical conflict resolution strategies, effective communication, emotional intelligence, and cultural competence. Additionally, incorporating conflict management skills in student programs will empower learners to effectively resolve peer disputes and actively engage in peer mediation initiatives.

- **Review and Strengthen Conflict Management Policies**

  A thorough review and revision of existing conflict management policies should be conducted to ensure clarity, fairness, and cultural sensitivity. The enforcement of these policies must be standardized across all levels of the school to prevent inconsistencies that contribute to conflict escalation. Furthermore, efforts should be made to communicate these policies clearly to all stakeholders and embed them within the school's culture.

- **Enhance Resource Allocation and Infrastructure**

  Schools should advocate for increased financial and human resources dedicated to conflict management activities. This includes recruiting trained counselors and mediators and providing designated, confidential spaces for counseling and mediation sessions, thereby fostering a safe and supportive environment for conflict resolution.

- **Promote Active Parental Involvement**

  Establish structured programs that encourage and facilitate meaningful parental involvement in conflict management. Regular parent-teacher conferences focused on student behavior and conflict resolution strategies should be institutionalized. Additionally, organizing workshops for parents will help clarify their roles and responsibilities in supporting positive conflict outcomes.

- **Improve Responsiveness and Accountability Mechanisms**

  Clear protocols with defined timelines should be developed to ensure timely interventions and follow-ups in conflict cases. Accountability frameworks must be put in place for administrators and staff involved in conflict management processes. Moreover, introducing feedback systems will allow students, parents,

and teachers to report on the effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts, thus promoting transparency and continuous improvement.

- **Expand and Support Peer Mediation Programs**

  Invest in training and supporting student peer mediators to handle minor conflicts, which can reduce the burden on staff and cultivate a positive school climate. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these programs are essential to maintain their effectiveness and sustainability.

- **Integrate Professional Counseling Services**

  Increase access to professional counseling to address underlying emotional and psychological factors that contribute to conflicts. Awareness campaigns should be implemented to encourage utilization of these services, aiming to reduce stigma and promote mental well-being among students and staff.

- **Foster Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity Awareness**

  Implement ongoing cultural competence training for all school stakeholders to promote mutual respect and understanding of diverse backgrounds. This approach will mitigate conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings and enhance the inclusiveness of the school environment.

- **Establish Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**

  Develop mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups, and incident tracking to regularly assess conflict management practices. The insights gained from these evaluations should inform policy adjustments, training programs, and resource allocation to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness in conflict resolution.

By addressing these recommendations, schools can significantly improve their conflict management effectiveness, reduce disruptions, and create a safer and more inclusive educational environment where all stakeholders feel heard, respected, and supported.

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APPENDICES

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study titled **"Conflict Management Practices in Selected Government Primary Schools in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City, Addis Ababa."** Your input is invaluable to the success of this research and will contribute to improving conflict management practices in primary schools.

Instructions for Completing the Questionnaire:

- Your responses will be treated with the at most confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.
- Do not write your name or any personal identifier on the questionnaire.
- Please read each question carefully before answering.
- Provide honest and accurate responses to ensure the validity of the study's findings.
- For closed-ended questions, tick (✓) the box that best represents your opinion.
- For Likert scale questions, select the option that best reflects your level of agreement or disagreement (e.g., Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).
- For open-ended questions, write your responses clearly in the space provided.

Your cooperation and participation are greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, please feel free to contact the researcher at **0921040860.**

Thank you for your time and valuable contribution!

Sincerely,
Kassaye Aragaw
Addis Ababa University

Demographic Information

Please provide information about yourself by ticking (✓) the appropriate box or filling in the blanks.

1. Role in the School:
   School Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Student ☐
   Parent/Guardian ☐ Education Official ☐
2. Gender:
   Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Age (Years):
   Under 18 ☐ 18–30 ☐ 31–40 ☐
   41–50 ☐ Above 50 ☐
4. Years of Experience (for Teachers/Administrators):
   Less than 2 years ☐ 2–5 years ☐
   6–10 years ☐ More than 10 year ☐

Part 1: Sources of Conflict

Please indicate the extent to which each item is a source of conflict in your school.

No	Source of Conflict	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Poor communication among staff					
2	Inadequate resources					
3	Disciplinary enforcement issues					
4	Cultural misunderstandings					
5	Role ambiguity among staff					
6	Student indiscipline					

Part 2: Types and Frequency of Conflicts

1. How often do conflicts occur in your school?

   Very frequently ☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐

   Rarely ☐ Never ☐

2. Who are the primary parties involved in conflicts? (Tick all that apply)

   Teachers and Teachers ☐ Teachers and Students ☐

   Students and Students ☐ Teachers and Parents ☐

   Others (please specify): _____

Part 3: Conflict Management Practices

To what extent are the following strategies used and effective in your school?

No	Strategy	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Ineffective	Very Ineffective
1	Mediation by school administrators					
2	Use of disciplinary committees					
3	Parent-teacher conferences					
4	Peer mediation programs (student-led)					
5	Counseling by professionals					
6	Conflict resolution training for staff/students					

7. Are there established policies or procedures for conflict management in your school?

   Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

8. Do teachers and administrators receive training on conflict resolution?

   Yes, regularly ☐ Occasionally ☐ No ☐

Part 4: Challenges in Conflict Management

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following challenges affects conflict management.

No	Challenge	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Lack of adequate training for staff					
2	Limited resources (financial, human, etc.)					
3	Lack of parental involvement					
4	Cultural/social differences among stakeholders					
5	Inconsistent enforcement of rules					
6	Administrative delays in responding to conflicts					

Part 5: Satisfaction Level

1. How satisfied are you with the current conflict management practices?

   Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐

   Dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐

Part 6: Open-Ended Questions

1. In your opinion, what are the key factors contributing to conflicts in your school?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What recommendations do you have for improving conflict management practices in your school?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Any additional comments or suggestions:

   _____

   _____

Interview Questions

1. Introduction Questions
   1.1 Can you introduce yourself and describe your role in the school?
   1.2 How long have you been in this role?
2. Sources and Types of Conflicts
   2.1 What do you think are the main causes of conflicts in your school?
   2.2 What types of conflicts are most common?
   2.3 Which groups or individuals are most frequently involved in these conflicts?
3. Conflict Management Practices
   3.1 Are there any established policies or guidelines for managing conflicts in your school?
   3.2 What methods are currently used to resolve conflicts?
   3.3 How effective do you think these methods are? Can you share examples of successful or unsuccessful conflict resolutions?
   3.4 Is there any training provided for teachers, students, or administrators on conflict resolution?
4. Challenges in Conflict Management
   4.1 What challenges does the school face in managing conflicts effectively?
   4.2 How do resource limitations (e.g., infrastructure, materials, or financial support) affect conflict management?
   4.3 Are cultural or societal factors influencing conflict resolution in your school?

5. Impact on School Environment
    5.1 How do conflicts impact the teaching and learning process in your school?
    5.2 Have you noticed changes in relationships among teachers, students, and parents due to conflicts?
6. Suggestions for Improvement
    6.1 What improvements or changes would you suggest to enhance conflict management practices in your school?
    6.2 How can parents, local education authorities, and the community contribute to better conflict management?
    6.3 Are there any specific tools, training, or support that you believe would help in resolving conflicts more effectively?
7. Closing Questions
    7.1 Is there anything else you would like to share regarding conflicts or conflict management in your school?
    7.2 Do you have any additional recommendations for this research?

Thank you for your time and valuable insights!