

**IMPACT OF INADEQUATE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS ON SERVICE
DELIVERY AT MODIPE HIGH SCHOOL IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

BY

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*I dedicate this piece of writing to my parents, Nchelé Lenah Rakgoale and my late father,
Bernard Rakgoale for sharing their wisdom, support and encouragement to study.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SACE- SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS

SAPS- SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICES

SASA- SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT

ABSTRACT

Different studies have clearly defined conflict management but little is known as to whether inadequate conflict management skill is close relative of service delivery. This paper presents the aim and objectives of the study, summary of the methodology used, type of data collected, very brief description of the data analysis methods, summary of findings conclusion and recommendations. The aim of the study is to investigate problems affecting the implementation of conflict management strategies within the school situation as witnessed by the chaotic situation within the school. Hence the concern raised by the community on critical issues which motivate the school management team to improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes on managing conflict in the workplace.

The type of data collected was both primary and secondary where people's views were called upon to provide information on the phenomenon. The objectives of the study are to conduct research on the challenge of conflict management in Modipe High School, to examine the relationship between conflict management and service delivery, to assess the impact of conflict on service delivery and to contribute towards strategic solutions for more effective conflict management.

Qualitative research methodology was applied using data collection techniques such as the interviews and questionnaires to draw information about the topic under investigation. Primary and secondary data was collected from interviews, questionnaires and literature review respectively. The data analysis methods that were employed include content and thematic analysis. This was followed by a brief summary. The study revealed that inadequate conflict management skills on service delivery can be caused by various actions, for example, unfair treatment of others, ignorance of work procedures, application of rules and regulations, and self-disciplined educators.

To this end, it is recommended that if there is a difference of opinion, proper channel of communication should be followed through the union representatives and supervisors, until the complaints or needs reach the management unit for discussion and finalisation where possible, without disagreements.

DECLARATION

I declare that the mini-dissertation report title Impact of Inadequate Conflict Management Skills on Service Delivery at Modipe High School in Limpopo Province is my own work and that it has not been conducted and submitted before any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as completed references.

Student name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The present study examines the impact of inadequate conflict management skills on service delivery at Modipe High School, Motupa Circuit. It will identify the problem statement and then outline the research questions and objective of the study. The literature applicable to the definition of conflict, nature and magnitude of conflict, causes of conflict indicators, management, conflict management, managing and resolution of conflict and dealing with disputes or grievances, will be reviewed. Finally, the research methodology and the research design to be employed in the study will be outlined.

The study will also focus on the role of the area manager's intervention mechanisms and the role of educator unions in promoting a healthy working relationship between educators and the School Management Team.

1.1Background /context

This research project is designed to highlight that conflict is an inevitable part of our working life, in the same way as it is in our private lives. We all encounter professional conflict –but whether it is own disagreements, personnel issues or competitive situations, our professional lives are filled with opportunities to manage it. However, most of us, given the choice, will shy away or ignore conflict rather than deal with it. Why? The reason is, more often than not, conflict is neither fun nor even comfortable.

This is evident from the chaotic situation that has been prevailing for the past ten years at Modipe High School between educators, learners and the principal. It follows that in such cases teacher unions and the Circuit Managers would always be engaged in teacher welfare cases. Perhaps it is so because we might think that managing conflict is expected to be an innate skill, one that we do not have.

1.2. Statement of the problem

There is a long standing conflict among learners and educators and among educators themselves in Modipe High School. Consequently, the matric results dropped significantly to

the worst level in years and subsequently the work environment is not conducive to teaching and learning.

1.3. Research questions

- (a) What is the nature and magnitude of conflict at Modipe High School?
- (b) What is the policy and legislative framework for conflict management in schools?
- (c) What management systems, procedures and or practices are in place to control conflict?
- (d) How does conflict affect service delivery?
- (e) What measures can be taken to promote a healthy working environment at Modipe High School?

1.4. Aim/ purpose of the study

The purpose of the undertaking is to understand how the stakeholders at Modipe High School accomplish their respective roles within the community they serve.

The study will investigate problems affecting the implementation of conflict management strategies within the school as witnessed by the chaotic situation within the school situation. Hence the concern raised by the community on critical issues which motivate the School Management Team (SMT) to improve their knowledge, skills attitudes on managing conflict in the workplace.

It follows that if proactive measures are not in place the school will serve as a battle ground for grudges and personal interest and not taking into cognizance the sole reason of their existence, that is, teaching and learning.

1.5. Objectives

Given the aims, the objectives of the study are to:

- (a) Conduct research on the challenges of conflict management in Modipe High School.
- (b) Examine the relationship between conflict management and service delivery.
- (c) Assess the impact of conflict on service delivery.

(d) Contribute towards strategic solutions for more effective conflict management.

1.6. Significance of the study. This study is basically undertaken because the role of the acting-principal could not be clearly defined for a considerable period of time by the Limpopo Department of Education. For the fact that the education process proceeded without the appointed principal and appointed Head of Department (HOD), provides the opportunity for this study to expose challenging issues that emerged since the appointed principal and appointed HOD departed.

The study will also make a significant contribution to the management structure with respect to management systems, procedures, and legislative framework for conflict undertaken to improve a healthy working environment.

Van der Westhuizen (1995) points out that any principal who wishes to solve conflict in his school effectively will have to cultivate certain important skills and attitudes in this regard; irrespective of whether he activated the conflict or not. The only way to develop these skills is through knowledge, self-control and regular practice in effective conflict solving.

1.7. Operational definitions

(a) Conflict

Baron and Greenberg (1995) state that conflict refers to a process in which one party perceives that another party has taken some action that will exert negative effects on its major interest, or it is about to take such actions. The key elements in conflict seem to include opposing interests between individuals groups, recognition of such opposition, and the belief by each side that the other will thwart or has already thwarted the interests, and actions that actually produce such thwarting.

Unfortunately, conflict defined in this manner is all too common in modern organisations. Moreover, the effects thereof are too costly to ignore.

Hocker and Wilmont (1997) define conflict as all interpersonal conflicts; whether they occur between family members, students and teachers, employees and supervisors or groups, have certain elements in common. Coser (1997) as cited in Hocker and Wilmont (1997) asserts that conflict is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and

resources, in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals.

From the preceding definitions, it is clear that conflict is a struggle over values and, as such, can refer to incompatible goals. Among the foregoing, there are common factors or features of conflict being, namely, a process regarded as interaction between two or more persons. This interaction is dynamic or changes constantly as a result of human behaviour; and has a competitive nature and a negative element as well and reflects negative emotional qualities. The pertinent definition of conflict would be the one advocated by Hocker and Wilmont, as it reflects on conflicting issues that need to be investigated.

(b) Management

Cronje *et al.* (1997) define management as the process whereby human, financial and informational resources are employed for the attainment of the objectives of an organisation. Cronje *et al.* (1997) further indicate that it should be clear at this stage that the fundamental management activities, and the resources of an organisation, as well as its goals, should not be viewed as separate entities, but accomplish those goals; organising the resources and people; leading the people; and controlling the resources and the activities of people. Informational resources are employed for the attainment of the objectives of an organization.

In South Africa prior to 1994, the concept of “management” was generally regarded as an activity for one who holds a senior position in an organisation, and research indicates invariably that this position was dominated by males. This meant that the manager in the school system was regarded as the highest authority, having unassailable power and control over all activities within a particular institution. His dominant position granted him the power to make unilateral decisions with very little or no input from the staff or parents. Mda and Mothata (2000).

(c) Conflict management

Yuki (1981) as cited in Schwella and Wissink (1997) states that conflict management may be defined as the extent to which a public manager restrains subordinates from fighting and arguing, encourages them to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner

and helps to settle conflicts and disagreements between subordinates. Schwella and Wissink (1997) argue that this definition does not take into account circumstances that may lead a public manager to stimulate conflict.

Tosi *et al.* (1994) asserts that conflict management means that a manager takes an active role in addressing conflict situations and intervenes if needed. A variety of actions are possible ranging from preventing conflict to getting it resolved. He presents four classes of ways to manage conflict, thus, avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating. Other conflict management strategies that could be used include confrontation techniques, improving organisation practices and special role and structure.

Mcshane and Travaglione (2003) define conflict management as interventions that alter the level and form of conflict in ways that maximise its benefits and minimise its dysfunctional consequences.

(d) Service delivery

Public services refer to a variety of services (benefits) that the public receive directly or indirectly from government institutions, for example, safety and security, water and electricity, health services, transport services and education Du Toit *et al.*,(2002).

Du Toit and van der Waldt (1999) mention that services refer to the results emanating from the execution of a variety of functions or processes.

(e) Impact

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995) defines impact as the effect or influence that an event or situation has on someone or something.

1.8. Outline of the thesis

Chapter two examines the available and relevant literature on the topic under study in order to draw the valuable experience of other scholars on the issues under investigation. The literature was reviewed in order to establish how the problem under investigation relates to previous research, identify gaps and to enable the researcher to learn more about the literature. It became apparent that literature review unearthed, amongst other things,

that conflict management requires skills and knowledge for effective service delivery in any situation.

Chapter three outlines the research design, a plan of action for this study and data collection procedures. The research applied qualitative approach, utilisation of questionnaires and interviews in order to validate the findings in this study.

Chapter four presents the findings of the research which are elucidated by means of pie charts to make responses of the respondents much clearer. Analysis of these findings was subsequently done. The chapter answered the research questions posed in chapter one and three. Moreover, the study revealed the types, indicators and root causes of conflict, conflict management process, strategies and techniques, procedure for handling conflict, the legislative framework regarding the code of conduct for learners and educators respectively.

Chapter five deals with conclusions and recommendations of the study including limitations.

CHAPTER TWO- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The review of literature is presented under the following headings: the nature of conflict and conflict indicators, conflict management, conflict management strategies, conflict management techniques, golden rules, and impact of conflict on service delivery.

2.2. The nature of conflict and conflict indicators

Henry Barki and Jon Hartwick (1951-2002) state that a lack of a clear conceptualisation and operationalisation of the construct of interpersonal conflict makes it difficult to compare the results of different studies and hinders the accumulation of knowledge in the conflict domain. Defining interpersonal conflict as a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals, the present paper presents a two-dimensional framework and a typology of interpersonal conflict that incorporates previous conceptualisations of the construct. The first dimension of the framework identifies three properties generally associated with conflict situations: disagreement, negative emotion, and interference. The framework's second dimension identifies two targets of interpersonal conflict encountered in organizational settings: task and interpersonal relationship. Based on this framework, the study highlights several shortcomings of current conceptualizations and operationalizations of interpersonal conflict in the organizational literature, and provides suggestions for their remedy.

Alter C (1990) states that theorists have categorised organisational conflict in a number of ways. Molnar and Rogers (1979) described types of structural conflict resulting from rules, policies, and procedures. Pondy (1969) and Frazier (1983) call relatively minor disagreements frictional conflict and call clashes over fundamental issues systemic or manifest conflict. All forms can occur in systems at the individual or the collective level Galtung (1967). Individuals can direct angry words or acts at other individuals, and organisations can undertake communication or action meant to neutralize, exclude, or harm other organisations.

Conceptualized conflict as an organisational behaviour occurs and reoccurs during the life of a service delivery system. Conflict occurs between individuals and organizations as organizations within a collective strive to maximize their control over their dependency on the collective Leach (1980).

Lumsden and Lumsden (2000) state that conflict occurs when two or more people perceive their individual goals as being mutually exclusive, that is, if they perceive that accomplishing one person's goal keeps another's goal from being achieved. Differences may be negotiated cooperatively, or transactional processes may degenerate into a dysfunctional clash. That is, it gets personal.

Putman (1986) as cited in Lumsden and Lumsden (2000) notes that members may blame one another for disagreements rather than looking to the circumstances. "The tensions inherent in decisions dilemmas are managed through power plays by dominant members who control decision rules, procedurals directives, and topics for discussion."

In addition to the nature of conflict Gresse (2003) postulates other types of conflict including, real conflict or substance conflict, perceived or felt conflict, destructive and constructive conflict, frictional and strategic conflict, interpersonal conflict, intro-individual conflict and inter-group conflicts.

Isolated incidents of conflict seldom go beyond interpersonal conflict. An accumulation of isolated incidents can build up to become explosive. If management is aware of conflict indicators, such conflicts can be avoided Zide (2006). Zide points out further indicators include: group behaviour (tension, apathy, gossip) strikes, high labour turnover and absenteeism, rumours from the grapevine, exit interview results, assault (both physical, psychological and emotional) go-slows, overtime bans, and intimidation, high frequency of disciplinary action and grievance hearings, and organizational bullying.

Zide (2006) also notes that when management is experiencing or is made aware of the conflicting indicators, it is obliged to do something about it. It follows that non-pro-active attendance to them not only leads and promotes the festering of a wound, but endangers the work environment of its employees, resources and the activities of people.

2.3. Causes of conflict

James A. Wall, Jr and Ronda Roberts Callister (1995)-In the past twenty-five years researchers have not concentrated on finding causes, Deutsch (1990). However, there have been adequate empirical studies, theoretic pieces, and astute observations that allow us to enumerate them. If you reflect on the definition of conflict, it seems to indicate several logical groupings of causes. Because a party and other are involved in the conflict, some of the causes would stem from the characteristics of each.

Robbins (1990) in Schwella et al. (1996) identifies the structurally derived causes of conflict. The structurally derived causes of conflict have been identified and discussed including, one-way task dependence where there is unilateral task dependence when one department operates independently except for relying on a common resource or authority. Conflict prevails because of lack of interaction within departments and as such there will be no motivation for peak performance, high horizontal differentiation where the different perspectives in which managers are placed in the organisational structure are the potential for conflict. Top managers are more oriented than supervisors who are in charge of daily activities. Managers differ in personalities and this prone to conflict between divisions, for example, on the use of resources, owing to different opinions, management style or objectives Van der Waldt and Du Toit (2003).

According to van der Westhuizen (1995), dependence on common resources refers to a lack of resources that may cause employees and departments to compete for the same resources. The end result is that some departments win and other lose, which leads to conflict. For example, a group of History teachers may want to take learners on an educational excursion to a local historical site. As such, they may come to conflict with other colleagues who will not allow learners to miss their classes. Thus, the needs of one department are jeopardized while the other is satisfied.

The shortage of textbooks is another fact worth noting. For instance, the commercial stream received no supply until recently. The only textbook that was available was the teacher's copy bought out of school fund. Commercial subjects and Accounting in particular require that learners be given daily activities in order for a meaningful learning to take place. So, the lack of supply not only worsens the situation but is a hindrance to effective service delivery.

Difference in evaluation criteria and reward system: employees in organizations are constantly competing for promotions, recognition, praise, more money and more responsibility. Inconsistent criteria and reward systems result in conflict among individual employees for everyone gives the best and expects to be accordingly rewarded for the effort, time, knowledge, skills, creativity and energy expended.

In order to prevent conflict, its serious effects have to be recognized and accepted as damaging to warrant preventative action. Managers have a responsibility to ensure that policies and procedures of the organisation are communicated and implemented. Employees on the other side have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that is not offensive to others or violate the rules and regulations as set out in the policy of the organisation. These controls of behaviour make people feel frustrated or sometimes insulted as they restrict their freedom and autonomy which they value and lend to a feeling of loss of trust and respect when controls are excessive.

Bad managers often make unilateral decisions or involve only those affected by the decision to participate. They are reluctant to consider other points of view. Unilateral decisions invite others to question their ideas and this may lead to conflict. Effective managers have the skill to integrate employee's contributions by being open-minded and receptive to new ideas, concepts and approaches.

Conflict is often caused by different values and beliefs due to unique backgrounds, education, age and a way of life. Cultural differences could cause dysfunctional conflict resulting from a lack of understanding of language, habits and attitudes. Employees fight over the right way of doing things due to their unique experiences in separate educational institutions.

When employees act in ways that do not match their status, conflict erupts. Status is important to most personnel. It is further exemplified by novice employees being allocated jobs at a higher level than those held by experienced employees. Another example would be younger employees supervising older, more experienced ones Gibson and Hodgetts (1989).

Role dissatisfaction occurs when the person in a role is unable to respond to the expectations of one or more members of the role set. The role expectations are understood,

but for one reason or another, they cannot be complied with. It is a source of potential tension that may result in a loss of job satisfaction, decreased confidence in one's boss, and a tendency to avoid unpleasant work environment.

Communication distortion can be caused by vertical and horizontal separation. Misunderstanding in the organisation or amongst managers and employees can result from poor communication channels. The manager must ensure that accurate information is disseminated across departments. Within a school situation communication channels and procedures including information books, internal circulars, and staff-meetings can effect good communication with role-players or stakeholders.

In addition to the above, Squelch and Lemmer (1994) presents common causes of conflict in a school, thus, incompatible goals occur for a variety of reasons, including, a clash of personalities, as when intense, highly energetic teacher (Type A) has to work in a team with a slower, less intense teacher (Type B), personal values, such as diverging ideas on discipline or different perceptions of the same situation. They add that the principal may, for instance, regard written reports as important whereas teachers view the extra paper work as bureaucratic "red tape".

School goal that differ from a teacher's objectives, such as when a highly individualistic teacher finds school rules and regulations to be an imposition on his or her professional autonomy can cause conflict, as well as limited resources such as having to share a classroom or insufficient funds. Incompatible goals, such as the development of school's sports facilities at the expense of cultural clubs can also trigger conflict.

In addition to this view Henkin et al. (2000) acknowledge incompatibilities among professionals with expert orientations, administrators with bureaucratic orientation, and students and parents, and referent publics with varying expectations for schools as educational and social institutions suggest continuities in terms of intensity and extent of conflict at school sites. New participatory realities of site-based managed schools may manifest benefits resulting from change and, concurrently, contribute to the conflict accompanying change. In essence the participatory model of management is, at once, the solution to problems and the source of new problems.

From the foregoing deliberations it goes beyond no reasonable doubt that the teaching and learning culture has lost meaning and this will impact negatively on end of year results and moreover, the school as a whole. It is the responsibility of the Department of Education to ensure that learners learn under healthy and conducive environment.

Although many of the conflicts arising from the reasons cited above seem to be simple, they have far-reaching implications on service delivery. Another factor worth noting is human relations causes of conflict which underlie the sort of problems that emerge from the more informal, interpersonal level of interaction. This is a remarkable area of conflict because, ultimately, all conflict is manifested at the human relations level, whether its cause lies at the distributive or at the structural level Tustin and Geldenhuys (2000). They add that the sources of interpersonal conflict are personal differences, information deficiency, role incompatibility, and environmental stress.

Under circumstances where teachers are not talking to each other no quality work will be done emanating from poor class attendance, no feedback given resulting from poor recordkeeping, poor time management- the syllabus will not be finished in good time therefore learners will have to sit for examination without prior revision. The teaching and learning environment becomes a battle of personal interest rather than facilitating learning.

2.4. Conflict management

Conflict management results as a combination of conflict and management. And the following definition can be derived as Gresse (2003) points out: "Conflict management is a process of chain of events, linked by cause and effect, accumulating over some time which can be planned and controlled of which management must take the lead and initiative."

Robbins (1990), as cited in Schwella et al. (1996), proposes that conflict is inevitable in organizations. Structural characteristics and incompatible personalities cause it. Robbins asserts that the manager's job is to create an environment in which conflict is healthy, but to prevent too high a degree of it, as this will be disruptive, chaotic and destroy cooperation.

Henken et al. (2000) argue that the extent to which organisational conflict may be channelled in constructive directions depends, in part on how it is managed or regulated. They further indicate that conflict management skills and strategies of organisational

executives, including principals of restructured schools, are important elements in the conflict regulation.

According to van der Westhuizen (1995) the methods used to manage all forms of tension, including severe conflict, between members of staff is of the utmost importance for the effective functioning of any organisation. It is against this background that the contemporary leader as well as educational manager be thoroughly trained in the effective resolution of conflict; otherwise it is not possible for him to do justice to the key role which he fills. This view is supported by Everard and Morris (1988), as cited in van der Westhuizen (1995) that the ability to handle conflict is a key factor in managerial success.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994) share the same sentiments stating that:"In general, members of the so-called service profession, such as teaching, are not trained in conflict management skills. They are trained primarily in the development of helping skills. However, if conflict in the schools is to be managed, educational managers and teachers will have to develop the skills needed to minimise or manage it".

In addition to these approaches are those observed by Coser (1967), the disputants, he reports, can turn to violence, in order to destroy the opponents or to hurt them sufficiently so that they acquiesce. Or the disputants can overtly or tacitly agree on symbols (such as taking a vital fort or rail link) for one side's defeat.

Kriesberg (1992) agrees that disputants can manage conflict violently, imposing their will on the opponent. Yet he emphasises they can also compromise, withdraw or convert the opponent. In this last option, which is similar to Pruitt and Syna's (1985) competitive approach, one disputant convinces the other to accept and seek what the disputant wants.

We find also that the conflict issue and the context of the conflict affects the choice of the management style. For example, Renwick (1975b) found that disputants were apt to choose confrontation on substantive issues such as salaries, promotions and performance appraisal. In conflict over issues of personal habits or mannerisms, they were apt to rely on compromise.

From the above discussion it stands to reason that the problem is not conflict itself, but the way people deal with it that matters most. If handled proactively it will breed success.

Conflict requires stakeholders to acknowledge the prevailing environment and confront it head-on. Although confrontation is sometimes damaging, it invokes people's senses to accede to the call. If management is aware of conflicting issues it is obliged to delve down to its causes so as to prevent abhor able and destructive consequences.

Conflict Management: The Role of Third Parties

While the disputants themselves can manage their conflict, so can third parties. Typically these parties intervene because resolution of the conflict is to their benefit, they are called upon, or they are expected to assist in the conflict resolution. In all of these situations, third parties are apt to become involved only when the disputants are unable or unwilling to handle the conflict.

When third parties intervene, they employ a rich repertoire of approaches. Often they proceed in a trial-and error fashion, trying one technique, then developing and relying on another. As they do so, a mixture of goals-harmony versus fairness, organizational effectiveness, or long-term stability-contribute to the variety of the techniques as do differences in the third-parties' experiences, demands of others, cultural differences, the nature(s) of the conflict and the disputants' needs. Usually managers have conflict management as a major priority; consequently, they may adopt leadership styles that serve this goal.

Researchers have found that managers use autocratic as well as participative approaches to conflict. For example, managers encourage negotiation, arbitrate, mediate, and enforce a truce, offer incentives, and even overlook conflicts Karambayya & Brett, (1989); Phillips, (1988); Putman (1994); Shapiro & Rosen (1994). With a more structural approach, Aldrich (1971) and Kahn (1965) note that leaders can respond to intergroup conflict by expanding the boundaries of one group so that the opposing group members are incorporated within the group. Burton (1969) points out an opposite tack, reducing the interaction and communication between disputants.

Robbins (1974) mixes the authoritarian and participative options, leaning somewhat in the authoritarian direction. The manager, he believes, can attack the conflict structurally by transferring a disputant, creating buffer positions, setting up formalised appeal systems, establishing rules that disputes are to be taken to the HRM group, or on occasion, forcing contact between the disputing parties.

2.5. Conflict management strategies

People handle conflict in different ways. It depends on many variables in the situation, that is, who the parties are; the nature of their relationship. The main reason to engage in conflict is to reach a resolution. Without a resolution conflict merely becomes an opportunity to recycle old arguments and disagreements. Gresse (2003) postulates five behavioural intentions or ways to handle conflict.

Competing: The competing style of management is characterised by the assertive, uncooperative and power tactics where the manager tries to attain one's concern at the other party's expense by means of authority. Competing can be appropriate when an immediate solution is required in a crisis situation.

Accommodating: With the Accommodating style, the manager is unassertive, cooperative and satisfying the other's concerns above own's. The manager may make the other party feel good in the mean-time, but does little to resolve conflict. It is thus almost a win-lose strategy.

Avoiding: The Avoiding style calls for the decision to do nothing about the situation.

The manager ignores the situation assuming that conflict will fade away without being personally involved. He, thus, therefore becomes unassertive and uncooperative, neglecting one's aside or postponing the noising of conflict issues.

According to Tosi et al. (1994) although avoiding conflict is a useful alternative, excessive avoidance can be very damaging to an organisation. Therefore, it calls upon managers to be flexible enough to use a particular style when it best suits the situation.

Collaborating: Collaborating is the ultimate win-win solution. The manager who utilises collaborating strategy combines a high concern for the interests of others with a high

concern for self as well. By being assertive and cooperative, the manager attempts to fully satisfy both parties' concerns. Furthermore, it is characterised by open and honest discussion among the parties, active listening and careful deliberation over a full range of alternatives to finding a solution that is in favour of them all.

Compromising: Compromising requires each party to give up something valuable. It is the approach taken by management as well as labour negotiations. It seeks for a middle ground in order to partially satisfy both parties.

Tosi et al. (1994) presents other conflict management strategies that could be used including confrontation techniques, improving organisation practices and special role structure.

From Zide's (2006) point of view, conflict in the workplace can be effectively settled and, when resolved it can be a powerful contributor to a sustained competitive advantage. In addition to that, managers should be seen to be re-affirming the organisation's continuous commitment to conflict management, thereby minimising hostility between themselves and their staff.

There is no good or bad style of handling conflict, hence the context and situation dictates to the manager which one should be applied. It stands to reason that managing conflict requires management to be proactive and move out of the comfort zone and positional power and be sensitive to the people's issues.

Conflict in the work environment is handled by the consistent application of policies, procedures, employment contracts, company rules and regulations, legislation, custom and practices and recognition agreements as well as discipline and grievance procedures Zide (2006).

In a school context, a principal will deal with conflicts among subordinates and between subordinates and other stakeholders using the following procedure. He or she should investigate the cause and obtain evidence from both parties and at the same time expose both to the truth and guard against fault-finding. When managing conflict legislative framework, for instance, the Employment Equity Act Section 17 & 18, and SACE code of conduct should be applied.

Collaborative decision-making in educational systems is frequently characterised by conflict and disagreement, given differing perspectives and opinions among participants, and differing interest in the status quo. School principals, charged with facilitators' roles in locally managed schools, are challenged to address resulting conflicts in ways that yield functional synergies and constructive outcomes which enable schools to respond to community needs Henkin et al. (2000). With resolution conflict can be rewarding and exciting and can move things forward.

A number of studies have been conducted in the use of different interpersonal conflict-handling styles Cosier & Ruble (1983, 1985). In general, these studies claim that people tend to use collaboration more often than other styles, whereas forcing and avoidance tend to be associated with decreases in the constructive use of conflict, negative feelings from others, and unfavourable self-evaluations of performance and abilities. The effect of accommodation and compromise tend to be mixed. Kozan (1989) found that managers in Turkey and Jordan demonstrated a resemblance to each other and to their U.S. counterparts in reporting a clear preference for the collaborative style in handling conflict. Some evidence that national culture influences the style of handling interpersonal conflict was also demonstrated by Ting-Toomey et al. (1991).

According to Macintosh & Stevens (2007) conflict management strategies refer to the specific behaviour patterns one applies in conflict situations e.g. Pruitt and Rubin (1986); Rahim (1983). It is important at this point to distinguish between conflict strategies and conflict style. The literature frequently uses the term conflict style to mean both an enduring disposition (a preferred approach that is relatively stable across situations and time), and a specific behavioural approach applied in a specific conflict situation. However, several authors have made a distinction, arguing a style, a general preferred approach, should be distinguished from strategies or intentions chosen to match a specific conflict context Knapp et al.(1988); Pruitt (1983). Many researchers have settled on five major approaches/strategies for handling conflict determined by one's standing on dual concerns: concern for self and concern for others e.g. Dual Concern Theory, Rahim and Bonoma (1979). These five strategies are integrative/problem solving (high concern for self/high concern for other), obliging/accommodating (low self/high other), dominating/contending (high self/low other), avoiding (low self/low other), and compromise (moderate self/

moderate other). Integrative (problem solving) strategies attempt to protect the interest of both parties resulting in more win/win outcomes for both parties. Many behavioural scientists believe that an integrative, problem-solving approach is most appropriate in complex conflict situations. This style requires the open exchange of information in an effort to find unique solutions that are acceptable to both parties. An integrative strategy is likely in a more relational exchange context, where the importance of protecting both parties' interest is influenced by past and future interactions. An obliging strategy, basically giving in to other party, is appropriate when you feel you are wrong, have a weak position or the issue is not very important, and when, maintaining a relationship is important. A dominating strategy might be appropriate when you have more power, the issue is important to you or may significantly cost you in some way, and you feel it is necessary to be assertive. An avoiding strategy might be appropriate where the issue is trivial or where the costs associated with confronting the issue outweigh the benefits. Compromise might be appropriate when parties have equal power, consensus can not be reached, and when other styles (e.g. integrative) do not work.

2.6. Conflict management techniques

Wessels (2005) asserts that managing conflict requires certain skills and techniques that, although easily understood, may not be easy to implement. He adds that one may think of conflict management as an art that benefits everyone through learning the skills, but it takes practice implementing the techniques.

According to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (2003) three techniques can be utilized, namely:

An appeal to common objective: An appeal to staff members of a public institution who have diverse political points of view and cultures, to work towards a common objective, the interaction between conflicting members is emphasised, bringing them closer to conciliation.

Organization redesign

When institutions function in isolation of each other, there is often conflict in the coordination of activities. Management can use some of the following techniques to overcome the problems.

Grouping: the institution can redesign the organisation so that points of coordination are reduced. Every institution is then allowed independent access to resources.

Buffering: a buffer can be placed between divisions, for example, a procedure manual that determines work flow speed.

Contact points: individuals and units can be trained and appointed to promote the flow of information and communication between members of conflicting groups. If knowledge on the other party's social norms, work methods, is obtained, conflict tends to decrease.

Organisational arrangements

By using organisation arrangements such as lines of command, the public manager can refer conflict to higher levels of authority. In addition, Rossouw (2004) presents dispute and grievance resolution procedures with special reference to grievances, conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

2.7. Golden rules

Zide (2006) points out that apart from conflict management techniques, there are golden rules of conflict management.

Listens to others and the other side: Managing conflict centres on the principle of *audi alter partem*, that is a good manager listens to both parties involved in the conflict. In managing conflict, one could mediate, intervene, and give a ruling and support the implementation of the decision taken.

Investigate the circumstance carefully: Considering alternatives from all angles will help the manager to identify various ideas, approaches and solution surrounding the conflict situation and will therefore not make premature judgement.

Keep calm, do not be emotional: Extreme emotions are likely to hinder effective communication. One will be lured into irrational and subjective thinking process and impose premature judgements. It is, therefore, imperative to keep calm in order to stay focused.

Concentrate on the facts only: Focus on the problem and the issue at hand and try by all means not to personalize issues as this could lead to personal attacks and blame. It reflects

pessimist manager who only sees dark side of things and proves to be rigid and short-sighted.

Remain Neutral: It is of vital importance to remain neutral in a conflict environment because employees need to express feelings and thoughts about issues at stake. Therefore, the manager should remain neutral so as to encourage the subordinates to box forward new ideas to solve the problem.

Identify possible background influence: Unresolved conflict from the past will always breed conflict. It will even become the festering of the wound rather than healing it. It follows that if the root causes are identified, preventative measures will be taken.

Do not threaten the security of either party: Posing threats to employees will not solve the problem but aggravate the conflict. A good manager creates a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere for discussion. By creating an enabling environment will encourage employees to be open and honest. When negotiations get tough, the tendency to attack the other party should be avoided.

Focus on the need for each party to cooperate: During negotiations, the opportunity for continued cooperation should be created because the resolution relies to a greater extent on their interdependence. Win-win solution should be fostered as such.

2.8. Impact of conflict on service delivery

Chung and Schneider (2002) state that higher levels of experienced role conflict will be related to other negative employees and organisational outcomes such as lower job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions and absenteeism, and fewer organisational citizenship behaviours.

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of South Africa of 1996 and the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997 made an important contribution to a new attitude amongst public servants and citizens regarding service delivery. Improving the delivery of public service means redressing the imbalance of the past and, while maintaining continuity service to all levels of society focusing on meeting the needs of the 40% of South Africans who are living below the poverty line and those, as well as the disabled, and black

women living in rural areas, who have previously been disadvantaged in terms of service delivery.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery the (Batho Pele) outlines eight principles including, consulting users of services, setting service standards, increasing access, ensuring courtesy, providing more and better information, increasing openness and transparency, remedying mistakes and failures and getting the best possible value for money.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Section 195 (1), serves as a reference point to guide the conduct of all public officials in every sphere of government and all government departments. It provides that public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution: services must be provided impartially, fairly, equally and without bias. People's needs must be encouraged to participate in policy-making. Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. Public administration must be accountable.

The lack of transparency and accountability especially among all educators pose a challenge not only to the recipients of services but to the Department of Education as well. According to Van der Waldt (2004) transparency means those decisions taken, and their reinforcement is done in a manner that follows the rules and regulations. He further indicates that firstly, information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement, and secondly, that information transmitted in easily understandable forms and media.

Van der Waldt (2004) states clearly that accountability is a key requirement of good governance not only to governmental institutions, but also the private sector and civil society organisations; and it must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders.

The principal is the head of the school the same way as the head of the family. Should this prominent figure act in a way that collude his expected role he will be delving down to his downfall.

In support of the view held above Mda and Mothata (2000) upheld the principles of accountability and transparency in which schools should be managed in reference to the White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) (1995) stating that:

“The restoration of the culture of teaching, learning and management involves the creation of accountability. This means the development of a common purpose or mission among students, teachers, principals and governing bodies, with clear, mutually agreed and understood responsibilities and lines of cooperation and accountability”.

It is constitutionally, socially and morally unjust for educators to continue to draw cheques at month-ends at the expense of learners who require good quality education but fail to do so on the basis of unhealthy school life prevailing. The teaching and learning process suffers as a result of continuous engagement in futile problem-solving exercises owing to lack of necessary skills, attitudes regarding effective key solutions to conflict management and resolution strategies.

South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 preamble upholds the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organization, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State

In everyday language, conflict has strong negative connotation. It seems to imply anger, direct confrontations, and harsh damaging behaviour. However, conflict in work settings operate like the proverbial “double-edged sword”. Depending on why it occurs and how it develops, conflict can yield beneficial as well as harmful effects Zide (2006).

Baron and Greenberg (1999) advocate the positive and negative effects of conflict as follows: Conflict often yields strong negative emotions and can be stressful. It frequently interferes with communication between individuals, groups, or divisions. It diverts attention and needed energies away from major tasks and efforts to attain key organisational goals. Conflict between groups often encourages their leaders to shift from participative to authoritarian styles; the reason being that groups experiencing stress require firm direction. Managers need to adopt more controlling tactics when conflict develops and moreover open communication lines so as to keep his or her subordinates well-informed about current issues.

Gibson, et al. (1975) as cited in Roux (1999) states that an individual who is confronted with conflict usually experiences indecisiveness, emotional tension, dissatisfaction, as well as psychological abnormalities. In addition to this argument Lippert (1982) as cited in Roux (1999) outlines the following effects of role conflict on institutional performance and he notes that the role conflict causes a loss of energy in the execution of functions, destroys employee morale, polarises individuals and groups, widens differences in individuals and groups, is detrimental to good cooperation between individuals, brings about irresponsible behaviour in individuals, brings about suspicion and mistrust between individuals and causes a decline in productivity.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994) indicates that there is a price to be paid for conflict both by the individuals involved and the school as an organisation. Feelings such as satisfaction, motivation, trust and unity are likely to be negatively affected. Regardless of the outcome of conflict its presence may cost the school time, energy, productivity and even money.

The school environment may also contribute to bullying behaviour. Examples are competitiveness throughout the schools, discipline that is exercised by the teacher dominance. Conflicts of interest also affect academic achievement.

Although conflict has a disruptive impact on organisation it can sometime yield benefit as well. The most important benefits of conflict include the following: conflict serve to bring problems that have previously been ignored into the open. When there is no open conflict we carry on as though things are all right even if we know they are not. Conflict motivates people on both sides of an issue to know and understand each other's positions more fully.

Conflict often encourages the consideration of new ideas and approaches, facilitating innovation and change. Conflict enhances group loyalty, increasing motivation and performance within the groups or units involved Baron and Greenberg (1999).

According to Burger and Schwella (1996), holding to the interaction view, an organization without conflict is static, apathetic and unresponsive to the need for change. Conflict can improve effectiveness by stimulating change and improving decision-making processes.

Conclusion

Managing conflict centres on the principle of *audi alterum partem* (listening to both parties involved in the conflict). In managing conflict one could mediate (listens to both partner's side) intervene, give a ruling, support the implementation of the decision taken. In managing conflict the manager must emphasize the core-business of the institution and need for existence. Every conflict addressed must be recorded.

DETAILED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are the existing structures and processes for conflict management in place for the provision of quality and effective delivery of services?
2. How can one detect the prevalence of conflict at the workplace?
3. What is the role of the principal in conflict situations?
4. How best can conflict be resolved in the workplace?
5. Why are methods used to manage all forms of conflict crucial?
6. Do models applied by researchers provide the most recent and valuable solution to problems faced by the organisation?

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology and design that was followed in the research process. The chapter also identifies the target group, sampling method and the research technique.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a plan or blue print of how one intends to conduct research Mouton (2001). A research design is a plan for the collection and analysis of data with the aim of answering the research question Rossouw (2003).

The study applied a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach. The use of evaluation research is also supported by Mouton (2001) who writes that implementation evaluation research aims to answer the question whether an intervention (programme, therapy, policy or strategy) has been properly implemented, whether the target group has been adequately covered and whether the intervention was implemented as designed.

The main aim of outcome or product evaluation studies is to establish whether the intended and unintended outcomes of the programme have materialised. This would include immediate or short-term outcomes, as well as long-term outcomes or so-called impact of the programme.

Quantitative research is associated with analytical research and its purpose is to arrive at a universal statement. In quantitative methodology, a researcher assigns numbers to observation Brynard and Hanekom (1997).

Qualitative methodology refers to research that produces descriptive data, generally people's own written or spoken words. Usually no numbers are assigned to observation Brynard and Hanekom (1997).

For the purposes of the proposed study, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were applied. The one methodology deals with raw statements made by people (qualitative) whereas the other one's point of departure is the analysis of cause and effects of the raw statements made by people in their natural settings. Qualitative research can pave the way for quantitative studies of the same subject.

Mouton (2001) presents content analysis as studies that analyse the content of texts and documents (such as letters, speeches, and annual reports). Content refers to words, meaning pictures, symbols, themes or any message that can be communicated.

3.3 Study area

The study was conducted at Mothlomeng village in Bolobedu South. The research was conducted at the most hectic period of the year when mid-year examinations were written, 1 May 2010 .Although the principal granted the researcher permission to conduct interviews, the interviews were actually not conducted at the school premises, but at the educators' own time and at their respective places of residence. The researcher is of the opinion that teachers experience problems with regard to conflict management strategies and techniques, grievance, resolution procedures and interventions that will enhance a healthy working environment.

3.4. Target population and sampling

Population target for the study included the deputy principal, CS1 educators, learner representative, and members of the community and educator unions. Salkind (2006) argues that “When results are generalisable, they can be applied to different populations with the same characteristics in different settings. He further points out that when results are not generalisable (when the sample selected is not an accurate representation of the population) the results are applicable only to the people in the same sample who participated in the original research; not to any others.”

3.5. Sample size and selection method

Salkind (2006) defines a sample as a subset of a population. Rossouw (2003) notes that “One of the biggest problems that face the content analyser is the potential amount of information that is available for analysis. Because all data cannot be coded completely, it needs to be reduced to a manageable size before the problem can be investigated in any situation.

People who were targeted in the study were CS1 educators, 1 Head of Department, and the principal of the school. The sample also included the Area Manager, the chairperson of

School Governing Body (SGB), educator unions and Representative Council for Learners (RCL).

Purposive sampling was an appropriate technique as the researcher thinks and believes that the respondents possess relevant and reliable information required for the study because they are directly involved in the conflict environment.

The primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgment of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. The researcher only goes to only those people who in his/her opinion are likely to have the required information and be willing to share it. He adds that "This type of sampling is extremely useful when you want to construct a historical reality, describe a phenomenon or develop something about which only a little is known Kumar (1999)."

3.6. Data collection methods

Research methodology deals with how to collect data and the processing thereof within the framework of the research process Bryanard & Hanekom (1997). There are two methodologies for collecting data, namely: quantitative and qualitative methods. Both methods use specific techniques to collect data, *inter alia*, literature reviews, interview, questionnaires and direct observations. Instruments such as attitude and rating scales have been developed to measure reliability of data collection. In turn, the reliability and validity of measuring instruments have to be tested.

3.7 Procedure for data collection

The researcher obtained a covering letter from the university so as to facilitate accessing information from school. This letter was presented to the circuit manager for approval. A verbal greenlight was granted. Appointments were made in advance to avoid inconvenience.

A. Interview

In order to gain more insight into the issues pertaining to impact of inadequate conflict management skills, the researcher used interviews in order to solicit raw data and explanation of conflicts and its management. Structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires were utilised simultaneously for data collection.

The researcher designed 10 pre-determined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule. Interview questions were informed by the problem of the statement, objectives and significance of the study as well as the research questions. These questions are attached to the research report as Annexure A and are titled ‘interview questions’.

The researcher intended to interview 13 out of 26 (that is 50%) of the stakeholders of the school, but eventually managed to interview only 7 due to time constraints. The age of respondents range from 20-25 and 40-50 and 51. I must indicate that it has not been an easy exercise to secure appointments due to their tight schedules. Included in the 7 interviewees is the deputy principal of the school, 1 grade eleven learner and representative council for learners, 1 SMT member, 1 old and 1 new CS1 educators. The unavailability of the circuit manager was because of his tight schedule. The interview session took approximately 20 minutes per interviewee.

B. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from post level 1 educators. The rationale behind the choice of this technique was that educators at this level are the foot soldiers of the institution. Members of the school community or stakeholders of Modipe High School were selected to furnish the required information on the subject concerned. The exercise took approximately three weeks.

C. Documentation review

Documentation review was planned to be used as another method of research. The following documents were intended to be quested for perusal. They include the financial statements, log book, time register, and a record of matriculation results, South African Council for Educators (SACE), South African Schools Act (SASA), information book and internal circulars. Unfortunately the principal was not available to assist on such matters he was held up in meetings with the circuit managers and district managers.

3.8 Data analysis methods

Van der Waldt et al (2002) note: "After the data have been gathered, they must be analysed to form supporting statements for the conclusions or inferences of the research. They further indicate that this analysis can be carried out in quantitative (statistical) or qualitative manner (concept analysis, textual analysis, phenomenon analysis). The determinant of research, the purpose of the specific research strategy and the type of data influence the choice.

The researcher determined and selected from the general field exactly that data which are required for conflict management and basic guidelines, applying techniques to the specific needs of participants, patterns of conflict, understanding their reactions, identifying the causes, preventing conflicts from developing and escalating and applying corrective resolution techniques.

3.9. Delimitation of study

The survey was conducted at Mothlomeng village in May 2010. This was the most unfortunate period to collect data. Respondents were highly committed and their schedules tight as learners were engaged in the mid-year examinations. The circuit managers, the chairperson of School Governing Body were not available for interview due to their tight schedules. Factors that nearly hampered the research project include time constraints, travelling and collection of completed questionnaires as the researcher was not residing in the respondents' vicinity. Female educators were overwhelmed by fear and initially were not willing to cooperate. But after the concerted effort by the researcher to indicate the value of their contributions they were willing to cooperate and requested to complete the questionnaires instead.

3.10. Ethical considerations

The researcher issued letters of consent to various respondents prior the interview and questionnaire process. The letter indicated clearly that the information required would be treated with the strictest confidentiality. The purpose of the study and benefit of the research were also clarified.

3.11. Conclusion

The main instruments that were used are the interview and questionnaire. The main objective of using the two tactics was to get to the root of the problem, which is the root causes of conflicts within the school environment and to find out from the respondents what strategies could be applied in order to minimise conflicts and foster a healthy working environment.

CHAPTER FOUR -PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

Chapter four deals with the presentation, data analysis and integration of results to the overall research. This will be followed by statistical analysis whereby the scores will be illustrated. This will be followed by a summary.

4.2. Qualitative data analysis: Questionnaires responses

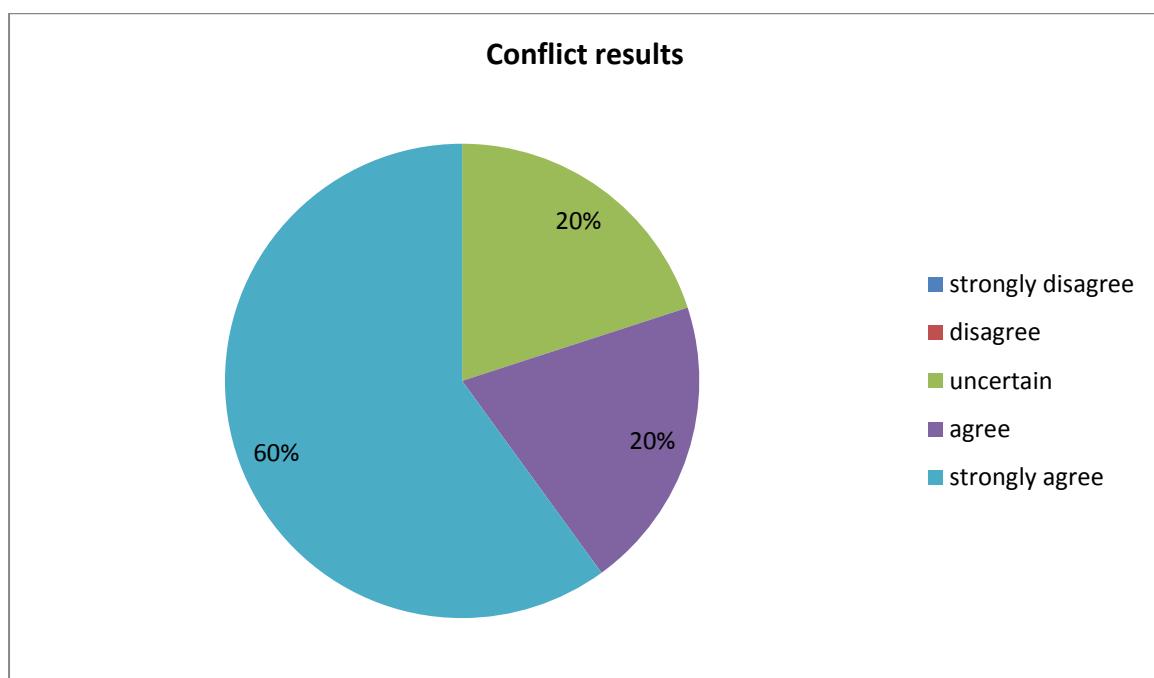
The following represents data analysis based on the responses from the questionnaire. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to six educators of which four were retrieved. Each respondent was given 10 questions to respond to and all the questions were responded to. The focus of the questions in the questionnaire was aimed at testing the research questions based on the problem statement.

Each statement had five response categories, namely:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Uncertain
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree.

4.2.1. Conflict results in time consumption and poor working relationships

Figure 4.2.1.



The pie chart above illustrates that 20% of the respondents were uncertain whereas another 20% of the respondents agreed that conflict result in time consumption and poor working relationships. The reasons behind their responses were that educators tend to devote much of their time solving their problems instead of teaching learners and will thus become unproductive due to unhealthy work relations.

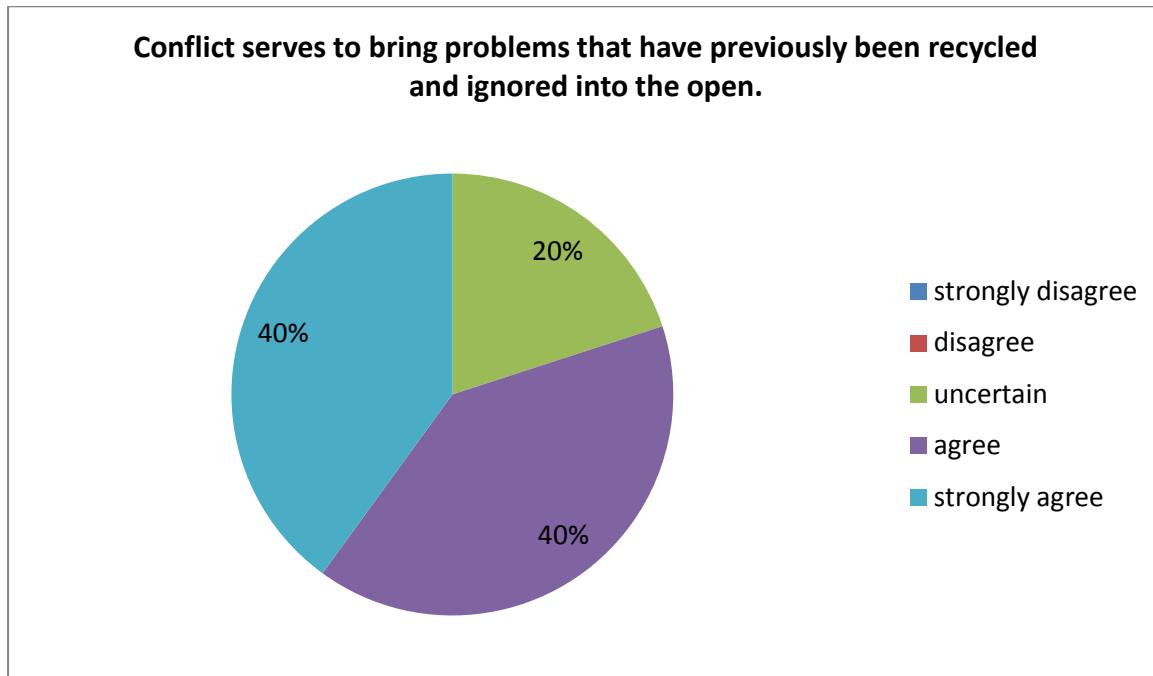
In cases where educators devote much of their time solving problems instead of teaching learners will add more failure rate to the school rather than improving results. They become unproductive due to unhealthy work relations as a result.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994) support this view stating that feelings such as satisfaction, motivation, and trust unity are likely to be negatively affected. Regardless of the outcome of conflict its presence may cost the school time, energy, productivity and even more money. Contrary to the view held by Squelch and Lemmer is Lippert's (1982) as cited in Roux (1999) holds a decending view stating that role conflict causes a loss of energy in the execution of functions, destroys employee morale, polarises individuals and groups. Again Lippert as cited in Roux (1999) shares the same sentiments stating that role conflict is detrimental to good cooperation between individuals.

One scholar points out the cause whereas the other the effect.

4.2.2. Conflict serves to bring problems that have previously been recycled and ignored into the open.

Figure 4.2.2.



The pie chart above indicates that 20% of the respondents were uncertain, 40% agreed and 40% strongly agreed that hidden feelings and emotions burst if conflict is not attended to. In other words, the same problem never fades away. A time comes when it surfaces and explodes. The fact of the matter is that it exists and non-proactive attendance will result in regrettable behaviour.

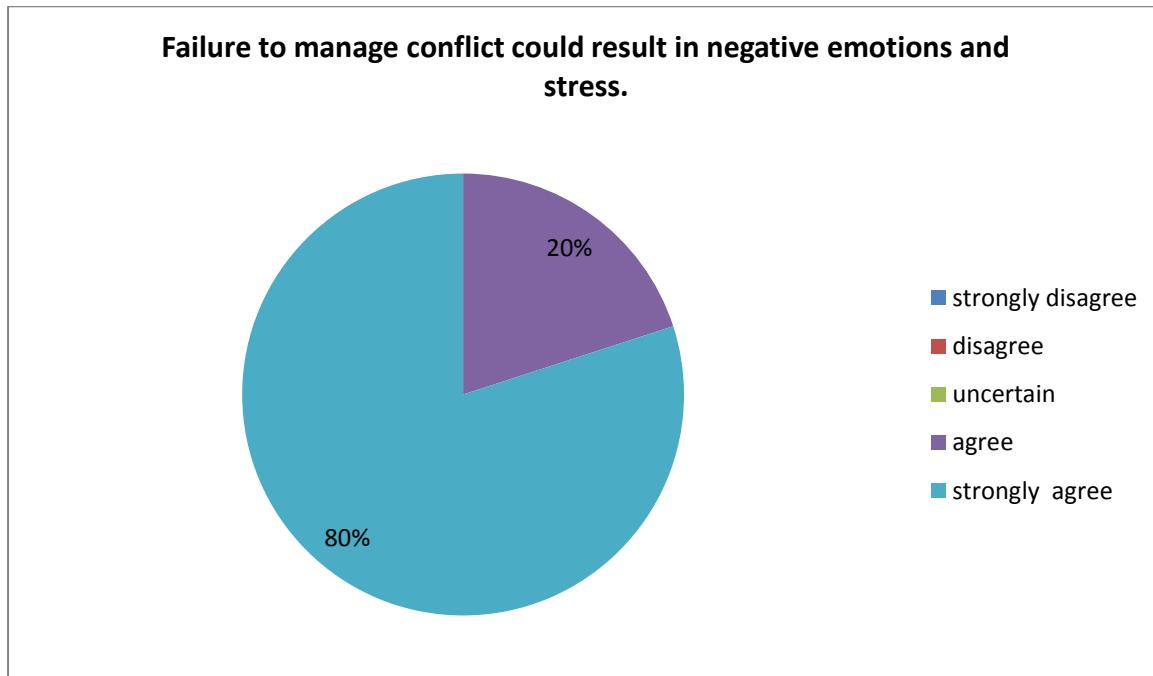
Conflicts bring problems previously ignored and recycled into the open. Baron and Greenberg (1999) claim that when there is no open conflict we carry on as if we know they are not. Conflict motivates people on both sides of an issue to know and understand each other's position more fully.

4.2.3. Failure to manage conflict could result in negative emotions and stress.

The pie chart below presents that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed at 80% followed by agreed respondents category at 20% that if a conflict is not effectively managed it could breed negative emotions and stress and that could impact negatively on the work

performance of educators because unhealthy mind in unhealthy body leads to unnecessary depression and tension.

Figure 4.2.3.

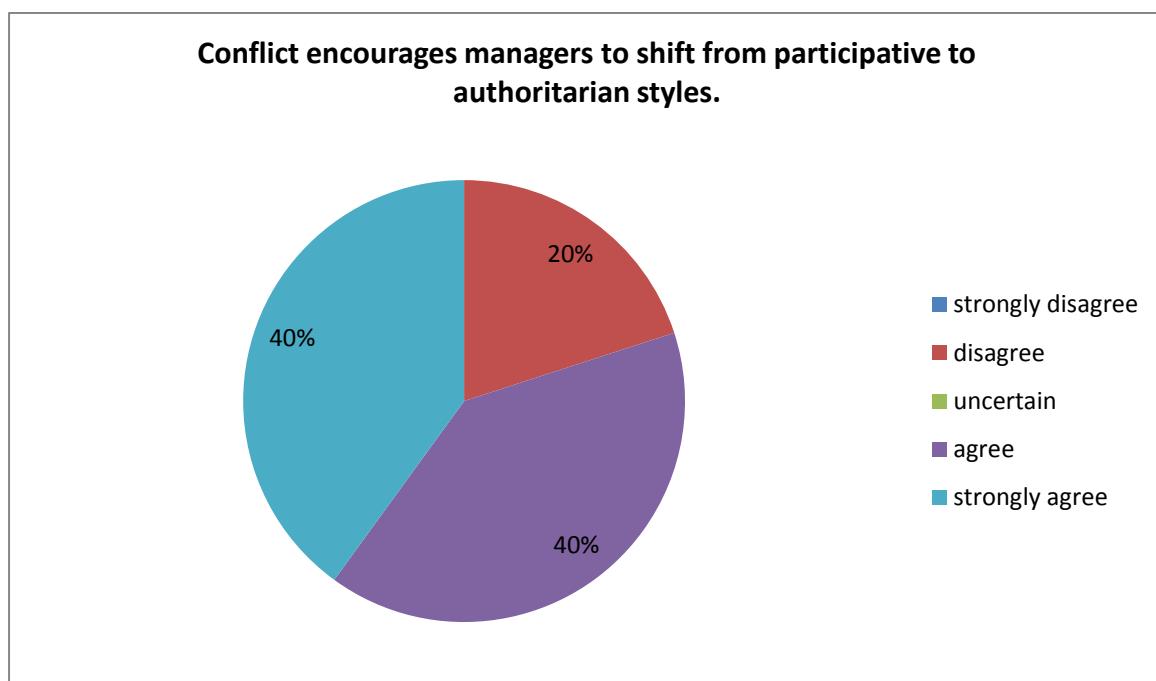


When educators acknowledge the circumstances prevailing at the school as detrimental to effective teaching and learning, then they can delve down to the causes of conflict so as to come up with possible solution to the problems at hand in order to prevent the negative outcomes. Baron and Greenberg (1999) declare that when there is no open conflict we carry on as though things are all right even if we know they are not. Conflict motivates people on both sides of an issue to know and understand each other's positions more fully.

On the other hand Zide (2006) also notes that when management is experiencing or is made aware of the conflicting indicators, it is obliged to do something about it, if follows that non-proactive attendance to them not only leads and promotes the festering of the wound, but endangers the work environment of its employees, resources and the activities of people.

4.2.4. Conflict encourages managers to shift from participative to authoritarian styles.

Figure 4.2.4.



The pie chart above illustrates that 20% of educators disagreed stating that conflict does not encourage managers to shift from participative to authoritarian styles. It depends on the character of the manager in question. 40% of educators strongly agreed indicating that a manager who is not cooperative, consultative is not prepared to face challenges instead he/she keeps on giving instructions, imposing decisions because they feel insecure and think that their authority is undermined. The remaining 40% agreed that managers tend to enforce unilateral decisions following their failure to minimise or manage conflict.

Figure 4.2.5. Consultation brings about efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace.

The pie chart below shows that 20% of the respondents agreed that consultation brings about efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace, stating that problem-shared is problem-halved. If one consults, some of the problems become lighter and seemingly will be solved. Eighty percent strongly agreed, pointing out that people feel acknowledged and valued when consulted beforehand and therefore will be effective in carrying out their duties to the desired satisfaction.

Figure 4.2.5.

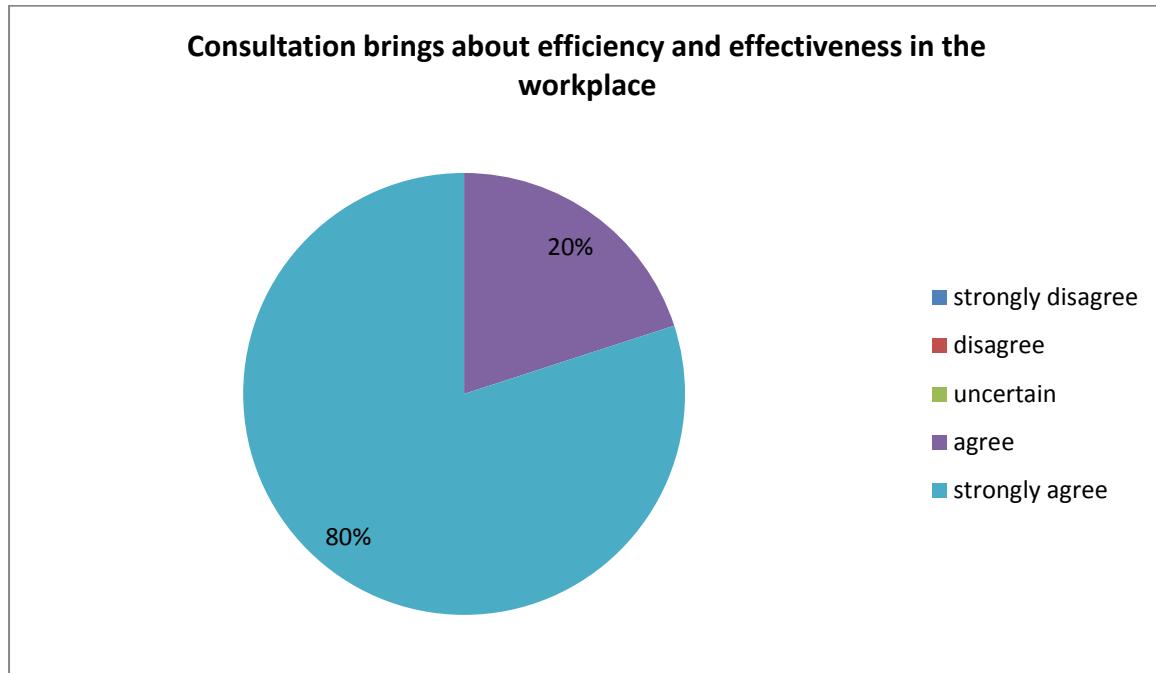
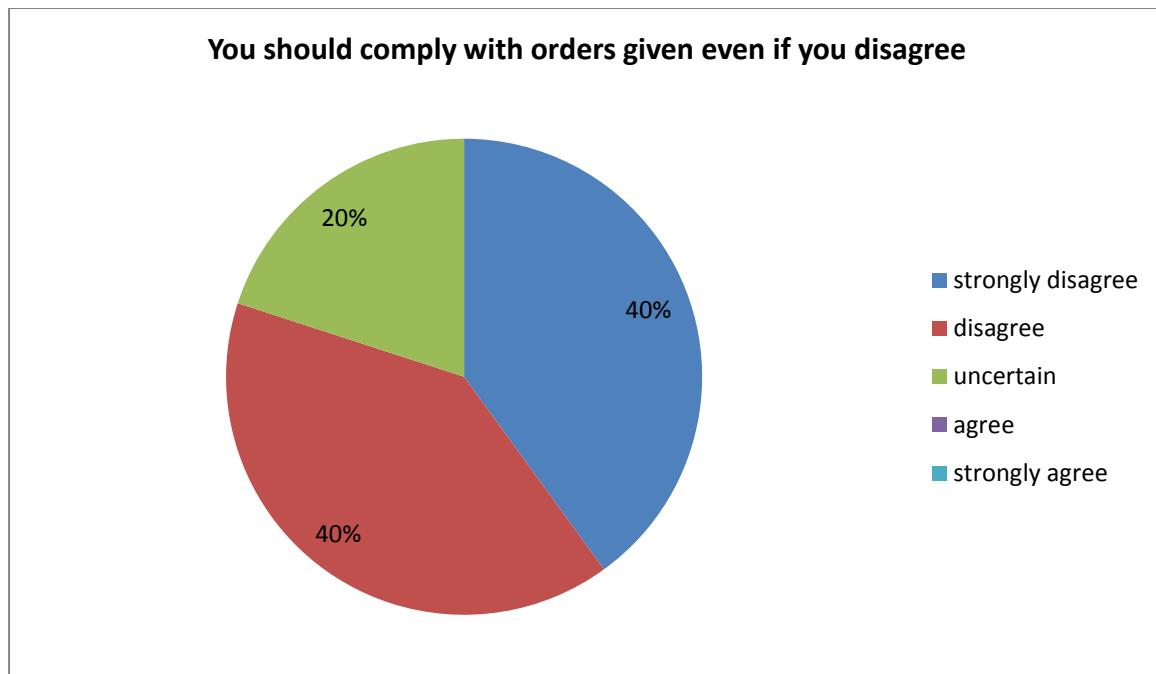


Figure 4.2.6. You should comply with orders given even if you disagree.

Figure 4.2.6.

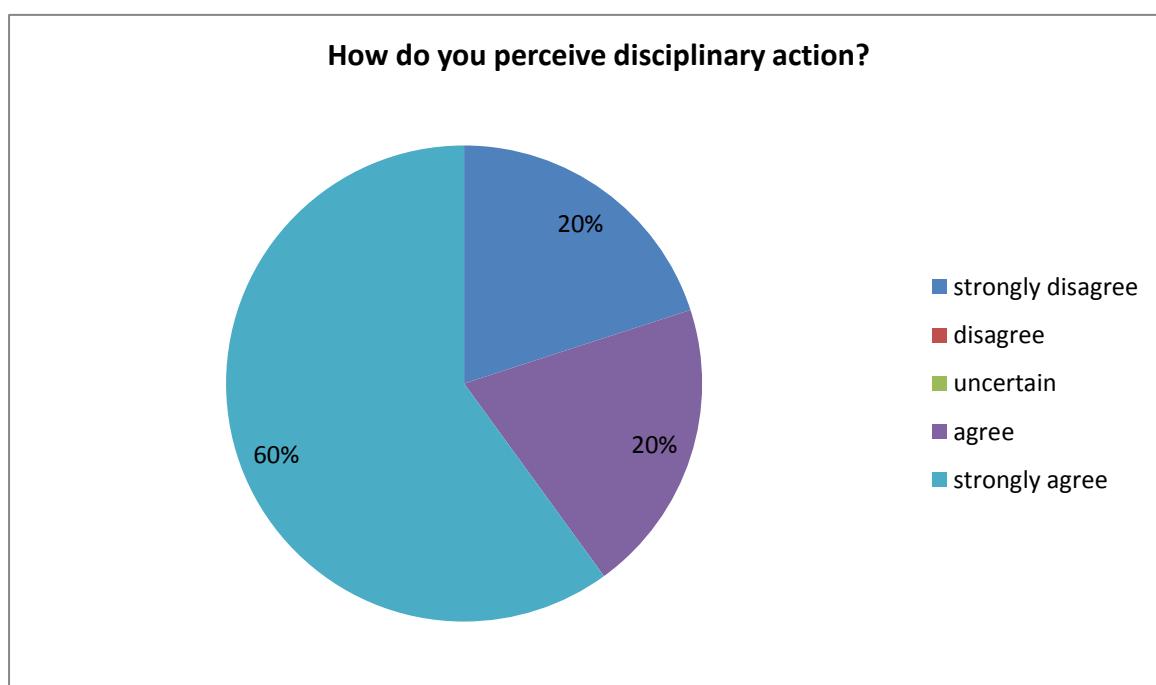


The pie chart above indicates that 40% of the respondents strongly disagreed and another 40% disagreed that they do not have to comply with orders given if they disagree whereas 20% was uncertain as to whether one should comply with orders given or not.

The strongly disagree category indicates that if you are not comfortable with the orders given, the best thing to do is to raise your concern rather than doing something for the sake of compliance. Every person has the democratic right to reject something that is not pleasing. Workers should be given orders that are compliant to their work and policies of their department. Those falling into the disagreed category were of the opinion that one should be true to himself/herself.

Figure 4.2.7. How do you perceive disciplinary action?

Figure 4.2.7.



(a) Disciplinary action is a procedural measure.

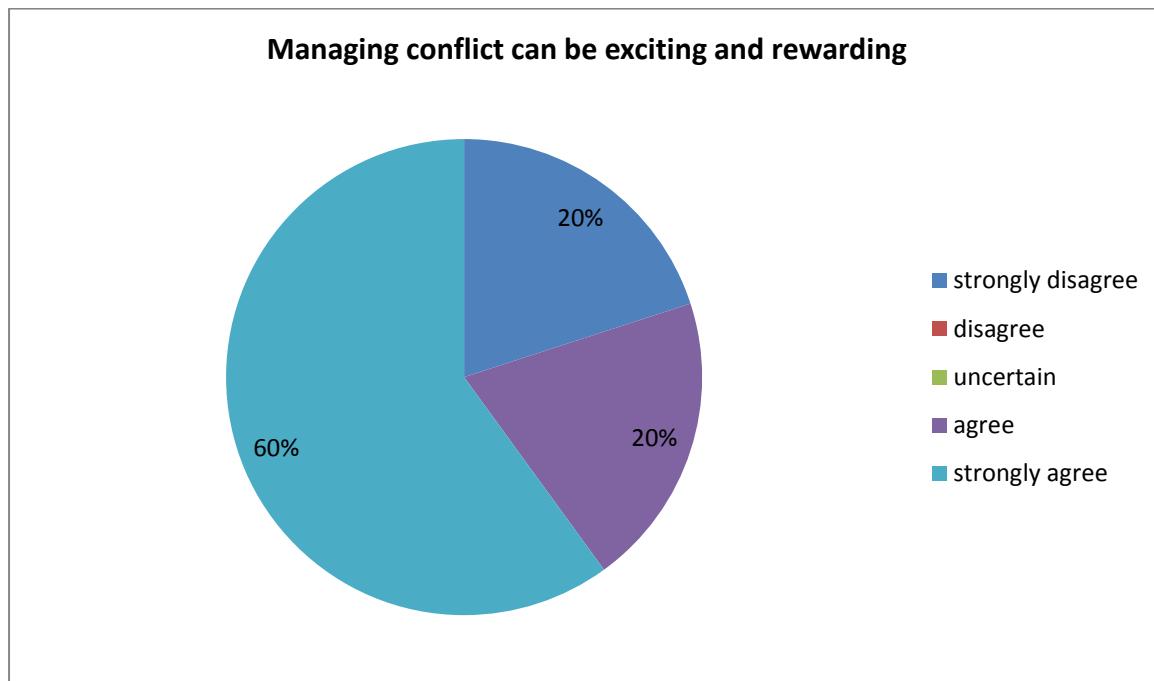
(b) Disciplinary action is a punishment.

The pie chart above depicts that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed, followed by 20% of the respondents agreeing that disciplinary action is a procedural measure and not a punishment. Therefore, disciplinary action is a corrective measure not a punishment aiming at correcting and changing unbecoming behaviour. 20% of the respondents strongly

disagreed on disciplinary action being a punishment stating that it only becomes a punishment if procedures are not followed.

Figure 4.2.8. Managing conflict can be exciting and rewarding

Figure 4.2.8.



The pie chart above illustrates that 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement indicating that managing conflict can never be exciting and rewarding. Apart from conflict having negative connotations it goes to the extent of being something coupled with unpleasant characteristics.

Another 20% of the respondents agreed with the statement pointing out that people in conflict do not agree with most things, but the skill which will be applied to resolve it will make it exciting. 60% of the respondents indicated that they strongly agree with the statement. The best way to manage conflict is to be able to identify the type and causes of conflict at stake. This will help the manager (principal in this instance) to resolve the problem amicably and make informed decisions.

4.2.9. General comments on conflict resolution at the workplace.

After a conflict has been reported, the parties in conflict should be brought together to discuss the issue. Each member should give his/her side of the story. The person handling the hearing should try to bring the two parties together.

4.3. Interview responses

4.3.1 The school has a history of strikes and conflicts among stakeholders.

The majority of the respondents (six out of seven) concurred with the question on the school's history of strikes and conflicts. One out of seven respondents differed stating that in every organisation there will always be conflicts, and Modipe High School is not an exception.

4.3.2. Deterioration of matric results and its contribution

Table 4.3.2.1 below indicates that five respondents agreed that the matriculation results were the worst when the school obtained a zero percent pass but they were gradually improving by at least one per cent until 54% was achieved. By that time the school was having grade 12 for the first time and educators did not have experience in teaching grade 12. One respondent indicated that there was a great improvement on the results. On the contrary, there is one respondent who indicated that the matric results deteriorated to the worst level in years.

| State of results | No | % |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|

| | | |
|---------------------|---|------|
| Worst but improving | 5 | 71.4 |
| Improving | 1 | 14.3 |
| Worst | 1 | 14.3 |

TOTAL = 7 100

Respondents have mixed feelings about matric results owing to the fact that some educators were not part of the history because they were not employed by then. Old educators witnessed the events for the past ten years. Those who said the results were the worst but improving were old educators whereas those who said they were improving were the newly appointed ones.

4.3.3 Legislative framework

| Educators & learners | No. | % |
|------------------------------|-----|------|
| Both SACE & SASA | 6 | 85.7 |
| Draft for SGB & constitution | 1 | 14.3 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

Table 4.3.3

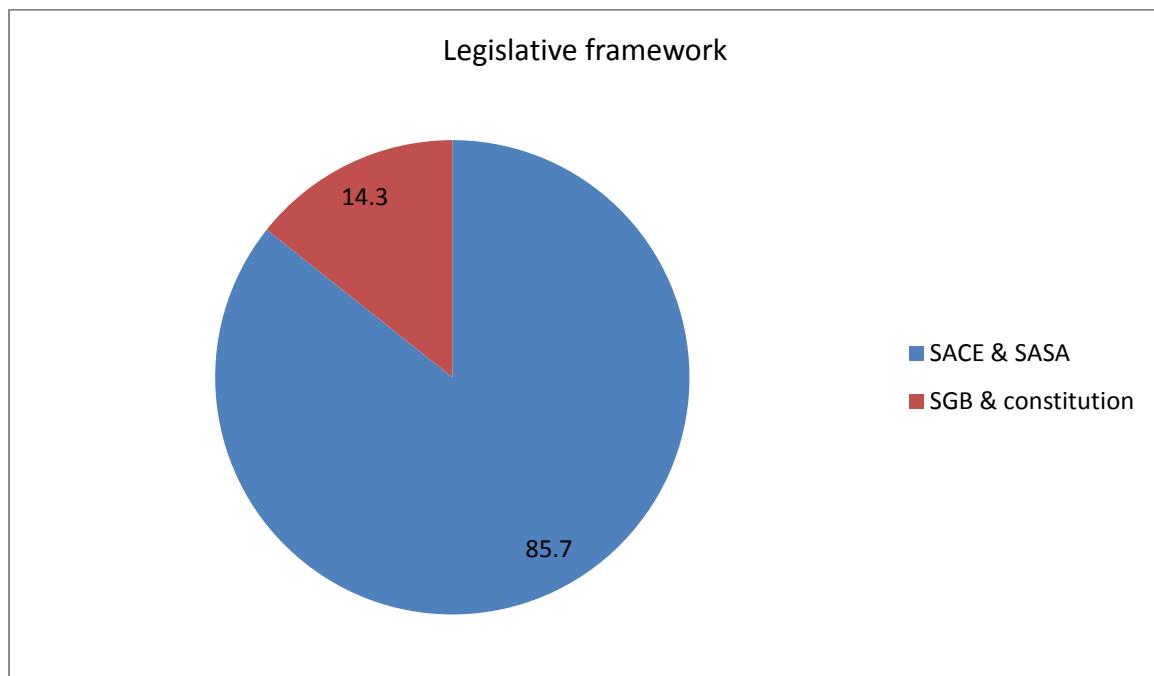
Table 4.3.3 above depicts that 85.7% of the respondents state that both SACE & SASA are utilised as legislative framework for educators and learners with regard to the code of conduct whereas 14.3% of the respondents indicates that the SGB utilises a draft of rules and regulations and the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

All the respondents are aware of the legislative framework applicable to their institution but the challenge is the effective part of it that has to be considered. Being aware of the legislative framework applicable to one's institution does not necessarily mean adherence to the rules and regulations as envisaged. Employees in the public service are held responsible for adherence to rules and procedures rather than for efficiency and productivity in service delivery.

This view is supported by the South African Schools Act (SASA), 84 of 1996 preamble upholding the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promoting their

responsibility for the organization, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Section 195 (1) serving as a reference point to guide the conduct of all public officials in every sphere of government and all government departments and SACE code of conduct .The legislative framework should be adhered to always as a guiding principle to showcase the practice of good code of conduct for both learners and educators.

Figure 4.3.3.Legislative framework



4.3.4. Conflict management policy

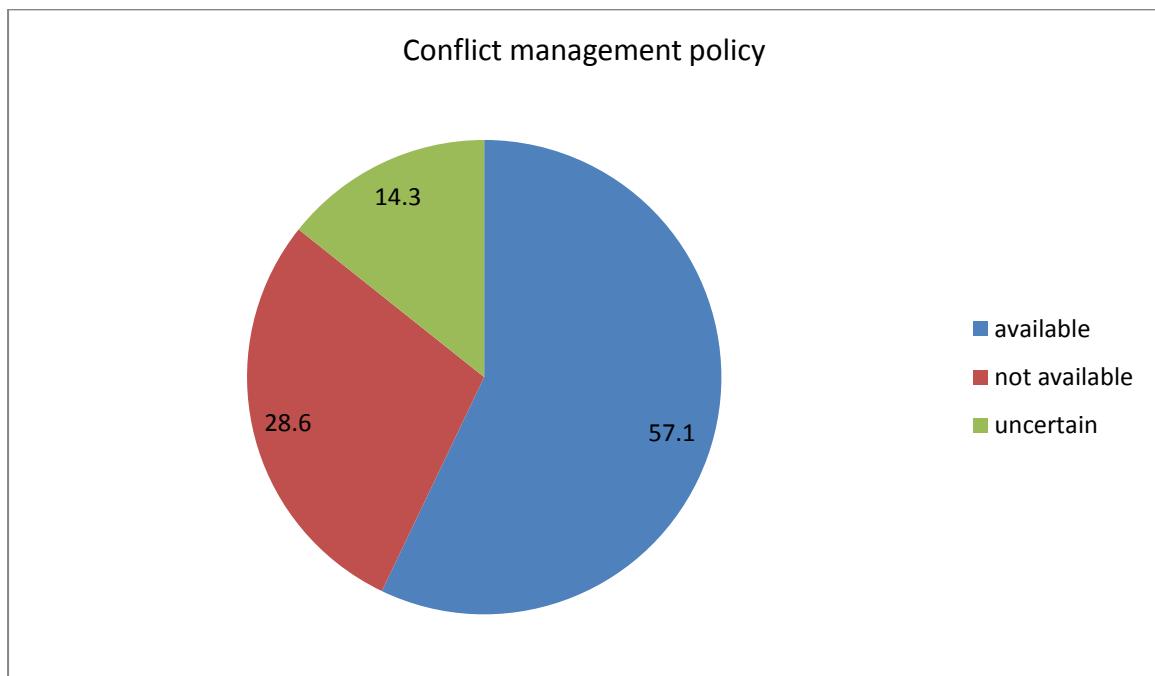
Table 4.3.4. Conflict management policy

| Conflict management policy | No. | % |
|----------------------------|-----|------|
| Available | 4 | 57.1 |
| Not available | 2 | 28.6 |
| Uncertain | 1 | 14.3 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

The pie-chart below shows that 57.1% of the respondents think that conflict management policy is available and 28% think it is not available and 14.3% is uncertain.

4.3.4. Conflict management policy

Figure 4.3.4. Conflict management policy



Whether conflict management policy is effective or not depends on the nature of the challenge it is faced with. It will be regarded as effective to when most of the problem are resolved.

4.3.5 Procedures for handling conflicts

Table 4.3.5.

| Educators & learners | No. | % |
|----------------------|-----|-----|
| Protocol observed | 7 | 100 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

Table 4.3.5. above illustrates that all respondents concur with the statement one hundred percent that procedures are followed when handling conflicts.

The study revealed that the procedure if protocol is observed when handling conflicts at the school including the following:

The class teacher manages minor learner fights whereas great offences such as abuse of drugs and alcohol are referred to the principal who then calls learners' parents and the SGB. In cases where teachers are involved in conflicts, the staff-matters committee deals with the matter and if needs be the matter is referred to the school management team (SMT) and if there is no progress the principal will take the matter up with higher authorities.

4.3.6 Root causes of conflict

When respondents were asked to identify factors that they thought hindered service delivery , they suggested a number of factors including: misunderstanding among stakeholders, communication breakdown, manangement style, no recognition of prior learning, imposition of issues without prior consultation, favouritism, camps or groups, lack of resources both physical and human, a clear code of conduct for learners,

no report back , bunking of periods as well as uncommitted learners and educators who come to school after school and unsupportive parents.

The majority of the respondents pointed out that when people misunderstand each other it is likely for them to act in ways that collude the organizational structure. The manager (principal) should ensure that information is communicated clearly. In cases where there is a one way type of communication utilised that information will not be well disseminated. In other words, the information must cascade from top to bottom. The end result of misunderstanding sometimes goes to the extent of turning people to be insubordinate.

Another factor worth mentioning regarding the root cause of conflict is unilateral decision-making. Most of the respondents indicated that the staff members and stakeholders should first and foremost be consulted about any change that is to be effected because whatever is decided upon has impact on themselves as persons and the organisation as a whole. Therefore, the manager should not make unilateral decision as these breed poor transparency, ultimately causing unnecessary friction.

The study revealed also that unsupportive parents contribute to the malfunctioning of the school because they are not actively involved in the education of their children. When parents' meetings are called they do not turn up, but some parents do not deliberately become unsupportive owing to the fact that they have never been to school themselves.

For the fact that the school is situated at a rural area , makes it difficult for learners to access valuable information from the library and internet, because learners come from impoverished family backgrounds and cannot afford transport costs to town for referencing.

The study also revealed that inadequate staff, classrooms and teacher learner support materials not only form a barrier to effective teaching and learning but contribute to discipline problems. Learners who are overcrowded in a classroom are not afforded the opportunity to learn with ease because of ventilation. Outcomes-based education requires learners to work in groups or pairs and it becomes impossible as a result.

The school environment prevailing is not conducive to teaching and learning. All sort of conflicts among the stakeholders need to be managed as conflict cannot be completely avoided or prevented. Macintosh & Stevens (2007) highlight that literature frequently uses the term conflict style to mean both a preferred approach that is relatively stable across situations and time, and a specific behavioural approach applied in a specific conflict situation.

Many researchers have settled on five major approaches/strategies namely: integrative/problem solving (high concern for self/high concern for others), obliging/accommodating (low self/high other), dominating/contending (high self/low other), avoiding (low self/low other), and compromise (moderate self/moderate other).

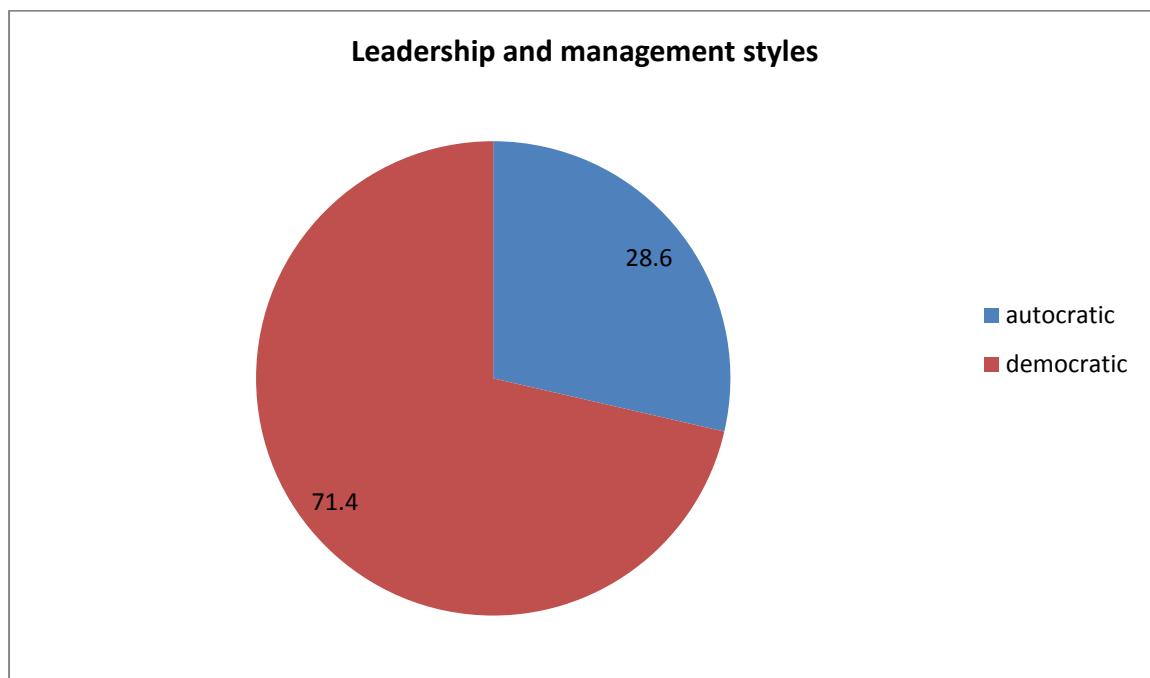
4.3.7 Leadership & management style

Table 4.3.7.1

| Leadership and management style | No. | % |
|--|-----|------|
| Autocratic | 2 | 28.6 |
| Democratic | 5 | 71.4 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

Table 4.3.7. above, indicates that five respondents (71.4%) prefer democratic leadership and management style, whereas two respondents (28.6%) prefer autocratic leadership and management style.

Figure 4.3.7.1 Preferential leadership and management style.

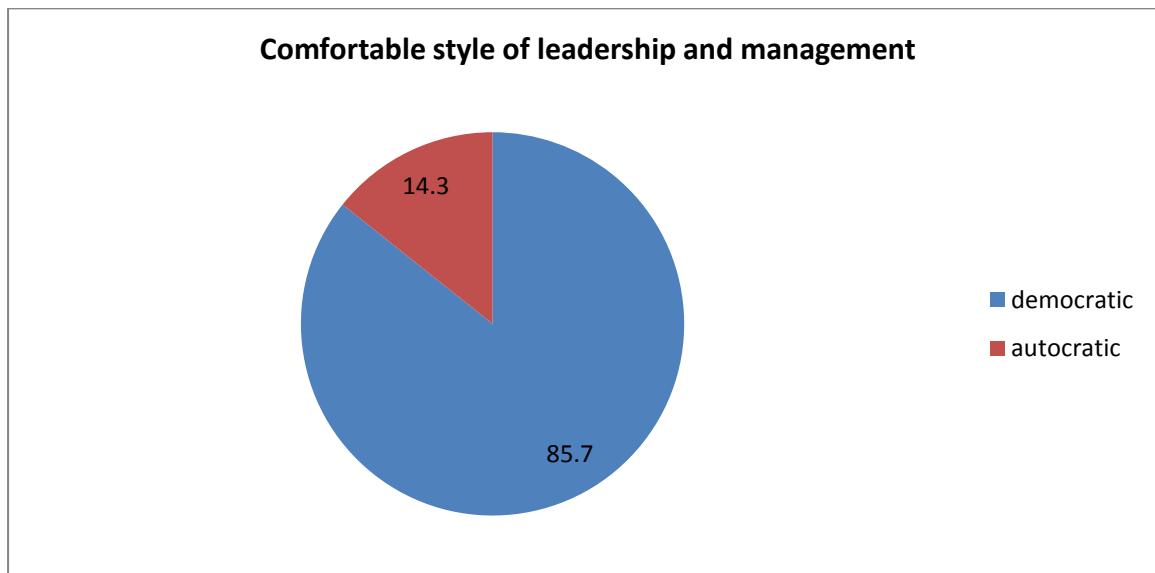


4.3.8 Comfortable style of leadership and management

| comfortable | No. | % |
|-------------|-----|------|
| Democratic | 6 | 85.7 |
| autocratic | 1 | 14.3 |
| total | 7 | 100 |

Table 4.3.8

Figure 4.3.8



The pie chart above shows distinctively respondents' level of satisfaction with regard to democratic and autocratic leadership and management style at 85.7% and 14.7% respectively. Those who are comfortable with democratic style of leadership and management claimed that they do not want decisions to be imposed on matters that affected their lives and those who are comfortable with autocratic style of leadership and management indicate that too much freedom without authority will bring the organisation into disrepute.

4.3.9 Communication with juniors and superiors

The respondents indicated that protocol is 100% followed. Communication with juniors is done through staff meetings, information book or circulars whereas communication with superiors is through circulars or by means of the telephone.

4.3.10. Recommendations for conflict resolution

The following Table 4.3.10, below illustrates respondents' recommendations for an open-door policy at 57.1% while 28.6% respondents recommend the provision of adequate resources and 14.3% respondents recommend social induction.

Respondents deemed it fit to suggest possible solution remedy the situation. Majority of the

| Recommendations | No. | % |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| Open door policy | 4 | 57.1 |
| Adequate resources | 2 | 28.6 |
| Social induction | 1 | 14.3 |
| Total | 7 | 100 |

Table 4.3.10

Respondents recommended open-door policy as a conflict resolution mechanism because they felt that they should feel free to approach the manager, the principal in this case about heartfelt issues that affect their work environment. Those who suggested adequate resources pointed out that without resources the learning material is meaningless.

The other respondents indicated that without workshops the work environment will not adapt to change. Change comes from within.

Conclusion

This chapter accordingly recorded the findings of the research with a view of enabling the study to draw conclusions and make recommendations about the phenomenon under study. The next chapter concludes the study by providing recommendations and the way forward

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.

5. Introduction

Following the findings and the critical issues raised, therefore call for the following conclusions and recommendations and implications.

5.1. Conclusions

The results of the survey reported here provide some interesting insight to adequate conflict management skill and teaching and learning relationships. In both cases it is clear that conflict has a negative impact on the results of the school.

The history of conflict at Modipe High School dates back to 2002 since the appointed principal departed. The nature of conflict experienced since then manifested itself through personal clashes, chronic absenteeism, fighting for ownership of school furniture by learners and teachers, non-observance of time, and drug abuse by learners. Molnah and Rogers (1979) describes types of structural conflict resulting from rules.

Gresse (2003) identifies types of conflict as destructive and constructive, frictional and destructive, interpersonal, intro-individual conflict and intergroup conflicts.

Henri Barker and Jon Hartwick (1951-2002) Identify three properties generally associated with conflict situations: disagreement, negative emotion and interference.

Authors sometimes use the words nature , properties and types of conflict interchangeably. Others claim that the source of conflict brings about the outcome (effect) and vice-versa.

The Department of Education intervened and resolved the problem by providing the school with enough furniture and 6 mobile classrooms. Surprisingly, the school matric results are improving and not deteriorating.

The response rates indicated that more educators have issues that need to be addressed, which can cause delay in service delivery. Among them are issues related to communication and power decentralisation, feedback and consultation. Educators indicated that they did not want to be rubber stamps of decision-making on matters affecting their daily lives, but to be viewed as people who have potential to add to the synergy of the organisation.

In South Africa prior to 1994, the concept of “management” was generally regarded as an activity for the one who holds a senior position in an organization. This meant that the manager in the school system was regarded as the highest authority, having unassailable power and control over all activities within a particular institution. His dominant position granted him the power to make unilateral decisions with very little or no input from the staff or parents. Mda and Mothata (2000).

Nowadays, the approach to solve problems in the workplace is dictated by the situation and not by an individual.

Delays in service delivery can be caused by various actions, for example, unfair treatment of others, lack of monitoring, ignorance of work procedures, rules, regulations, poor supervision etc. on the other hand, good performance results from actions such as control, application of rules and regulations, self-disciplined workers etc.

Management, supervisors and subordinates should work as a team to achieve the objectives of the institution with ease. If there is a difference of opinion proper channel of communication should be followed through the union representatives and supervisors, until the complaints or needs reach the management unit for discussion and finalization where possible, without disagreement. The response rates indicated that more employees have issues that need to be addressed, which can cause delay in service delivery.

5.2. Recommendations

The following are the major recommendations drawn from the issues raised and analysed. These recommendations are solely aimed at ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery services.

Inadequate conflict management skills on service delivery can be caused by various actions, for example, unfair treatment of others, lack of monitoring, ignorance of work procedures, rules, regulations, poor supervision etc.

It is therefore recommended that management, supervisors and subordinates should work as a team to achieve the objectives of the institution with ease. If there is a difference of opinion proper channels of communication should be followed through union

representatives and supervisors, until the complaints or needs reach the management unit for discussion and finalisation where possible, without disagreement.

Managers to provide some elements that could be applied to ensure sound discipline namely, warning to be done by communicating fully and clearly the rules and standard practices to the employees; disciplinary action should be immediate and the supervisor should not wait a few days and hope that the situation will go unnoticed; supervisors should try to be equally consistent in applying discipline . Moreover, the disciplinary measures should not practise favouritism, and that supervisors' approach to employees should be the same. They should try to discipline the act, not the employee. Supervisors should not be insulting or abusive when disciplining subordinate. They should be impersonal.

In support of the view held above, Zide (2006) presents the following golden rules of conflict management including the following: listening to others and the other side, investigating the circumstances carefully, keeping calm and not being emotional, concentrating on the facts only, remaining neutral, identifying possible background influence, and not threatening the security of either party.

Conflict draws school's progress backward but if the principal could learn to consult educators on matters pertaining to the school then the teachers would be in a better position to respect and recognise him as their leader and execute their duties to the best of their abilities. Respect is never acquired but earned.

It is further recommended that educators occupying higher positions should further their studies in management courses so as to broaden their horizon and keep abreast of management knowledge of the time.

It is recommended also that the Department of Education liaise with the Department of South African Police Services (SAPS). Because learners engage in drug abuse, the police should be requested to come and work with students so that this problem is solved. Students who abuse drugs should be counselled and ways to stop the spread of drug use by the learners should be found and strictly imposed on the learners.

The department of education to appoint more educators , supply more furniture and equipments ,to ensure that each school has a library and a laboratory, build more classrooms so that learners can have enough resources to learn.

The minister of education or member of executive committee to address the school on the monitoring and management of the curriculum, therefore, recommend that a task team be established to monitor and support educators on the curriculum.

Parents to be actively involved in the education of their children because education starts at home.

Education is a constitutional right and not a privilege. They have a responsibility to towards the future of their children

Open door policy to be established so that educators can feel free to approach the principal whenever there are heartfelt issues that need to be addressed so as to ensure that transparency and consultation is effected. Consultation is a pivot of school life. It centres around peoples own voices and thus binds them .No deviation will be necessary as they will be turning a sword against their own will. Therefore, imposition of decisions will mark the beginning of the scourge which will render the situation worse than hell itself.

5.3. Practical Implications

Communication-based misunderstanding becomes especially prevalent if the other is angry, dislikes, or distrusts the manager (principal).

Regular, staff meetings to be held in order to update the staff about the development of education, and school because debriefing sessions sometimes deprive educators of the right to express their feelings satisfactorily due to time constraints. Educators including the principal to be equipped with good communication skills and above all develop good human relations because this is the core.

As has been pointed out earlier, conflicts arise in any organisation, but these have to be managed properly, otherwise they can destroy the personnel and consequently the organisation itself. Therefore, collective management of conflicts is the way forward. Everyone, with the leadership at the forefront must be involved at every stage of the solution of any issue that generates conflict. This will create an atmosphere of transparency and trust. Conflict management depends to a great extent on collaboration and team-work

among teachers, principal and parents. Collaborative decision-making in educational systems is frequently characterised by conflict and disagreement, given differing interests in the status quo. School principals charged with facilitator roles in locally managed schools, are challenged to address resulting conflicts in ways that yield functional synergies and constructive outcomes which enable schools to respond community needs, Henkin *et al* (1999).

Improving employee relation climate

To this end, improvements to the climate can be attained by developing fair employee relations policies and procedures and implementing them consistently. Line managers and team leaders who are largely responsible for day-to-day conduct of employees relation need to be educated and trained on the approaches they should adopt. Transparency should be achieved by communicating policies to employees, and commitment increased by involvement and participation process. Problems that need to be resolved can be identified by simply talking to employees, their representatives and their trade union officials. Most importantly, the organisation can address its obligation to the employees as stakeholders take steps to build trust. Armstrong (2006).

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Consistency matrix

| Hypotheses/propositions/research questions | Source of theory | Source of data | Type of data | Analysis |
|--|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. What is the nature and magnitude of conflict at Modipe High School? | Gresse 2003, Schwella et. al Westhuizen, 1995. Gibson & Hodges | Secondary data | Primary & secondary | Interviews & questionnaires |
| 2. What is the policy and legislative framework for conflict management in schools? | SACE SASA CONSTITUTION WHITE PAPER | Secondary data | Primary & secondary | Interviews & questionnaires |
| 3. What management systems, procedures and or practises are in place to control conflict? | Gresse, 2003 Schwella, 1974 Macintosh G & Stevens (2007) | Secondary Peer reviewed journal | Primary & secondary | Interviews & questionnaires |
| 4. How does conflict affect service delivery? | Squelch and Lemmer, 1994. | Secondary | Primary & secondary | Interviews & questionnaires |
| 5. What measures can be taken to promote a healthy working environment at Modipe? | Armstrong, 2006. | secondary | Primary & secondary | Interviews & questionnaires |

APPENDIX: A

Study title: Impact of inadequate Conflict Management skills on Service Delivery at the Modipe High School in Limpopo province

Dear Respondent,

This is part of the research project for Masters Degree in Public Administration (MPA) at the Turfloop Graduate School of leadership of the University of Limpopo. You are requested to complete a 15 minute self-rating check list. This check list consists of statements about knowledge application which you will judge to be true or false according to how a statement applies to you.

Kindly furnish some information required by ticking or circling, where applicable the response that best reflects your attitude about the statement made. Where possible, provide reason(s) to support your argument. There is no right or wrong answer.

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and confidential. The outcome of the study is for academic purpose only. The results of the survey will be available upon request.

Thank you

Rakgwale S.M (Ms)

Tel: 0794745608

APPENDIX B: Research questionnaire

Study title: Impact of Inadequate Conflict Management Skills on Service Delivery at Modipe High School in Limpopo Province.

**Please circle the appropriate number that best reflects your view on each item in turn.
Give reasons on the provided lines.**

Each statement has five response categories:

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Uncertain 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree.

1. Time consumption and poor working relationships and could be as a result of conflict.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

2. Conflict serves to bring problems that have previously been recycled and ignored into the open.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

3. Failure to manage conflict could result into negative relationships and stress:

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

4. Conflict encourages managers to shift from participative to authoritarian styles.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

5. Consultation brings about efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

6. You should comply with orders given if you disagree.

1 2 3 4 5

Why do you say so?

7. How do you perceive disciplinary hearing? (Choose the statement you agree with.)

- Disciplinary action is a punishment.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

-Disciplinary action is a procedural measure.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

8. Managing conflict can be exciting and rewarding. It requires skill, knowledge and experience.

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

9. Generally comment how conflict could be resolved and managed at the workplace.

1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX C:

Study title: Impact of Inadequate Conflict Management Skills on Service Delivery at Modipe High School in Limpopo Province.

Dear respondent,

This is part of the research project for Masters Degree in Public Administration (MPA) at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership, the University of Limpopo.

You are requested to furnish information required by answering questions to the best of your knowledge. The interview session will take approximately 20 minutes. Where applicable you will be requested to explain on your views.

The interview is completely anonymous and confidential. The outcome of the study is for academic purposes only. The results of the survey will be available upon request.

Thank you

Rakgwale S.M. (Ms)

Tel: 0794745608

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. The school has a history of strikes and conflicts among stakeholders. How true is this?
2. It is common knowledge that the matriculation results have deteriorated to the worst level in subsequent years. What contributed to the deterioration?
3. What legislative framework do you adhere to regarding the code of conduct for learners and teachers?
4. Do you have conflict management policy at the school and how effective is it?
5. What is the procedure for handling conflicts at the school?
6. What are the root causes of conflict within the school?
7. What style of leadership and management is utilized?
8. Are you comfortable with this style? Give reasons.
9. How do you communicate with your juniors and superiors?
10. Generally comment on the issues of conflict at the school and how best they could be resolved.