CONFLICT AND STUDENTS' ATTRITION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAGWI COUNTY, EASTERN EQUATORIA STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

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A Thesis Dissertation Presented to the

School of Postgraduate Studies and Research

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Of Masters in Conflict Resolution
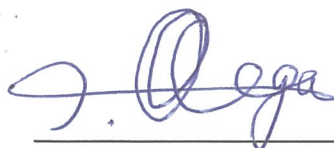
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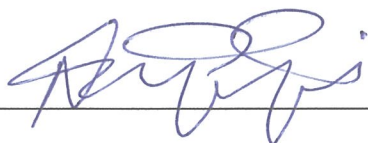
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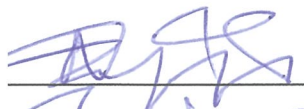
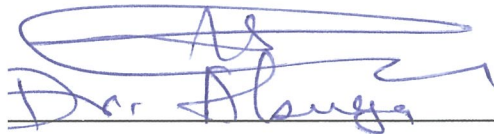20/09/2012

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"This thesis entitled " Conflict and students' attrition in secondary schools in Magwi County" presented by Olega Jackson Daniel, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of education in educational management and administration has been examined and approved by the panel on oral examination with grade of <u>PASSED</u>.

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Grade: _____

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DEDICATION

This piece of work has been dedicated to the Almighty God as He has enabled me to achieve this great success in this noble task. It is also dedicated to my beloved wife Joyce, and our children Emmanuel, Maxwell, Esther and Daniel for their sacrifice, love and support as I pursued this course.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher is greatly indebted to God, his relatives, friends and communities for their valuable contributions in his academic achievements.

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His respondents are also specially saluted.

He appreciates all those who contributed in whatever form but whose names are not mentioned here. God bless you all, thanks.

List of Acronym/ Abbreviations.

1. **NNESCO** -United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

2. **EFA** -Education for All.

3. **OUHK-** Open University of Hong Kong

        (a)   4. FAWE- Forum for African Women Educationalists.

        (b)   5. UK - United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

The study was concerned with conflict on students' attrition in secondary Schools in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. The study was guided by 4 objectives; Determining the profile of the respondents, the level of conflict, The level of students' attrition and the relationship between conflict and students' attrition in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria State. The study applied descriptive co relational survey design using quantitative approach to derive meaning from quantitative data generated. The main research instrument used to obtain data during the study was Likert scale questionnaire researcher made to suit the objectives of the study. Data collection was guided by the research questions and objectives. A total of 156 respondents were used. Results from the study and analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between level of conflict and students' attrition in secondary schools. Revelations from the study indicated that there is low level of conflict in the secondary school in Magwi County, there is low level of students' attrition in this division and there is a strong positive correlation between conflict and students' attrition. The study further recommended that The Head teachers should enhance professionalism in dealing with causes of conflict. The Head teachers should enhance effective communication with all stakeholders in the school to minimize causes of conflict. The Head teachers should identify causes of conflict in schools and curb them to minimize various forms of conflict that may ensue.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Background of the Study

Education is attributed as a key role in both preventing conflict and rebuilding post-conflict societies. The dialectical approach to education, which was ceaselessly emphasized by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, signifies within a scenario of conflict or post-conflict that every education system has the potential to either aggravate the conditions that lead to violent conflict or to overcome and heal them. However, independent from the potential role of education to reverse or contribute to development, education systems are invariably debilitated by conflict. In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar the issue of conflict as an impediment to the achievement of EFA goals was analyzed at a strategic session on Education in Situations of Emergencies and Crisis. This followed an EFA Assessment Thematic Study on Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis (UNESCO, 1999) which concluded that 'man made' and natural disasters have emerged as major barriers to the accomplishments of Education for All.

Conflict is inevitable in any human institution. The fundamental meaning of conflict is disagreement. It is obvious that disagreement, irrespective of the form it takes, is bound to be experienced in most circumstances and situations. Owusu (2007) argues that our bodies experience some sort of disagreement in most circumstances. For instance, if someone takes medications and the body reacts to the drugs, there is disagreement between the body and the drugs. Similarly, disagreement arises in the body when we eat and the food comes out immediately as vomit or diarrhoea without performing the supposed functions in the body. Different forms of disagreements do surface in our families. In many marriages, disagreements occur over sensitive issues such as the frequency of sex in a week, housekeeping money, husband dating another woman and many more. Such disagreements could be more serious and produce hatred, divorce or even murder.

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Owusu (2007) further contends that a disagreement is witnessed when a baby cries as a result of being uncomfortable but which the mother, out of misunderstanding, forces the baby to breastfeed which the child refuses or does not respond to. Again, disagreements do crop up when adolescents believe they can lead their own lives as they desire and clash with parents or guardians who try to prevent or dictate to them as to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, leading to the parties not understanding each other. Disagreements can occur in communities when chiefs and elders make rules and the community members refuse to comply with them. Government policy on National Health Insurance has even brought a kind of disagreement between some people because their religious beliefs do not permit them to have photographs of themselves be taken. Even in religion which has the fundamental belief that there is a supreme being (God), a lot of disagreements do occur. For example, Christians who are supposed to share the same belief have disagreement over the appropriate day for worshiping God in this case either Sunday or Saturday.

In diverse ways, disagreements can also occur in schools– among teachers, among students, between students and their teachers. For example, disagreement may emerge among teachers when a colleague keeps students or students at morning assembly for too long resulting in taking some time off the other colleagues' period for teaching. Disagreements could also arise between students if a pupil from an upper class takes a chair or table from a fellow student who is in a lower class and the junior struggles with the senior students. In the same way, disagreement could occur between teachers and students over disciplinary measures such as corporal punishment and other forms of punishments that ensure discipline in the school. These conflict situations have to be resolve to ensure peace and harmony between the persons and in society. The conflict situation in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria has not been any different from what has been discussed. The education system in the County has been adversely affected as a result of conflicts. The conflict situation in Magwi County is prevalent with teacher to teacher and pupil to teacher.

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Statement of the Problem

Santrock (2001) asserts that little attention is paid to what happens in the school environment, in the classroom when teaching is in progress and the kind of relationships that exist between teachers and students, among teachers, among students, between teachers and their school heads, and even between the school and the community in which the school exists. Students' attrition is getting high in Magwi county secondary schools. Student drop-out rates in secondary schools is much higher, and lower in primary schools across South Sudan. parents should monitor school-going children."Some children do not report to school even if they were seen leaving home for school from their homes. They do not reach the school compound and classes. They end up somewhere playing with other children Duot Ajang Dut, cited in Sudan Tribune 16th may 2011.This high level of attrition badly affects the society in that those school dropout become social misfits and engage in very anti social activities like drug abuse, burglary, rape murder among others. If this problem has to be solved, its root causes have to be dug out, thus the researcher sought to find out if attrition is linked to the level of conflict in schools in Magwi county secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at validating the human nature and violence theory of conflict, add to the existing knowledge on conflicts, and finally provide suggestions for further knowledge on conflict in secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

i) To determine the profile of respondents in respect to sex and age

ii) To identify the level of conflict in the Secondary school in Magwi County

iii) To determine the level of students attrition in secondary schools in Magwi County.

iv) To determine the relationship between level of conflict and level of students attrition in Magwi

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Research Questions

    i) What is the profile of the respondents in respect to age and gender?

    ii) What is the level of conflict in the Secondary schools in Magwi County?

    iii) What is the level of students' attrition in Magwi County secondary schools?

    iv) What is the relationship between the level of conflict and the level of attrition in secondary schools in Magwi County?

Null Hypotheses

There is no significant relationship between level of conflict and level of students' attrition in Magwi County Secondary schools.

Scope

Geographical scope; the study took place in Magwi County of South Sudan. This study covered both private and public secondary schools

Content scope; the study focused on; (1) identifying the profile of the respondents and identifying level of conflicts, (2) determine the level of students attrition in secondary schools in Magwi County, and (3) determine the relationship between the level of conflict and the level of attrition in secondary schools in Magwi County.

Time scope; the study was conducted between April and August 2012

Theoretical scope; the study was underpinned by Jay (1995) Human Nature and violence theory of conflict.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study might be beneficial to the following;

The ministry of education and policy makers ; the study findings will help them understand the peculiarities that relate to students attrition and conflict in secondary schools so as to organize for measures to remedy the situation

The Teacher Training Institutions will benefit from the findings of this research because the schools can be a place of learning when teachers realize the needs of students, accommodate students in all circumstances and treat each child as an

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individual. Due to this, principals of Teacher Training Institutions can incorporate conflict resolution studies in their curriculum to train teachers.

Tutors of Teacher Training Institutions. They will improve their relationship with the teacher trainees, so that they can replicate the cordial relationship with their students when they are posted to their various schools. This in a long run will have a significant impact on education in South Sudan.

parents and the communities; they are stakeholders of education. Therefore these stakeholders are going to benefit from the outcome of the study by increasing their awareness on the negative effects conflict has on their wards education. They will also learn from the outcome by cultivating warm relationships between them and the school. This can be done by organizing open forum at community mass meeting and at the schools' PTA meetings.

Researchers ; Theoretically, the study will also prompt more researchers in the area having contributed to the literature and methodology of such future studies.

Operational Definition of Key terms

Conflict; conflict is a disagreement between two or more people or between two or more choices in the academic environment of the learners. In this study, the conceptualization of conflict included; Student-teacher, Student- Parent, Student-Student, Student- support staff and Teacher- Teacher conflict.

Secondary school; a school that gives secondary education between the levels of 9-12 (South Sudan case)

Attrition; students leaving or exiting secondary schools before completion of their secondary education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher critically looked at and studied the related literatures by different authors in regards to Conflict and Students' Attrition in Secondary Schools.

Concepts, ideas and opinions of Experts/Authors

Conflict

According to Meek, Heit and Page (2005), conflict is a disagreement between two or more people or between two or more choices. Similarly, Cannie, Sasse and CFCS (2002) simply refer to conflict as a disagreement or struggle between two or more people. Expanding on this definition, Cole (1998) also states that conflict is a condition that arises whenever the perceived interests of an individual or a group clash with those of another individual or a group in such a way that strong emotions are aroused and compromise is not considered to be an option. On the other hand, Hart (2002) writes that "conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or groups of people which is sometimes characterized by physical violence or assault". While www.biol.sukuba.ac.jp/macer/biodict/htm defines conflict as a situation in which opposing viewpoints have come into physical confrontation. From these definitions, conflict can be seen as a contest of opposing forces or power, a struggle to resist or overcome. It is also clear that conflict exists whenever incompatible perception or activities occur.

Conflict can also be a situation in which there are incompatible goals, thought or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition. Important aspects of these definitions include "expressed struggle", which means the two sides must communicate about the problem for there to be a conflict. Another important idea

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is that conflict often involves perceptions. The two sides may only perceive that their goals, resources and interference are incompatible with each other's.

One of the major reasons identified for adult students to attrition of their courses has been conflict between their studies and other commitments in their working or family lives (Louttit, 1968; Cullen, 1994) and students at the OUHK have been no exception to this (Fan and Chan, 1997). This has particularly been a problem if the students have experienced any change in any personal or work-related circumstances after commencing their courses (Smith, 1987).

Another potential problem that can cause students to give up can occur if they are overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy and distress when they are faced with the new demands of their studies (Rickinson and Rutherford, 1996). Once they lose confidence in their abilities, it becomes easy for them to give up (Cullen, 1994). Financial problems also play a major part in contributing to student dropouts (Cullen, 1994; Young, 1994; Fan and Chan, 1997). From another point of view, Cooke et al. suggested that students with internal locus of control, that is those who attribute their success or failure to internal factors such as effort, are more likely to feel able to influence circumstances and persevere than those who attribute their successes and failures to external factors beyond their control. Only two studies reported gender differences in ability to persevere in the face of personal problems, and these were contradictory. While Fan and Chan (1997) found a slight tendency for females to be more persevering, Cullen (1994) reported that women were more likely to be affected by these outside pressures. A less commonly documented issue, but nevertheless one that may very well be relevant to student attrition is that some students have been found to attrition simply because they have accomplished their own educational goals from the course, have attained whatever they set themselves to attain, and have no need to continue (Louttit, 1969; Cox, 1984).

Students' attrition

Many people, according to Rugh, (2000) consider education to be one of the best investments in international development. An association exists between improvements

in national development indicators and an increase in the number of girls receiving formal schooling, independent of improvements in academic quality

He opined that students who complete their education are more likely to lead productive lives, support their families, take good care of their children, and practice healthy behaviors than women with little or no education. Because of these benefits, strong interest exists in girls' education programs, specifically within the global reproductive health sector. Reproductive health programs identified the importance of educating young girls before their sexual debut through participatory, community-based approaches.

In Africa, the enrolment and retention of students in school is lower than that of boys. The under-representation of girls tends to be greatest in rural areas and among the most disadvantaged communities. While a number of measures can be shown to have an impact on the retention in school, one of the important factors is the presence of teachers in the school (Bernard, 2002). The presence of female teachers in a school can help to make the school environment a safer place for girls especially in rural areas. Many students in Africa are forced to dropout of school because school administrators are insensitive to gender issues, including sexual abuse and intimidation (PANA, 2003).

According to FAWE magazine titled "the education of girls and women", females constitute nearly 50% of the children in grade one in south Sudan, Zambia and Nigeria. However the enrolment decreases the higher one ascends the education hierarchy. In the sub Sahara region, girl's gross enrolment ratios at primary level rose from 22% in 1961 to more than 61% in the 21st century. FAWE (2000)
It is estimated that over 36 million of African students, most of whom residing in rural areas are out of school, either having never enrolled or having dropped out of the education system. If the poverty rate rises in some societies, the number is expected to rise. World Bank (2000) Girls, especially those in rural areas, fail to enroll in or to

complete primary schooling because their parents themselves are uneducated /illiterate. There is also a 'myth' among most illiterate parents that "boys are generally clever and hard working in school.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this study, the researcher will use the human nature and violence theory of conflict propounded by Jay (1995).

Human nature and Violence: this theoretical perspective of conflict explains that individuals are violent in nature. Other workers tend to bully others at work place. Jay (1995) defines workplace bullying as "the persistent ill treatment of an individual at work by one or more other persons." Workplace bullying has a negative impact upon the victim and that it is a repeated activity. This condition occurs when people coerce others into doing something against their will. Another personality classified under natural violence is domineering. A domineering person was defined by Jay (1995) as a person who often picks on the weakest person around and stand up for him/her and that "domineering people tend to try and shout other people down." If this behaviour is not identified earlier during its development, it can cause stress on other employees. Jay (1995) continues with the scrutiny of another personality which he calls aggressive type which is the type of person that can upset others because "aggressive people tend to think and act fast, and they are often insecure and need recognition and personal power." Aggressive is another form of stress and as a consequence it must be identified and dealt with accordingly.

Deutsch (2005) has identified the features of violence which he contends violence "stimulates the view that the solution of a conflict can only be imposed by one side on the other, which in turn leads to using coercive tactics such as psychological as well as physical threats and violence." In this regard, conflict could be viewed as a power struggle between opposing parties

Related studies

Conflict in the School Situation

The school as an organization of individuals cannot escape conflict because it is made up of individuals. Siann and Ugwuegbu (2000) explain that parents and teachers are the two centres of almost every child's universe. No one knows their child better than the parents and no one knows how to teach better than the teacher. It is a centered child who finds that his or her universes are in harmony with each other. Smith and Lastlett (1994) believe that when there is a school-based conflict, it is almost always desirable to avoid a win or lose outcomes because the players will continue to work together in the best interests of the child. In other words, relationships between parents and the school are ongoing since it continues long after the conflict is over. The last thing that is not needed in conflict in the school situation is for one party to feel like a winner and the other a loser because these stakeholders need to coordinate to ensure better education of the children.

Causes of conflict in the school: Classroom management, disruption and punishment have been identified in the literature as some of the common sources of conflict in secondary schools in particular.

(1) Classroom management: Santrock (2001) asserts that all levels of education need good classroom managers to design the physical environment of the classroom for effective learning tasks to occur. Orlich, Harder and Callahan and Gibson (2001) also describe the classroom as a social and emotional as well as a learning environment which therefore, must be controlled to ensure law and order. Likewise, Braine, Kerry and Pilling (1990) have observed that as teachers aim to create conducive classroom atmosphere for their students to develop, it is equally important for them to deal with challenges to their authority as soon as they emerge before they develop to a dangerous level. This brings in Orlich, Harder, Callahan and Gibson's (2001) concept that one of the teacher's roles is to establish a classroom environment that prevents problems from emerging and if they occur, teachers should intervene quickly to prevent

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it disrupting the lesson. Besides, they establish that the classroom is a place for dynamic systems of interactions between teachers and students, and among students whereby uncountable verbal and non-verbal behaviours which crop up each day ought to be managed to improve learning processes in the classroom.

Braine, Kerry and Pilling (1990) have noticed that one of the commonest difficulties teachers face in the classroom is the problem of very talkative students. The often volatile nature of teenage behaviour can lead to outbursts of unacceptable behaviour with any teacher. It is therefore up to the teacher to deal with such outbursts and prevent them from overwhelming the class, the lesson, and ultimately, the teacher himself/herself. According to Smith and Laslett (1996), it is imperative to avoid confrontations with students as a teacher but there are occasions when a confrontation is beneficial. For example, a teacher cannot avoid a confrontation when he or she is summoned by a colleague to assist in solving a problem between her and a pupil. In this instance, the angry pupil may turn on his or her teacher and the other teacher may also decide that he or she will not tolerate the pupil's provocative or stupid behaviour any longer. This can result in conflict between the teacher and the pupil. It can be seen here that a conducive classroom environment does not only involve the physical environment but also consists of establishing and maintaining classroom norms, getting students to co-operate, effectively dealing with problems and using good communication strategies.

(2) Disruption: The Microsoft Encarta Dictionary Tool (2007) defines disruption as "an unwelcome or unexpected break in a process or activity". Elaborating on this definition, Braine, Kerry and Pilling (2003) explain that disruption in the classroom situation interrupts usual and normal class routines. Smith and Laslett (1996) also support the idea that classroom disruption undermines the learning process, explaining that certain students have marked tendencies to upset the stability of a class by their notorious disruptive attention-seeking behaviours while such negative situations in the classroom consume much of the instructional periods and affect the teaching and learning

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process. To them, the disruptive behaviour of students may include talkative students, habitual late coming, dragging chairs across the classroom, students talking outside through the windows, and students interacting with colleagues while classes are in progress. Furthermore, Gray, Miller and Noakes (1995) cite other destructive behaviour as verbal abuse, temper burst in class and violence to teachers and other students which also have different disruptive values depending upon the strategy of the teacher managing the class. Siann and Ugwuegbu (2000) are also of the view that disruptive behaviours of children in the secondary schools almost always stem from low esteem although other factors may contribute to such behaviour. They emphasize that if a child who has low self-esteem probably thinks the only way to make his or her presence felt is exhibiting a bad behaviour such as any of those mentioned earlier. In spite of these challenges, Santrock (2001) observes that teachers have more influence on the behaviour of students in its early stages of development in the classroom and are also in a strong position to help mediate students' behaviour in the school setting.

(3) Punishments and discipline: Ivancevich and Matteson (1990) define punishment as a presentation of an aversive event or the removal of a positive event following a response that decreases the frequency of the response. According to Smith and Laslett (1996), many conflicts begin in the classroom with what a teacher may say, the way he or she may walk, stride towards a pupil, glare at a pupil or point at him or her. Leonard, Eccles and Gabarro (1983) also explain that conflict normally occurs in a class when a pupil feels that he or she has been punished unfairly, or feels that reprimands, criticisms and punishment were not deserved and legitimate. Ivancevich and Matteson (1990) explain that punishments and disciplinary measures are used to eliminate undesirable behaviours and poor performance in organisations. Citing examples of such undesirable behaviour as absenteeism, tardiness, leaving the school or the workplace before closing time, fighting, violating rules and regulations, and the use of abusive language, Ivancevich and Matteson (1990) asset that such behaviours if not eradicated as early as possible can impede the growth of the organization.

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Referring to discipline as the use of some form of punishment or sanctions when employees deviate from the rules, Beck and Betz (2002) say that not all disciplinary measures are necessarily punishment. They suppose that where frequent absence from work results in a three-day suspension, the suspended person who does not like his or her job and prefers to stay at home, will not regard the suspension as aversive. In such a situation, the disciplined person has not been punished with suspension. As Cameron and Thorsborne (2001) state, it is generally seen that punishment in most cases brings conflict in organizations such as schools. They explain that punishment produces conflict when the intensity or severity and the moral behind its use are not legitimate. In their view, some people's resistance to the use of punishment is based on moral grounds, the moral position being that pain is bad and should always be avoided. Ivancevich and Matteson (1990) again stress that punishment achieves a greater effectiveness when the aversive stimulus is relatively intense and the implication of this condition is that in order to be effective, punishment should get the immediate attention of the person being punished. Unquestionably, the emphasis on punishment in a school situation is to maintain order and control. For this reason, if punishment is unduly awarded, it almost undermines the mutual respect necessary for a sound teacher-pupil relationship and at worse, generates conflict. It can be deduced from the discussions that conflict results from contexts of opposing forces or power and struggle to resist or overcome.

Conflict as a daily occurrence in the administration and management of an organization such as a school is also characterized by interaction among individuals who have varied opinions and interests. Conflict will invariably occur in organisations because as people work together they will inevitably have issues to discuss, many of which are potential grounds for disagreement or misunderstanding that can breed conflict. It can also be inferred that every conflict situation leaves a conflict aftermath that affects the way both individuals or groups perceive and act upon subsequent conflict. Such effects can be either positive or negative depending on how conflict is managed. Positively, conflict can increase productivity, improve quality and quantity of

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and develop better communication methods. When they are managed effectively, conflict can change organisations for the better. However, conflict can have negative outcomes such as physical and psychological withdrawal of people, aggression and damage to property. It is generally accepted that conflict has negative connotations in societies, a fact which can be deduced from the definitions given to conflict. Obviously, none of the definitions given to conflict in the literature sourced indicates the positive aspect of conflict and that clearly shows that it is bad and should not be entertained. Conflict has many causes including competition for scarce resources, one party seeking to control another, and individualism in people, among others. The discussion reveals that conflict in an organization can occur at four levels - Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Intragroup and Intergroup. Identified conflict resolution strategies include Cooperative problem solving, Competing, Compromising, Avoiding and Accommodating. More significantly, these strategies leave conflict aftermath depending on the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy. The school as an organization is a system in which several networks of individuals interact, and which itself interacts with the wider social and economic environment. These individual interactions can be categorized as Head–Teacher, Teacher–Teacher, Teacher–Pupil and School – Community interactions or relationships.

According to Fianu (2000), pleasant interpersonal relationships between these groups are undisputably one of the factors which promote effective school administration and teaching and learning. Hence, their absence adversely affects school effectiveness.

Classroom management should therefore emphasize ways to develop and maintain a positive classroom environment that supports teaching and learning. Teachers must also use their authority to manage the classroom in order to reduce the probability of disruptive behaviour which cause conflict in the classroom. Such a situation will significantly improve teaching and learning processes and increase the chances of schooling effectiveness. In spite of the many challenges that teachers face in school, they can exert a lot more influence on the behaviour of students to prevent the

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development of conflict in the classroom. They are also in a much stronger position as classroom managers to help mediate students' behaviour in the school setting.

Types of Conflicts

The literature consulted identifies four types of conflict which are: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Intragroup and Intergroup conflicts. These types of conflicts are explained in the following sections. Intrapersonal Conflict; Larson and Mildred (2000) point out that intrapersonal conflict occurs within a person and that one can experience intrapersonal conflict with respect to the amount of resources one has by hearing internal voices that disagree. In agreement with this assertion, Orlich, et al (2001) explains that in intrapersonal conflict the individual tries to reconcile conflict within his or her own value structure. Similarly, Hart (2001) observes that conflict may not only take a toll on one's physical body but it often occupies one's thoughts and causes a great deal of emotion. Larson and Mildred (2000) also agree that intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual and can involve some form of goal or cognitive conflict. They argue that intrapersonal conflict occurs when a person's behaviour results in positive and negative outcomes or incompatible outcomes. An example is where a person has the option to choose a job in a government organization that does not pay well but has future security or take a job from a private company that pays well but does not provide any future security. Such a choice could lead to intrapersonal conflict.

Interpersonal conflict

While Meek, Heit and Page (2005) state that interpersonal conflict occurs between two or more persons, Larson and Mildred (2000) refer to interpersonal conflict as clashes that involve two or more individuals who perceive each other as being in opposition to preferred outcomes (goals) and or attitudes, values or behaviours. Similarly, Nelson-Jones (1990) indicates that interpersonal conflict is a situation in which one or both individuals in a relationship are experiencing difficulty in working or living with each other. Expanding on this point, Nelson-Jones states that interpersonal conflict usually occurs when due to differences or incompatibilities, needs, goals or styles clash.

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Similar to this assertion is Orlich et al observation (2001) who observed that in interpersonal conflict the values of different individuals or groups openly clash.

Intragroup Conflict

This type of conflict emerges between people who identify themselves as belonging to the same group. Larson and Mildred (2000) explain that intragroup conflict is a clash among some or all of a group's members which often affects the group's progress and effectiveness. In a classroom situation, an intragroup conflict may occur within members of a class where students sit in close proximity and interact with each other. Such conflict can also occur among the staff of schools who have different views on the kind of measures appropriate for punishing students. In this case, some teachers may support the use of corporal punishment while others may support other milder forms of punishment for misbehaviour.

Intergroup conflict

This emerges between two or more groups of people. While Larson and Mildred (2000) define intergroup conflict as opposition and clashes that arise between two or more groups, Wilmet and Hocker (1998) indicate that such conflicts are highly intense and costly to the group involved. Intergroup conflict can therefore occur between two or more schools. According to Antcliffe (1998), intergroup conflict within organisations occurs at three levels: vertical, horizontal and line staff. Antcliffe explains these as follows:

i) Vertical conflict refers to clashes between levels in an organization. For example, vertical conflict occurs when superiors try to control subordinates too tightly as subordinates resist the control.

ii) Horizontal conflict refers to clashes between groups of employees at the same hierarchical level in an organisation. In a school situation horizontal conflict will occur if one department desires a larger proportion of scarce resources at the expense of other departments.

iii) Line-staff conflict is a clash over authority relationships. As Jenning and Wattam (2005) indicate, line staff conflict can easily occur from the different organizational roles of line and staff departments. An example is where staffing decisions taken by the personnel department (a staff function) is opposed by the production department (a line function). This implies that conflict in an organization can occur at different levels and so conflict resolution is paramount to effective management of organisations. It is worth remembering that conflict that emerges in oneself, in marriages, in the family, the community, in an organization or country can be grouped under one or more of the types mentioned. It is also important to note that conflict can arise between people who have the same goals but disagree on the means by which the goals can be achieved. Conflict that occurs within a person can have either a covert effect on the imitations of the fellow or an overt effect which he or she involves other people in the conflict. Conflict should therefore not only be studied by itself as psychologists do but conflict resolution should be given keen consideration in social situations and its study should be a concern for all.

Causes of conflict in relationships

Conflict does not occur in a vacuum, in other words, there are causes to conflict of any type. Cannie, Sasse and CFCS (2002) affirm that there are some common factors which cause conflict in relationships. They explain these as situations or circumstances in which people find themselves, the personality of the individual or people, and the urge or desire for power. The authors explain these factors as follows: Situational factors: According to Microsoft Encarta Dictionary Tool (2007), a situation is the current condition that characterizes somebody's life or an event in a particular place, society or country. Cannie and CFCS (2002) and Beck (1987) explain that situational factors of conflict arise out of daily life. To them any aspect of living such as working or playing together contains the seed of situational conflict. Such conflicts can occur in all kinds of relationships – between family members, among friends, groups or acquaintances and even in an organization. As Tizard, Blatchford and Burke (2000) indicate, conflict over

situational factors can be overcome when the situation or circumstance changes. Even though a situational conflict may be intense, it is usually short-lived.

Personality factors: According to Cannie and CFCS (2002), personality factors come from individualism or the differences that are inherent in people. It is evident that everybody has a unique combination of values, characteristics, beliefs and life style. In an agreement with this assertion, Marshall (1990) says that as much as differences in personality add pleasure and richness to life, these differences can also create conflict in all aspects of life. In a family for instance, if a parent values order and neatness and the children do not, conflict may occur. Covey (2002) adds that very often, conflict involving personality factors occurs over matters such as mannerism, table manners and a person's way of life. These personality quirks may get on the nerves of another person and cause conflict. In the classroom situation, personality factors may be the tendency for one to be talkative, the dragging of feet, restlessness and fidgeting.

Power factors: The BBC dictionary (1990) defines power as the ability to influence another person. Cannie and CFCS (2002) indicate that power factors result in conflict when issues are important to both parties and often results when each of the parties wants to use power to get the other to agree with his or her position. Kreidle (1982) is of the view that conflict is inevitable when power factors come into play because those in power try to abuse it by forcing others to comply with situations that are not favourable. In the same way, Larson and Miidred (2000) emphasize that if the dependence is not mutual, but one way, the potential for conflict increases. For example, in a school situation, teachers seem to have total power when it comes to conducting examinations, marking and grading students' scripts. In this case students appear to be at the total mercy of teachers and when students' expectations are not met, conflict develops.

Conflict of any types – whether intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup or intergroup, can emerge based on the circumstance a person finds himself or herself in. In other words, certain situations can compel someone to be driven into a conflict.

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Again people's personality quirks are also fertile grounds for a conflict to crop up because of individualism. Conflict can easily erupt over personality factors such as courtesy, manners and so on. Thus conflict is inevitable when one tries to impose his or her interest, values or beliefs on another person. Undoubtedly, power factors can generate conflict in circumstances where people use power to subdue others to get what they want.

Strategies Administrators use to manage and Resolve Conflicts

Meeks, Heit and Page (2005) define conflict response style as a kind of behaviour a person exhibits when a conflict emerges while Wheeler (1995) asserts that conflict situation offers everyone an opportunity to choose the conflict management or response style appropriate for the conflict. Bittel (1995) says that the key to effective conflict preservation and management is the choice of appropriate conflict management style. To Bittel, although people have favourite styles they use in conflict situations, they are capable of choosing a different style when it is due. In the opinion of Owens (1990), because it is not always likely for one to control the source of conflict, it is paramount that one sticks to how to respond to conflict in a more acceptable and responsible manner. Similarly, Wayne, Hoy and Miskel (2001) agree that in order to manage conflict between others effectively, it is important to be aware of the early warning signs of conflict and the causes of disagreements. Bryant (1992) therefore recommends that arriving at a positive resolution of conflict should always be the ultimate goal. Wheeler (1995) has identified five types of conflict management styles which are described as co-operative or collaborative problem solving, competing, avoiding, accommodating and compromising. These are explained as follows:

i) **Collaborating**: According to Wheeler, this style enables people to work together so that everyone can win. In using this style people try to find a solution that will help everyone meet their interest and help everyone maintain a good relationship. This is in line with Larson and Mildred's (2000) explanation that the collaborative style involves a behaviour that is strongly cooperative and assertive which reflects a win-win approach

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to resolving conflict. Furthermore, Nelson-Jones (1995) says that the collaborative approach enables both parties to work as a team to prevent unnecessary conflict and also to arrive at mutually satisfactory solution in real conflict; thus, neither of them attempts to impose his or her interest on the other. Additionally, Malcolm (1980) says that the approach assumes that each of the parties is prepared to work on their inner difficulties to ensure peaceful conflict resolution. Whetten and Cameron (2005) contend that this approach, which is sometimes referred to as the "problem solving" mode, attempts to address fully the concerns of both parties so that both of them can feel that they have won the case. The authors believe that people who use the collaborative style are highly assertive with regards to reaching their goals but have a great deal of concern for the other person.

ii) **Competing style**: According to DeVault, Sayard and Yarber (2002), choosing a competitive style to resolve a conflict means a person is putting his or her interest before everyone else's interest. As Hayes (1996) indicates, people who adopt a competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they end up ruining friendships or relationships. In the view of Nelson-Jones (1995), there is always a winner and a loser with the competing style which allows one party to adopt the "I win-you lose" approach to resolving the conflict and so does all in his or her power to win the conflict. For instance, one party's tactics may include manipulation, not telling the whole truth, not admitting mistakes and sending negative verbal, voice and body messages. This is what Connie and CFCS (2002) explain as "going all out to win the conflict". Olson and DeFrain (2001) have observed that those who employ the competitive style of conflict resolution tend to be aggressive and uncooperative, persuing personal concerns at the expense of the other and in effect, such people try to gain power by direct confrontations and try to win without adjusting their goals and desires in light of the other person's goals and desires.

iii) **Compromising style**: The BBC dictionary (1990) defines compromise as an agreement in which people concur to accept less than they originally wanted. People

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who rely on the compromising style to resolve conflict find it necessary to satisfy some of their interests but not all of them; and such people are likely to say "let us split". Whetten and Cameron (2005) posit that compromise is an attempt to have a partial satisfaction for both parties in the sense that both receive the proverbial "half loaf..." and this compels both parties to make sacrifices to obtain a common gain.

iv) **Avoiding style**: Wayne, Hoy and Miskel (2001) refer to the avoiding approach as a method of dealing with conflict from a safe emotional distance. As with viewing a distant mountain range, the specific details get lost the farther away one is. In the same way emotional distancing as part of the avoiding approach may mean that there is difficulty in emphasizing or putting on another's shoe. This brings in Wheeler's (1995) notion that people who choose the avoiding style do not normally get involved in a conflict because such people tolerate whatever their opponent does in order to escape conflict. Bettmann and Moore (1994) emphasize that the avoiding style involves a behaviour that is unassertive and uncooperative; as a result an individual chooses this style to stay out of conflict, ignore disagreements, or remain neutral. The avoiding approach might reflect a decision to let the conflict work itself out, or it might reflect an aversion or tension and frustration. In the view of Eccles and Gabarro (1995), people engaging in an avoiding strategy protect themselves from the difficulty of conflict by putting up a mental wall. They stress that even though such people want to win, they are reluctant to jump into conflict the way someone with a competing response would. Connie and CFCS (2002) opine that the avoiding strategy may be useful when it is important to give some time and space to a conflict because some people are mood driven, and a day or even a few hours can make a tremendous difference in their willingness to engage in conflict productively. This brings in the notion that timing can be extremely important in determining when a problem is brought up or a conflict is discussed, and goes with the saying that "time heals some wounds". In agreement with this assertion, Olson and DeFrain (2001) contribute that conflict may go away over time, particularly if there is continuous contact between both sides on other issues and

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that contact is mostly positive and productive. In such situations, both parties may decide that what they were upset about in the past is just not important anymore.

v) **Accommodating style**: To Connie and CFCS (2002), the accommodating style means surrendering one's own needs and wishes to please the other person. According to Olson and DeFrain (2001), people who opt for an accommodating style deny themselves to put their interest last and let others have their way. Many times, they say, such people believe that keeping a good relationship is more worthwhile than anything else. In accordance with this notion, Whetten and Cameron (2005) maintain that the accommodating style satisfies the other party's concerns while neglecting one's own. They conclude that the difficulty in habitual use of the accommodating style is that it emphasizes preserving a friendly relationship at the expense of critically appraising issues and protecting personal rights. In explaining the accommodating approach, Larson and Mildred (2000) indicate that this style involves a behaviour that is cooperative but not assertive and which may mean an unselfish and a long term strategy to encourage others to cooperate or submit to the wishes of others. They describe that accommodators are usually favourably evaluated by others but are also perceived as weak and submissive. From these sources it can be seen that until we reach utopian society, there will always be conflict as there will always be disagreement about what is fair and best for all of us. It is impossible therefore to walk through the journey of life without experiencing conflict of any kind. If we accept the inevitability of conflict, it becomes extremely necessary to gain the skills needed to be successful dispute solvers. It will also be easiest to make this kind of shift in attitude if we have good skills to resolve or respond to conflict.

Based on the discussion of the five conflict response styles, Wheeler (1995) deduces, that avoiding or ignoring conflict does nothing to improve the situation because when conflict is driven underground, it only grows and will stay underground until it is so intense that an explosion may be the next step. It is also seen that collaboration and compromise are the most productive forms of addressing conflict because there is not a winner or loser but rather a working together for the best

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possible solution. On the other hand, those who adopt a competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they ruin friendships or relationships. It is also evident that individuals who opt for the accommodating approach deny themselves to contain conflict for the benefit of others.

When conflict occurs, people most commonly employ one or a combination of these conflict response styles and generally respond to conflict using what skills they have learned and moreover, are most comfortable with. Like parenting where most people receive no formal instruction but engage in it on the basis of what has been modeled for them in the past, so do people learn how to resolve conflict through experiencing one or more of these problem-solving styles in use. This implies that people have options for managing or resolving conflicts. The decision to maintain good relationships after conflict is perhaps, the best option. This is also probably the best option for resolving conflicts in the school system in order to sustain interpersonal relationships to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Positive Effects of Conflicts

According to Boulding (1993), despite the adverse effects that conflict can produce, disagreement between people has its good side. Although the definition of conflict does not seem to be beneficial at a glance, it has intrinsic importance when they are critically scrutinized. Wehlege and Wisconsin (2000) point out that conflict is a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces and the society at large and that when we disagree, it sharpens our focus and defines what the important issues are. However, Wheeler and Terrence (1995) indicate that suppression of conflict and dissent is a sure sign that freedom is on the decline and democracy is in trouble. Likewise, Aldag and Stearns (1987) explain that theorists and practitioners today view conflict as a useful force in an organization and, if managed correctly, can be a potential force for innovation and change. In disagreeing with the notion that conflict is inherently destructive, Robbins (2000) instead asserts that a certain amount of conflict in an organization is healthy as it prevents the organization from stagnating and from

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producing myopic decisions. From this perspective, Larson and Mildred (2000) believe that when conflicts are effectively managed, it can lead to outcomes that are productive and can enhance the health of the organization overtime. Thus, conflict in itself is neither good nor bad in value terms; it is natural. They explain that its impact on an organization and the behaviour of the people in it is largely dependent on the way it is treated. Jennings and Wattam (2005) also agree to the assertion that conflict is a necessary agent to stimulate change and innovation and that problems and inefficiencies in working will be highlighted by conflict whereas attempts to eliminate conflict can lead to such matters being "swept under the carpet". To add to this, Owens (2001) precisely notes that healthy competition and rivalry can lead to better decisions being made as attention is more clearly focused on the issue. Eccles and Gabbaro (1995) also note that the impact of such conflict is that groups can become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams, increasing more group and individual motivation which goes a long way to boost standards of performance as a result of commitment and concern to make better decisions.

Negative Effects of Conflicts

If conflict has its good side then it has a negative side as well. According to Aldag and Stearns (1987), anyone who has ever worked in an organization knows that conflict exists and that it can have destructive effects on the organization and the members' activities. Nelson-Jones (1995) explains that not only can conflict in the workplace cause great stress and unhappiness but it also can lower outputs and in extreme cases, bring strikes. Furthermore, Barker and Gum (1994) emphatically state that many times, in the midst of conflict, opposing individuals or groups will put their own interests or goals above those of the organization, resulting in the lessening of the organization's effectiveness. Owens (2001) also opines that frequent and powerful conflict can have a devastating impact on the behaviour of people in an organization in that conflict often develops into hostility which also causes people to withdraw both physically and psychologically. In a school situation, physical withdrawal can take the form of absence, tardiness and turnover which is often written off by laziness on the

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part of the teacher. Psychological withdrawal can also take the form of alienation, apathy and indifference.

On this score, Jorgensen and Henderson (1990) add that though a solution may be reached in conflict resolution, the means of gaining the solution may cause pain to the people involved and general weakening of relationships. Contributing to the adverse effects of conflict, Eccles and Gabbaro (1995) assert that conflict can lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as mob action, property damage and minor theft of property. They explain that in some cases, the frustrated individual may direct aggression against the person or object perceived to be the cause of the conflict. In other instances, Hopkins and Raynolds (1995) say that aggression may be displaced towards a person who is not directly involved in the situation. For instance, a teacher may displace aggression on a pupil who is not directly involved in a conflict between the child's parent and the teacher by inflicting various forms of punishments on the pupil. Whetten and Cameron (2005) conclude that most people have ample evidence that conflict often produces harmful results because some people have a very low tolerance for disagreement (whether it is a result of family background, cultural values or personality characteristics) and that interpersonal conflict saps their energy and demoralizes their spirits.

It can be seen from the discussion that the notion that conflict has negative effects and thus, should be eliminated does not wholly give the right impression. It is seen from the literature cited that in modern times, conflict has been given a different dimension resulting in the idea that conflict is neither inherently good nor bad but simply inevitable wherever people are found. It should be accepted that too much conflict can have adverse effects on individuals, groups and organizations because conflict resolution involves using up productive time and scarce resources, and diversion of energies that could more constructively be used elsewhere.

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On the other hand, little or no conflict in an organization for instance can also be a negative sign as it can lead to apathy and lethargy, and provide little or no impetus for change and innovation. Conflicts may be beneficial if they are used as instruments for change or innovation. As seen from the discussion, conflicts can improve relationships and the quality of decision making in an organization if they are managed constructively. It is also evident from the literature cited that some conflict situations produce nothing positive and that conflict may have either positive or negative consequences for individuals, organisations and the society depending on its frequency and how it is managed. As people try to settle conflicts with physical reactions which produce negative outcomes like hitting, kicking and scratching which hurt people, such physical reactions may be interpreted as a means of finding solution to the problems. These however, tend to be damaging to relationships while violence may lead to more violence. Another negative effect of conflict is that emotions are sometimes so strong that some people want to strike at the other person. Whether conflict can produce positive or negative effects depends on how that conflict is tackled or the strategy used to settle or resolve the conflict.

Conflict and attrition in Secondary schools.

From a pragmatic point of view, student retention is seen as a mark of a quality institution and, increasingly in these times of budget cutbacks, funding and headcounts are closely linked (White and Mosely, 1995). While there are some factors influencing attrition that are beyond the control of secondary schools, such as race, age, gender and socioeconomic status (Cooke, Sims and Peyrefitt, 1995), there are many ways in which secondary schools may be able to do more to prevent it if sufficient information is available to understand more about it (Rickinson and Rutherford, 1996). If data are available to predict which students are at risk of dropping out, then counselling staff and academics will be able to focus attention on addressing potential problems before they occur (Cooke et al., 1995).

There has been a lot of research undertaken to investigate factors affecting attrition rates of undergraduate students, but comparatively little concerned with

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secondary school students. Further research with the latter group is important, since they differ from the former according to age, career stage, personal life circumstances, reasons for pursuing education, and finances (Cooke et al., 1995).

Phythian and Clements (1980) reported job, domestic pressure and course content too hardor long as three main reasons for dropout from third –level mathematics courses in open university, UK. Rekkedal (1983) reported a number of reasons for learners' dropout from the NKI school, Norway like, lack of time, job commitments, changed career plans, economic reasons, illness, unsatisfactory living or study conditions, and personal reasons. Kennedy and Powell (1976) opined that attrition is a phenomenon caused by learners' characteristics (educational background, personality, motivation, aptitude and so on) and life circumstances (occupation, relationship with family and peer group, health and so on). Thompson (1997) conducted a study to investigate the extent to which a range of demographic, academic and administrative variables were related to attrition and persistence of external students enrolled in the fourth year of the Bachelor of Education course at Edith Cowan University during semester, 1995. Those students who withdrew from their studies had less teaching experience and completed fewer units and semesters of study. The majority of student reported that work, family and study commitments were the main reason(s) for their withdrawal. Withdrawn students were much less satisfied with the level of communication with the tutor and their assignment feedback.

Some other researchers also have identified conflict between the study and other commitments in family, social cr working life as one of the important reasons for dropout (Louttit, 1968; Cullen, 1994; Smith, 1987; Fan and Chan, 1997). Some researchers reported psychological reasons for attrition like, feeling of inadequacy, distress (Rickinson and Rutherford, 1996); lack of confidence (Cullen, 1994) examination anxiety (Fan and Chan, 1997) and so on. Dissatisfaction with the course content or learning environment (Chyung, Winiecki and Fenner, 1998) and difficult content (Fan and Chan, 1997) have also been identified as important reasons for attrition.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter includes; research design, area and population of study, sampling framework (sample size, sampling techniques, and sampling procedure), methods (instruments and sources of data), validity of the instruments, data gathering procedure, data analysis, ethical consideration, limitation of the study and the conclusion.

Research Design

The study used descriptive correlative survey design. Correlative because the study intended to find the relationship between Conflict and Attrition. The study followed a paradigm of non experimental descriptive research which is a survey design because it involves soliciting responses from the respondents once and for all. The study also applied expost factor design since data on student attrition was picked directly from the records in the offices of the selected schools.

Research Population

The population of this study consisted of all the teachers and students in Magwi secondary schools. Magwi County has a total of 14 secondary schools. There are a total of 570 students in upper secondary (form 3 and 4) schools. The total numbers of teachers in these secondary schools are 132.

Sample Sizes

A total of 7 schools were used as sample population for the study. The researcher endeavored to access, students as principal respondents of the study. The selected schools had a population of 256 form four and three students. Out of this, 156 were selected randomly using Slovenes' (1978) formula

Table 1: Study Population

Selected schools	Form 3 and 4 population	Sample population	Sampling Method
A	22	17	Simple random
B	28	23	Simple random
C	24	18	Simple random
D	20	10	Simple random
E ---	30	24	Simple random
F	58	41	Simple random
G	55	40	Simple random
Total	256	156	Simple random

According Slovenes' (1978) formula for sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where n = the sample size

N = Parent Population

e = the level of significance and this is 0.05.

Sampling Procedure

Simple random sampling was employed on 256 students to get the required sample.

Research Instruments

The study employed a researcher made questionnaire in data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two major sections, A and B. section A covered variables on the profile of the respondents. Section B, which was further sub divided into 5 parts from B (i)-B(v), majorly measured the independent variable of the study-conflict. The study also used a checklist to collect data on students' attrition.

Reliability of the Instruments

The reliability of any questionnaire is the consistency with which the same results are achieved. This always depends on the questionnaire and the person answering. Then the validity of a questionnaire relies on its reliability. If a questionnaire cannot be shown to be reliable, then there is no element of validity to be discussed. However validity and reliability are related in such a manner that a valid instrument is reliable but not vice versa. The test re-test technique was used to determine the reliability (accuracy) of the researcher devised instruments to twenty respondents. This was scrutinized by expert judges including the supervisors.

Validity of the Instrument

Content Validity Index (CVI) of a questionnaire focuses on the extent to which the instrument corresponds to the theoretical content as designed to measure. Content validity refers to the degree to which the text actually measures the traits for which it was designed. The split half reliability or sub divided test was calculated to further ascertain the coefficient of internal consistency. The test scores was split into two subsets, placing odd numbered items in one sub set and the even items in the other sub set. The scores were then computed for each individually using the Pearson product moment formula.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Objective one was analyzed using frequency tables and percentages. Objective two and three were analyzed using means and standard deviation. Objective four was analyzed using co relational tools mainly Pearson Correlation coefficient (PLCC) to determine the coefficient of the correlation 'r', deduce the relationship and level of significance.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the administration of the questionnaires

1. An introduction letter was obtained from the School of Post Graduate Studies and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective heads of primary schools.
2. When approved, the researcher secured a list of the qualified respondents from the school authorities in charge and selected through systematic random sampling from this list to arrive at the minimum sample size.
3. The respondents were explained to about the study and were requested to sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix 3).
4. Reproduced more than enough questionnaires for distribution.

During the administration of the questionnaires

1. The respondents were requested to answer completely and not to leave any part of the questionnaires unanswered.
2. The researcher and assistants emphasized retrieval of the questionnaires within five days from the date of distribution.
3. On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked if all were answered.

After the administration of the questionnaires

The data gathered was collated, encoded into the computer and statistically treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher:

1. The respondents and schools were coded instead of reflecting the names.
2. Solicited permission through a written request to the concerned officials of the primary schools included in the study.

3. Requested the respondents to sign in the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix 3)
4. Acknowledged the authors quoted in this study and the author of the standardized instrument through citations and referencing.
5. Presented the findings in a generalized manner.

Limitations of the Study

In view of the following threats to validity, the researcher claimed an allowable 5% margin of error at 0.05 level of significance. Measures were also indicated in order to minimize if not to eradicate the threats to the validity of the findings of this study.

1. *Extraneous variables* which were beyond the researcher's control such as respondents' honesty, personal biases and uncontrolled setting of the study.
2. *Instrumentation:* The research instruments on teaching strategies and language acquisition was self made. Therefore a validity and reliability test will be done to produce a credible measurement of the research variables.
3. *Testing:* The use of research assistants might have brought about inconsistency in the administration of the questionnaires in terms of time of administration, understanding of the items in the questionnaires and explanations given to the respondents. To minimize this threat, the research assistants were oriented and briefed on the procedures to be done in data collection.
4. *Attrition/Mortality:* Not all questionnaires were returned completely answered nor even retrieved back due to circumstances on the part of the respondents such as travels, sickness, hospitalization and refusal/withdrawal to participate. In anticipation to this, the researcher reserved more respondents by exceeding the minimum sample size. The respondents were also reminded not to leave any item in the questionnaires unanswered and were closely followed up as to the date of retrieval.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION of DATA

Introduction

This chapter shows the profile of the respondents, description of the level of the conflict and students' attrition comparison of means basing on sex and age in relationship between conflict and students' attrition in secondary schools in Magwi County Eastern Equatoria State ,South Sudan. Data presentation, analysis and interpretation were done basing on the research objectives.

Table 2;

Profile of the Respondents

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender;	Male	58	37
	Female	98	63
Total		156	100
Age;	15-19	143	92
	20-24	13	8
Total		156	100

Source; field data

From table 2, the researcher discovered that as pertains to sex of the respondents, the number of female students outweighed that of male students with a big margin. The girls form 63% of the total population where as the boys are only 37 %. This could insinuate that the society in which the study was carried out respect the value of the girl child thus taking more girls to school. Most boys in this age also start engaging themselves in economic activities such as quarrying stones and farming at a tender age thus making them not to cherish schooling.

With respect to age, the bulk of the respondents were formed by those who are below twenty years at 92%, where as those who had reached 20 years and above were only

8%.this could mean that the academic progression of most students in this division is normal and good since most of them join primary one at the age of 7 or 8, thus it is only expected that by the time they reach form three or four they are about 17 or 18 years old.

The independent variable

The independent variable in this study was conflict. In this study however, conflict was conceptualized into 5 aspects, which were measured with varying items in the questionnaire; student teacher conflict (measured with 8 items), student- parent conflict,(measured with 6 items), student -student conflict (measured with 8 items) student- support staff conflict (5 items), teacher- teacher conflict (5 items). The questions were likert scaled within a range of using strongly agree 4, agree 3, disagree 2, and strongly disagree 1. The response was as below;

Legend	Response mode.	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Very high
3	Agree	high
2	disagree	low
1	strongly disagree	very low

Table 3;
Level of Conflict in Magwi County Secondary Schools

Indicators of Conflict	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
B (1) Student- teacher conflict			
You are often at logger head with your teachers over indiscipline.	2.84	Low	2
There often exists rivalry over love affairs between students and teachers in your school.	2.31	Low	2
You often disagree with your teachers over academic performance.	2.24	Low	2
You often disagree with your teachers over awarding of marks.	2.57	Low	2
Your teachers and you disagree as a result of negative peer pressure.	3.49	High	3
Lateness is a major cause of conflict between students and teachers.	2.57	Low	2
You always disagree with your teachers over favouratism.	3.49	High	3
Difference in opinion always makes you disagree with your teachers.	2.57	Low	2
Total mean	**2.76**	**Low**	**2**
B (ii) Student-parent conflict			
You often disagree with your parents over indiscipline.	3.12	High	3
Your parent and you often conflict over responsibilities at home.	2.42	Low	2
Boy-girl relationship often makes you disagree with your parents.	3.12	High	3
Poor academic performance often makes you disagree with your parents.	2.67	Low	2
Lack of school fees often makes you fight with your parents.	1.94	Very low	1
You often disagree with your parents over failure to provide basic needs.	1.93	Very low	1
Total mean	**2.50**	Low	2
B (iii) Student- student conflict			

You always conflict with your fellow students over theft of property .	2.94	Low	2
You always fight with your fellow students over difference in opinion .	2.10	Low	2
Disrespect for prefects always makes you quarrel.	1.74	Very low	1
You often disagree with your fellow students over academic jealousy.	2.65	Low	2
Rivalry for attention always makes you fight with your friends.	2.39	Low	2
Boy-girl relationship always makes you conflict with your friends.	2.49	Low	2
You always disagree with your friends because of negative attitude.	2.32	Low	2
Indiscipline often makes you conflict with your fellow students.	2.99	Low	2
Total mean	**2.46**	Low	2
B (iv) Student-support staff Conflict			
You always disagree with the school support staff over their harshness.	2.82	Low	2
Favoritism always makes you disagree with your support staff.	3.74	Low	2
Low quantity of food always makes you disagree with your support staff.	3.07	High	3
You always disagree with your support staff over poor quality food.	2.45	Low	3
Difference in opinion always makes you disagree with your support staff.	1.24	Very Low	2
Total mean	**2.67**	**Low**	**2**
B (v) Teacher- teacher .			
Teachers in your school often disagree over negative attitude.	1.32	Very low	1
Modes of disciplining students often make teachers in your school conflict.	3.23	High	3
Unbalanced timetable always make teachers conflict in your school.	3.82	High	3
Love relationships often make your teachers fight.	2.24	Low	2

Performing and non performing teachers always conflict in your school.	3.93	High	3
Total mean.	2.91	Low	2
Overall mean.	2.66	Low	2

Source; Field data

According to Table 3, The overall level of conflict in Magwi County was rated as low with an overall mean index of 2.66. In respect to the aspects of conflict, student teacher conflict was rated as low with a mean of 2.76. Within this aspect however, the fact that teachers and students in that area disagree over negative peer pressure was ranked high with a mean of 3.49. This was also the same with the fact that the students always disagree with their teachers over favoritism. This had a mean of 3.49 as well.

This could stem from the pastoralists nature of most South Sudanese societies where nepotism and tribalism has deep roots; possibly, this vice has been extended to the school setting by the teachers and students. However, some items scored least means and they include; they often disagree over academic performance, a mean of 2.24, disagreement over difference in opinion, a mean of 2.57, disagreement over awarding of marks, a mean of 2.57, rivalry over love affairs 2.31 among others.

The aspect of student-parent conflict was also rated as low with a total mean index of 2.50. this aspect however had items that were rated so high including the fact that they often disagree over indiscipline, a mean of 3.12 and the fact that boy girl relationship makes them disagree oftenly, a mean of 3.12, aspects that were rated low include, fighting over poor academic performance, a mean of 2.67, conflicting over responsibilities at home among others. There are also aspects that ranked very low and they include, lack of school fees making them fight 1.94, and failure to provide basic need by the parents, a mean of 1.93.

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The aspect of student-student conflict also was rated low with a total mean of 2.46. within it, no item ranked high and almost all of them ranked low within a range of mean of 2, except the fact that disrespect of prefects always makes them fight which ranked lowest with a mean of 1.74. Other items like disagreeing over theft, difference in opinion, disagreement over academic jealousy, and disagreement over negative attitude among others all had a mean range of 2.

In respect to student-support staff conflict, the total mean was 2.67, indicating low levels of conflict in this category. However, elements within it such as disagreement over their harshness, and disagreement over poor quality food had low means of 2.82 and 2.45 respectively. Elements such as conflict over low quantity of food and favoritism had high means of 3.07 and 3.74 respectively. Difference in opinion however had the least score with a mean of 1.24.

As pertains to teacher- teacher relationship, there was a total mean of 2.91, with in our decision rule is considered also low. However within it, aspects such as difference over non performance, difference over modes of disciplining students and difference over unbalanced time tables scored high with means of 3.93, 3.23 and 3.82 respectively. Conflict over love relationship was ranked low with a mean of 2.24 and finally disagreement over attitude ranked very low with a mean of 1.32

The dependent variable

The dependent variable of the study was students' attrition , conceptualized in terms of students leaving school before the completion of their 4 years course, which was measured in terms of students who left the school on yearly basis between 2007-2010 ranked as very low (1-5), low (6-11), high (12-17), very high (18-22). the raw data on student attrition was obtained from the schools, their tendencies were summarized using means as indicated in table 4 below.;

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Table 4;

The Level of Students attrition rate

Rating	Interpretation	Rank
(0-5)	Very Low	4
(6-11)	Low	3
(12-17)	High	2
(18-22)	Very High	1

Year	Enrolment	Number that left	Rate of attrition in %	Interpretation
2007	2200			
2008	1956	244	10.9	Low
2009	1897	59	3.0	Very low
2010	1782	115	6.1	Low
Total	1693	89	4.5	Very low
Total		507	24.5	
Grand % mean		6.125		Low

Source; field data 2012

Results from the table 4 above points to the fact that the rate of students' attrition in the sampled schools is generally low. This is so evident in the above table where the rate of students' attrition mostly lies within the rank of 0-5. For example, on average, annually, students' attrition rate ranged between 3-4 in the decision rule. The total number of students who joined form 1 in 2007 was 2200 and by the end of that year, 244 had dropped out, when the same class joined form three, the population was 1897 and by the time that year was ending their population had reduced by 115 presumably because most of them failed to get good grades that could have them promoted to the candidate class, when they began form four, they were 1782 and yet by the end of that

year they had reduced by 4.5% this could have been due to failure by most of these students to raise National examination registration fees. A closer look at the performance indicates that on average, the general students' attrition level in the sampled schools was reported to be generally low hence the need to understand the cause.

The relationship between the level of school conflict and students' attrition rate

The purpose of this study was to establish whether there was a significant relationship between the level of school conflict and students' attrition rate. School conflict was categorized into five aspects namely; student- teacher conflict, student-student conflict, student-support staff conflict, student-parent conflict and teacher-teacher conflict. The adequacy of these aspects in each category was measured using means as shown in Table 4. In an attempt to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the two variables, the researcher used linear correlation coefficient to correlate the mean indices of the five aspects of school environment. Results on this test are shown on table 5 below.

Table 5;

Relationship between level of Conflict and level of Students' attrition

Category	Mean	Computed r-value	Critical value	Interpretation	Decision
Level of Conflict Vs	2.66	0.714	0.000	Positive significant correlation	Rejected
Level of Students' attrition	6.13				

Source; Field data

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From the above table according to Pearson's coefficient the relationship between school conflict and students dropout rate is strong and has the value of 0.714.

Computed r-value was generated from mean scores of the relationship between school conflict and dropout rate of students in Magwi County secondary schools. The critical value was generated from books of statistics/r-values.

The above table gives the nature and type of relationship between the school conflict and the students' attrition rate, the discrepancy between the computed value and the critical value reveals that there is a significant relationship between the level of school conflict and the level of students' dropout rate.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter describes the major findings from the field, summery, conclusions, recommendations, general recommendations and the areas for further research. The conclusions in this chapter were reached at, using the totality of the findings in chapter four. In addition the, the chapter explains the answers to the research questions, the assumptions that were cited by the researcher in the background to the study and in the statement of the problem in chapter one. The areas for further research are also suggested here.

This study was guided by four specific objectives, namely, to find out the profile of the respondents in respect to age and gender, to find out the level of conflict in secondary schools, to find out the level of attrition in these secondary schools and finally to find the relationship that exists between level of conflict and level of student attrition in these schools.

FINDINGS

Basing on the analysis in chapter four, the study made the following findings;

Students in Magwi County secondary schools as pertains to sex of the respondents, the number of female students out weight that of male students with a big margin. The girls form 63% of the total population where as the boys are only 37 %. This could insinuate that the society in which the study was carried out respect the value of the girl child thus taking more girls to school. Most boys in this age also start engaging themselves in economic activities such as quarrying stones and farming at a tender age thus making them not to cherish schooling. With respect to age, the bulk of the respondents were formed by those who are below twenty years at 92%, where as those who had reached 20 years and above were only 8%.this could mean that the

academic progression of most students in this division is normal and good since most of them join primary one at the age of 7 or 8, thus it is only expected that by the time they reach form three or four they are about 17 or 18 years old.

As pertains to conflict in Magwi County secondary schools, The overall level of conflict in Magwi County was rated as low with an overall mean index of 2.66. In respect to the aspects of conflict, student teacher conflict was rated as low with a mean of 2.76. Within this aspect however, the fact that teachers and students in that area disagree over negative peer pressure was ranked high with a mean of 3.49. This was also the same with the fact that the students always disagree with their teachers over favoritism. This had a mean of 3.49 as well. This could stem from the tribalistic nature of most Southern Sudanese societies where nepotism and tribalism has deep roots; possibly, this vice has been extended to the school setting by the teachers and students. However, some items scored least means and they include; they often disagree over academic performance, a mean of 2.24, disagreement over difference in opinion, a mean of 2.57, disagreement over awarding of marks, a mean of 2.57, rivalry over love affairs 2.31 among others.

The aspect of student parent conflict was also rated as low with a total mean index of 2.50. this aspect however had items that were rated so high including the fact that they often disagree over indiscipline, a mean of 3.12 and the fact that boy girl relationship makes them disagree oftenly, a mean of 3.12, aspects that were rated low include, fighting over poor academic performance, a mean of 2.67, conflicting over responsibilities at home among others. There are also aspects that ranked very low and they include, lack of school fees making them fight 1.94, and failure to provide basic need by the parents, a mean of 1.93. The aspect of student-student conflict also was rated low with a total mean of 2.46. Within it, no item ranked high and almost all of them ranked low within a range of mean of 2, except the fact that disrespect of prefects always make them fight which ranked lowest with a mean of 1.74. Other items

like disagreeing over theft, difference in opinion, disagreement over academic jealousy, and disagreement over negative attitude among others all had a mean range of 2.

In respect to student-support staff conflict, the total mean was 2.67, indicating low levels of conflict in this category. However, elements within it such as disagreement over their harshness, and disagreement over poor quality food had low means of 2.82 and 2.45 respectively. Elements such as conflict over low quantity of food and favoritism had high means of 3.07 and 3.74 respectively. Difference in opinion however had the least score with a mean of 1.24. As pertains to teacher- teacher relationship, there was a total mean of 2.91, with in our decision rule is considered also low. However within it, aspects such as difference over non performance, difference over modes of disciplining students and difference over unbalanced time tables scored high with means of 3.93, 3.23 and 3.82 respectively. Conflict over love relationship was ranked low with a mean of 2.24 and finally disagreement over attitude ranked very low with a mean of 1.32

With reference to level of students' attrition in Magwi County secondary schools, the study found out that that the rate of students' attrition in the sampled schools was generally low. This is so evident in the table 4 where the rate of students' attrition mostly lies within the rank of 0-5. For example, on average, annually, students' attrition rate ranged between 3-4 in the decision rule. The total number of students who joined form 1 in 2007 was 2200 and by the end of that year, 244 had dropped out, when the same class joined form three, the population was 1897 and by the time that year was ending their population had reduced by 115 presumably because most of them failed to get good grades that could have them promoted to the candidate class, when they began form four, they were 1782 and yet by the end of that year they had reduced by 4.5% this could have been due to failure by most of these students to raise National examination registration fees. A closer look at the performance indicates that on average, the general students' attrition level in the sampled schools was reported to be generally low.

On the basis of the relationship between level conflict and level of students' attrition, according to Pearson's coefficient the relationship between school conflict and students dropout rate is strong and has the value of 0.714. Computed r-value was generated from mean scores of the relationship between school conflict and dropout rate of students in Magwi County secondary schools. The critical value was generated from books of statistics/r-values. Table 5 gives the nature and type of relationship between the school conflict and the students' dropout rate, the discrepancy between the computed value and the critical value reveals that there is a significant relationship between the level of school conflict and the level of students' dropout rate.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that;

1. There are more girls than boys in Magwi County Secondary schools and that most of the students in secondary schools in this division are aged between 15-19 years.
2. The level of conflict in the secondary schools in Magwi county is low.
3. The level of students' attrition from Magwi county secondary schools is low.
4. There is a strong significant relationship between the level of conflict and students'. attrition rate

RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to causes of conflict in secondary schools in Magwi County, the study recommended that: The Head teachers should enhance professionalism in dealing with causes of conflict. The Head teachers should enhance effective communication with all stakeholders in the school to minimize causes of conflict. The Head teachers should identify causes of conflict in schools and curb them to minimize various forms of

Conflict. The Head teachers should enhance effective management to resolution strategies to the Head of departments to enable them manage teams in their

Departments Ministry of Education should enhance capacity building for stakeholders in education to equip them with necessary conflict management strategies to overcome conflicts in schools. The Head teachers should adopt arbitration, reconciliation, climate of trust, collaboration, negotiations on effective communication as effective strategies in resolving conflict in schools.

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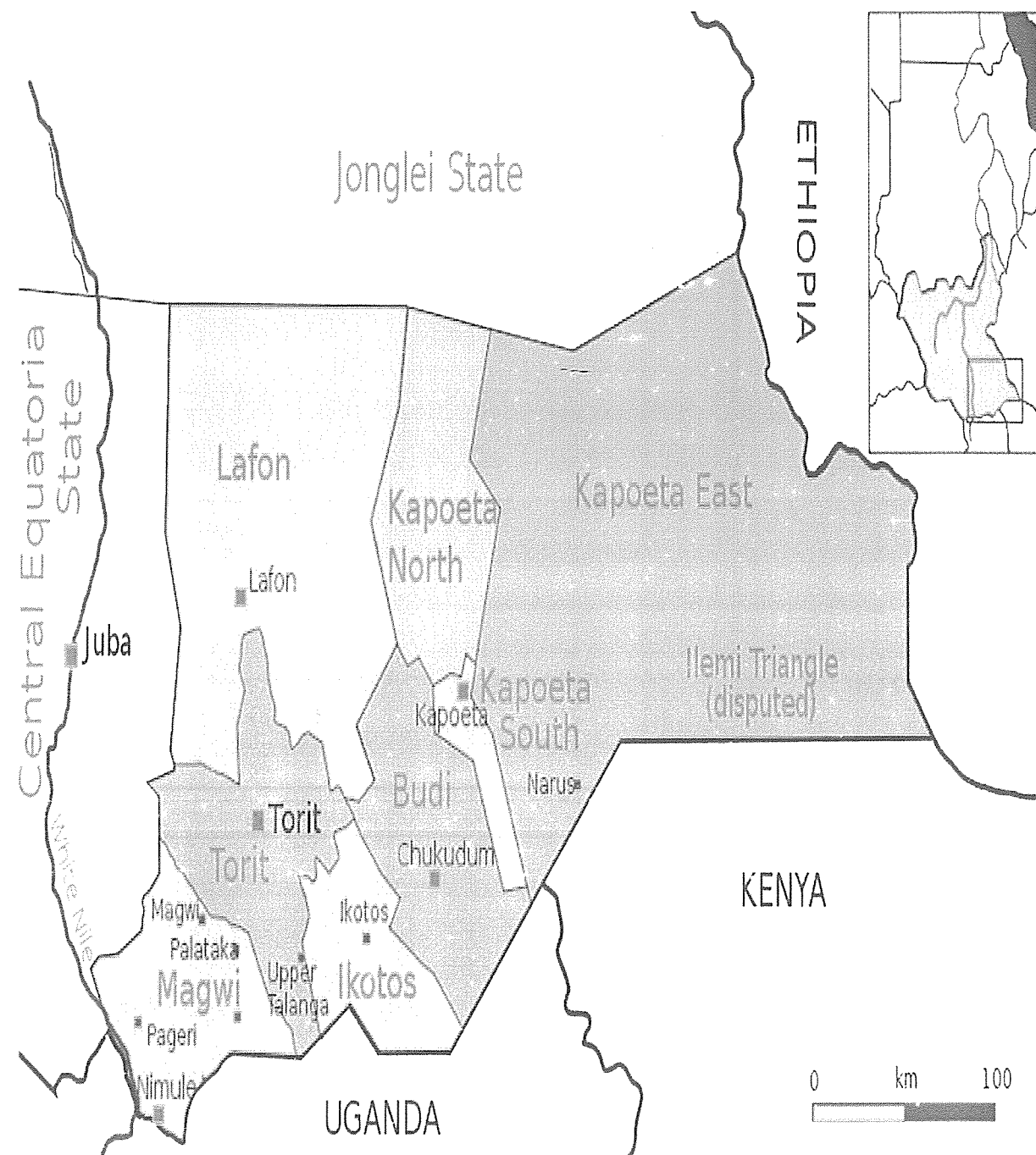Gray, P., Miller, A. and Noakes, J. (1995). *Challenging Behaviour in School.* Routledge, New York.

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MAP OF SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan–Sudan boundary represents January 1, 1956 alignment; final alignment pending negotiations and demarcation.

SUDAN

Abyei Area

Area of dispute

Raga

Aweil

Bentiu

Kuacjok

Wau

Tonj

Rumbek

Kodok

Malakal

Sudd

ETHIOPIA

Bor

Boma

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Yambio

JUBA

Torit

Nimule

Kinyeti

Ilemi Triangle

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Congo

KENYA

UGANDA

0   100   200 km
0   100   200 mil

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Ggaba Road - Kansanga
P.O. Box 20000, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 - 414 - 266813 / +256 - 772 - 322563
Fax: +256 - 414 - 501 974
E-mail: admin@kiu.ac.ug
Website: www.kiu.ac.ug

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF HIGHER DEGREES AND RESEARCH (CHDR)

Date: 18th July, 2012

**RE: REQUEST OF OLEGA JACKSON DANIEL MCR/17849/71/DU
TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION**

The above mentioned is a bonafide student of Kampala International University pursuing Masters in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building.

He is currently conducting a research entitled " **Conflict and Students' Attrition in Secondary Schools in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria State , South Sudan."**

Your organization has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to his research project. The purpose of this letter is to request you to avail him with the pertinent information he may need.

Any information shared with him from your organization shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Mr. Malinga Ramadhan
Head of Department,
Economics and Management Sciences, (CHDR)

NOTED BY:
Dr. Sofia Sol T. Gaite
Principal-CHDR

"Exploring the Heights"

**KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
MASTERS PROGRAM**

Dear respondent,

Greetings!!

I am a candidate for Masters in Conflict Resolution at Kampala International University (KIU) and currently pursuing a thesis entitled **Conflict and students' attrition in secondary schools in Magwi county, Eastern Equatoria State South Sudan.** In view of this empirical investigation, may I request your assistance by being part of this study by answering the questionnaire. Rest assured that the information you provide shall be kept with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purpose only.

As you answer the questionnaire, be reminded to respond to the items in the questionnaires thus not leaving any item un answered. Further, May I retrieve this questionnaire in 5 days after you have received it? Thank you very much in advance.

Yours faith fully

MR. Olega Jackson Daniel

....

APPENDIX III

INFORMED CONSENT

I am giving my consent to be part of the research study of **Olega Jackson Daniel** that will focus on **Conflict and Students' attrition in Secondary Schools in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan** . I shall be assured of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality and that I will be given the option to refuse participation and right to withdraw my participation any time.

I have been informed that the research is voluntary and that the results will be given to me if I ask for it.

Initials:_____

Date_____

APPENDIX IV

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Section A; Profile of the respondents

Please tick against the appropriate answer for the closed questions below.

Q1.   Sex
        A)   Male   [ ]
        B)   Female   [ ]

Q2.   How old are you?
        A)   15-19   [ ]
        B)   20-above   [ ]

Section B

Respond to these below questions using Strongly agree 1, agree2, , disagree 3, and strongly disagree 4.

Indicators of conflict	1	2	3	4
B (1) student- teacher conflict				
1 You are often at logger head with your teachers over indiscipline				
2 There often exists rivalry over love affairs between students and teachers in your school				
3 You often disagree with your teachers over academic performance				
4 You often disagree with your teachers over awarding of marks				
5 Your teachers and you disagree as a result of negative peer pressure				

6	Lateness is a major cause of conflict between students and teachers				6
7	You always disagree with your teachers over favouratism				
8	Difference in opinion always makes you disagree with your teachers				
	B (ii) Student-parent conflict				
1	You often disagree with your parents over indiscipline				
2	Your parent and you often conflict over responsibilities at home				
3	Boy-girl relationship often makes you disagree with your parents				
4	Poor academic performance often makes you disagree with your parents				
5	Lack of school fees often makes you fight with your parents				
5	You often disagree with your parents over failure to provide basic needs				
	B (iii) Student- student conflict				
1	You always conflict with your fellow students over theft of property				
2	You always fight with your fellow students over difference in opinion				
3	Disrespect for prefects always makes you quarrel				
4	You often disagree with your fellow students over academic jealousy				
5	Rivalry for attention always makes you fight with your friends				
5	Boy-girl relationship always makes you conflict with your friends				
7	You always disagree with your friends because of negative attitude				

8	Indiscipline often makes you conflict with your fellow students					
	B (iv) Students-support staff					
1	You always disagree with the school support staff over their harshness					
2	Favoritism always makes you disagree with your support staff					
3	Low quantity of food always makes you disagree with your support staff					
4	You always disagree with your support staff over poor quality food					
5	Difference in opinion always makes you disagree with your support staff					
	B (v) Teacher- teacher					
1	Teachers in your school often disagree over negative attitude					
2	Modes of disciplining students often make teachers in your school conflict					
3	Unbalanced timetable always make teachers conflict in your school					
4	Love relationships often make your teachers fight					
5	Performing and non performing teachers always conflict in your school					

APPENDIX V

RECORD SHEET; STUDENTS' ATTRITION

Rating	Interpretation	Rank
(0-5)	Very Low	4
(6-11)	Low	3
(12-17)	High	2
(18-22)	Very High	1

Year	Enrolment	Number that left	Rate of attrition in %	Interpretation
2007	2200			
2008	1956	244	10.9	Low
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Total	1693	89	4.5	Very low
Total		507	24.5	
Grand % mean			6.125	Low

Source; Field data