THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB) IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY

By

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for

the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In the subject

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF G.D. KAMPER

JANUARY 2013

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I declare that **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB) IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY** is my own work and that all the resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

(Majola V.J.)

Signature ………………………..   Date   <u>15/12/2012</u>

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SUMMARY

The study focused on the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in the management of conflict in schools. The investigation was done in one of the secondary schools in Gauteng Province. Causes of conflict and the challenges facing the SGB, teachers, learners and parents have been discussed. Types and nature of conflict have been listed and discussed including the resolutions and management of conflict. A literature review provided a conceptual framework and covered definitions of conflict, conflict management strategies, conflict resolution, governance and qualities required for a successful SGB in governing conflict in a secondary school. An empirical investigation using a qualitative approach was conducted and data gathered by means of interviews with the SGB. Finally a synopsis of findings and recommendations was made to assist the policy makers, departmental officials, SGBs, principals, teachers and parents in proper management of conflict in secondary schools.

KEY WORDS

School governing body, school conflict, conflict management, conflict resolution, school governance.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with my utmost pleasure to acknowledge the following people for their assistance.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DoE	Department of Education
GEM/BEM	Girls Education Movement/Boys Education Movement
MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Conflict mostly has a negative connotation, but in actual sense it can either be destructive or constructive. Conflict naturally occurs in human interaction and if managed properly, can be a very constructive avenue for needed change (Coser 1964, in Vestal & Jones 2004: 131). I have observed and felt the negative consequences of conflict in my workplace among the school management team (SMT) members which ultimately involves the Post level (PL) 1 teachers. Teachers at the grassroots level eventually become confused when the SMT members fight one another. This conflict is painful, especially if it is not managed properly. The pain I had in my heart due to conflicts happening in my workplace, including my observations of the negative impact caused by conflicts in some of the schools as seen in the media whereby some teachers are harassed and some learners are molested and raped in the school yard, developed my interest in this topic. Particularly, my focus is on the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management, since this body is the key agent in school governance.

The School Governing Body (SGB) as mandated by the South African School Act 84 of 1996 has a legal responsibility to minimize and manage conflicts to ensure that schools are safe, secure and conducive to teaching and learning by ensuring that the necessary policies, procedures and structures are in place (Squelch 2001:138). Unfortunately, in the literature, the current status of knowledge pertaining to the role of the SGB in conflict management as reported by Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53) is that conflict management measures receive little attention in schools, and when provided, such programmes are presented by stakeholders other than the SGB. The SGB is only mentioned as a participatory body in conflict management.

According to Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007: 78) conflict management refers to the deliberate interventions by managers to stimulate and encourage beneficial or helpful conflict and to resolve, suppress or prevent harmful conflict.   Conflict

management has become part of an effective management style. As a result of its effectiveness as management style, conflict management can no longer be ignored by education leaders and they should make provision for handling and solving conflict within the context of the school (Loock 2003: 29).

Media coverage shows the increasing number of tragic events and violence that take place within the school yard and in the community due to conflicts between the stakeholders of the school. For an example, according to the television news, in one of the high schools in Pietermaritzburg, a learner was stabbed and killed by the other learner of the same school. The victim died on his way to hospital on the 24/10/2012. According to the SGB of that school the perpetrators were still roaming around the school premises. These conflicts originate from the school and sometimes flow into the community or **vice versa**. According to Tshigwane (2008:3) conflicts emanate from the many changes that have been introduced in South African school education such as conflict over allocations, new post establishments, promotional posts and others that concern learners.

The high numbers of injuries and deaths that occur within the schools have brought awareness to the authorities in the schools such as the SGB to take action by managing the conflict effectively. The principal is usually the mediator; therefore it is imperative that he/she evaluates conflict management practices together with the SGB to ensure that they suit the nature of the conflict.

Section 16 (1) of the Schools Act 84 of 1996 provides that the governance of the public school is vested in its governing body. The SGBs have special roles and duties to perform at school to ensure the smooth running of the institution by supporting the school by all means and to ensure that conflict is taken care of by intervening properly using the suitable conflict management skills and resolution strategies. According to Snodgrass and Haines (2005:26) there is a need for research into the nature of conflicts and the interventions and training that will address these problems. The principal, teachers and other non-teaching staff such as administrative personnel have to be supported in performing their professional functions because in performing these functions, conflict can erupt. Most people lack skills of conflict management and training, therefore they need to be empowered

with conflict management skills.   Squelch (2001: 38) highlights the fact that in many schools SGBs do not have a clear understanding of their roles, duties and liability and this is coupled to their lack of capacity to fulfil their duties.

In view of the above, the role of SGBs in conflict management needs to be clarified. The purpose of this research is, therefore, to determine the role of SGBs in conflict management so as to minimize the incidence of conflict in schools. This will be done by defining the concept of conflict management, examining conflict management strategies, investigating the nature and extent of conflict and determining the reasons that can lead to schools becoming the centres of conflict. Finally it is intended to recommend conflict management strategies and resolution methods that can be put in place by the SGB to manage conflict and to solve the problems experienced by stakeholders of the schools. This research is worth doing because many people suffer greatly in schools due to lack of knowledge and skills to deal effectively with conflict. This research also envisages to assists policymakers to provide sufficiently for conflict management in relevant policies.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Some schools are often experiencing conflict and some are gradually becoming the centre of conflict. The conflict differs depending on the source and the extent in which they occur.

This conflict originates within the school yard and flow into the community or from the community into the school. The SGBs find themselves in the centre of this conflict as they are responsible for the school's governance and by virtue of being members of the community. Such conflict has a negative impact on the smooth running of the institutions and the SGB is responsible for creating an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. The principal is best suited and trained for conflict management, but he/she cannot do this alone. The support of the SGB is required.

Following on the points made above, the following questions constitute the research problem:

Main research question: What is the function of the SGB in managing conflict?

Research sub-questions:

▪ What is the typical nature of conflicts in schools?
▪ What are the reasons that a school can become the centre of community conflicts?
▪ What conflict management strategies and resolution methods can be implemented by the SGB to solve problems in schools?

1.3   RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

In this research efforts were made to search for answers to the questions stated above from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Research aim: To determine the function of the SGB in managing conflict.

Research objectives:

▪ To investigate the nature and extent of conflict in schools.
▪ To identify the reasons that can lead to schools to become the centre of community conflict.
▪ To recommend conflict management strategies and resolution methods that can be implemented by the SGB to solve problems in schools.

1.4   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.4.1   What is conflict?

According to Owens (2001) in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007: 67) the literature on conflict indicates that there is no consensus on what constitutes a specific definition of conflict. Two things are essential elements of conflict, namely divergent views and the incompatibility of those views.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994) and Cleary (2003), in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007: 67) continue to say that conflict occurs when two or more people have incompatible goals and each believe that the other party's behaviour prevents them from achieving their goals. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007: 72) define conflict as a process that consists of a series of events over time.

Uline (2003: 783) views conflict as a natural part of collective human experience. He goes on to say that conflict can be avoided and suppressed. Conflict in schools can be identified by specific indicators, such as poor discipline, low morale, few staff meetings, communication breakdown and interpersonal friction (Tshigwane 2008:18). Griffin (1987) in Khuzwayo (2007:10) mentions that conflict refers to disagreements between two or more people or groups within an organisation.

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:76) conceptualize conflict on four levels namely:

- Intrapersonal conflict (within an individual)
- Interpersonal conflict (between individuals)
- Intergroup conflict (between groups)
- School-community conflicts(within the community)

1.4.2   What is conflict management?

Conflict management refers to the deliberate intervention by managers to stimulate and encourage beneficial or helpful conflict and to resolve, suppress or prevent harmful conflict (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007: 78). According to Tshigwane (2008: 50) conflict management is a process that takes cognizance of the stages of its unfolding, from potential conflict situations to outbreaks that might require conflict resolution strategies. For the purpose of this study, conflict management refers to a process whereby the SGB intervene in a responsive manner to strengthen positive effects of conflict that may be of importance while overcoming the negative effects that may be of destructive nature, using optimal conflict resolution strategies. Conflict management implies a pro-active approach of expecting that there will be conflict and then focusing on how to manage it (Heystek 2004:312).

1.4.3   What is a School Governing Body?

School Governing Body refers to a group composed of parents, educators, non-educators, co-opted members of the community, learners (in case the school has grade 8 – 12 learners) and the principal as an ex officio member, elected by the school community to govern the school (Khuzwayo 2007:5).

The School Governing Body (SGB) is thus a committee that has been democratically elected to represent all the parents of learners in a particular school.

1.4.4   The nature and extent of conflict in schools

As discussed earlier, conflict can be productive and destructive. It is thus apparent that the SGB needs to know types of conflict, namely functional conflict and dysfunctional conflict. According to Robbins (2005: 14) functional conflict is conflict that supports the goals of the organization and improves the performance. Robbins (2005:14) asserts that dysfunctional conflict is conflict that hinders organizational performance and harms or interferes with organizational members. This kind of conflict is dangerous and the more "glory" is staked, the bitterer the conflict become and the less easy it is to achieve a solution (Van der Merwe 2003) in Tshigwane (2008: 16-17). The extent to which the conflict occur differ depending on the source of conflict. This conflict has a negative impact but sometimes it can have the potential to stimulate organizational effectiveness.

Conflict is a concern of everyone, especially of those who are involved in education like SGBs, teachers, learners and parents. All stakeholders need to be empowered regarding conflict management skills. Snodgrass and Haines (2005:26) are of the opinion that the level of conflict in South African schools is of grave concern to all involved in education and there is a distinct need for research into the nature of conflict and the interventions and training that will address these problems.

Snodgrass and Haines (2005:26) further state that many scholars suggest that in many cases, the interventions conducted have been done haphazardly without a good understanding of the type of conflict and have been dictated by guesswork, personal prejudice or domination of viewpoints of certain stakeholders. This research focuses on the role of the SGB to manage conflict in schools.

1.4.5 The role of the SGB in conflict management

The education system has introduced many changes in schools, including the governance of schools, whereby ordinary people eventually obtain a say in the running of their schools (Gann 1998, in Tsotetsi, Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2008: 385). According to Clase, Kok and Van der Merwe (2007:247) SGBs of public schools in South Africa before 1990 did not necessarily have a demanding task because of restricted powers assigned to them.   During the 1990s the situation changed dramatically and greater powers and responsibilities were legally handed over to the governing bodies (Squelch 1998:107). The South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) has mandated SGBs to take control of schools and they are expected to perform certain functions. One of the expectations of the SGB is the need for them to understand various aspects of the school, because the SGB operates in the context of the school as an organization.

According to Van Der Westhuizen et al. (2007) in Jansen, Kruger and Van Zyl (2008: 5) an organization is a formal structure in which people are in certain relations to one another, within which people's actions are directed at achieving common objectives. In such a situation, conflict is likely to occur because people have different ideas and perspectives. Some of these perspectives may be incompatible, implying the need for conflict management. It is therefore the duty of the SGB to see to it that such conflict is productive and well managed by applying effective conflict resolution strategies.

A review of the literature in South Africa indicates that relatively little attention is given to conflict management in schools. When provided, such programmes are usually presented by other staff like non-governmental staff, educators, social workers, psychologists and others (Snodgrass & Blunt 2009:53).

The SGB is usually not pertinently mentioned as a body that should deal robustly with conflict management knowledge and practice. Snodgrass and Blunt(2009:53) further note that Lederach (1995; 2000) highlights that these programmes are mostly based on western models of conflict resolution because the field of conflict management and resolution is basically developed within a framework of western intellectual traditions involving the expectations, values and rationality that are embedded in western culture.

According to Stevahn, Munger and Kealey (2005:3) there are numerous school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes that have been created and adopted with the intention to assist students to learn how to manage their conflicts constructively.

Stevahn et al. further state that these programmes can be classified as either total-student-body or cadre approaches. The total-student-body aims to train all the students to negotiate their own interpersonal conflicts constructively, unlike a cadre approach which trains only a small number of students with the intention of such students serving as school wide peer mediators. These authors report that evidence on the effectiveness of the total-student–body approach to conflict resolution is incomplete.

Stevahn et al (2005:3) mention that the literature indicates major shortcomings regarding the effectiveness of school-based conflict training programs. The findings and conclusions are largely contextual and cannot be generalized broadly across educational settings.

Another critique is that these programmes are largely irrelevant. They do not necessarily address constructive conflict management, and they also lack a sound conceptual framework. The literature indicates that researchers need to investigate the effectiveness of theory-based conflict programmes.

The SGB needs to develop a school culture within which conflict can be dealt with constructively by incorporating the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes in the curriculum taught at school. Consequently, Lederach (1995) in Snodgrass and Blunt

(2009:54) identifies an eclectic model that incorporates two approaches that are used to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for managing conflict. According to Lederach (1995) in Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) the first model is the "prescriptive approach" which regards the trainer as an expert, with sound knowledge of the needs of the participants. He is expected to transfer his/her expertise or knowledge to the participants. The second one is the "elicitive approach" which according to Lederach (1995) in Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) builds on the knowledge in the setting.

In addition to the models identified by Snodgrass and Blunt (2009), Brinson, Kottler and Fisher (2004:295) also accentuate that one theory to account for the reasons children resort to violence as a way to solve problems is that they lack adequate conflict resolution skills.

Since the SGB is working as a team, each member has to understand his/her own response to conflict. The principal in particular has a task of conflict management because of the skills and knowledge vested in him/her but the principal cannot work in isolation. He/she needs the cooperation of other members of the SGB as the expertise of the principal needs to be shared amongst the members so that they can offer assistance and build the strength of the whole team. This will only be possible if the SGB can work as a team and can analyze different types of conflicts.

In addition to conflict analysis, the SGB must understand what the conflict entails and what its impact is so that the SGB can be in the position to manage it properly. Mestry (2006: 33) confirms that the Schools Act encourages collaboration. The principal must support the SGB in all its efforts to govern the school and similarly, parents must support the principal to achieve the ultimate objective of educating learners (Mestry 2006: 33). This boils down to the fact that all the stakeholders must be involved in ensuring that conflict is kept at a minimum.

In the same vein, Snodgrass & Haines (2005:26) emphasize that all those involved in education have reiterated the need to equip principals, teachers, learners and parents with the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills to manage conflict in a constructive manner. According to the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and

Governance (MGSLG 2005:93) the role of the leader is to deal with conflict in a fair minded way so that the work of the SGB can continue.

The leader will need to help people to try to negotiate their differences. A disagreement and clash of interest can be solved by negotiation. A misunderstanding can be solved by clear communication. A clash of values will not be resolved, but people can agree to disagree while still working together.

According to Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) the research states that the role of the SGB is to manage conflict, not to eliminate it. Conflict management is closely tied to friendship relations; therefore conflicts are essential in creating and maintaining friendships. Conflict handled creatively can lead to better relationships, increased trust and increased creativity in problem solving. Unmanaged conflict can create dysfunctional schools which deprive learners of their right to citizenship through free and equal education (Snodgrass & Blunt 2009:54). The role of the principal as the instructional leader and in the SGB is to integrate conflict prevention and resolution into a conflict management process. It essentially revolves around diagnosis and intervention (Tshigwane 2008:62).

Kgomo (2006), in Tshigwane (2008:63) suggests that the principal's role in conflict management revolves around engaging in the conflict management process and this requires a principal to play several roles, *inter alia* being an agent of communication, a problem solver, a negotiator, a leader, a mediator, a decision-maker and a researcher. The principal has a key role in empowering the SGB by incorporating these attributes. As a problem-solver he/she will facilitate the process of empowering the SGB with the steps that need to be followed when solving problems such as the *following: Defining the problem, analyzing it, determining possible solutions,* selecting the best solution, implementing the solution and evaluating the implementation (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:81). Section 20(1) (d) and section 8(1) of the Schools Act require SGBs to adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school. In managing conflict the SGBs have to be protected by an effective code of conduct which is without any loopholes.

Essentially, the principal and the teaching staff have the task of implementing the code of conduct, but the SGB has an active role in ensuring that it gives the necessary procedural support to the entire staff.

In terms of Section 33 of the Schools Act (South Africa 1996), the principal must conduct disciplinary hearings in a lawful, reasonable and fair manner. In the same vein the SGB plays a major role in the disciplinary hearings of learners that are accused of serious misconduct, such as vandalizing school property, assaulting and raping other learners, and using drugs in school premises. Sanctions that may be imposed by the SGB in such misconduct include suspension and expulsion from school. The SGB must ensure that they comply with the due process in their conduction of disciplinary hearings.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

According to Mouton (2001:55) a research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting research. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:52) assert that a research design is the plan according to which we obtain research participants and collect information from them. It provides the overall structure for procedures that a research study follows and includes data collection and analysis (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:85). Research methods refer to the process in which the research will be conducted. Gay (1992) in Kgomo (2006:101) contends that research methodology is the approach to address a research question.

This research is a case study because in-depth data in a specific locality will be gathered, for the purpose of learning more about the SGB's role in conflict management. According to Maree (2007:76) a case study allows me as a researcher to use multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. It l also helps me as a researcher to gain greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a specific situation.

 Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:193) highlight the fact that in a case study a limited number of units of analysis are studied intensively.   In this case a SGB will be interviewed as a team, with the exception of the chairperson and the principal

who are interviewed as individuals. A case study allows for flexibility depending on the circumstances. In this research the qualitative approach will be used to investigate conflict management as an SGB function. The purpose of the qualitative approach is to describe and explain phenomena and to explore and interpret the data given.

I have decided to use the qualitative approach because firstly, it provides an in-depth description of people in their natural setting. Secondly it reveals the nature of certain situational settings, processes, relationships, systems or people (Leedy 1993:134). Thirdly, it enables me as a researcher to gain new insights from the particular phenomena and finally to seek in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences. I will be interacting with members of the SGB in probing the conflict-related experiences of their school governance.

The challenge of this approach is the requirement for the researcher to be well versed in observation techniques, interview strategies and other data collection methods that are likely to be necessary to answer the research problem. Essentially, the researcher functions as the research instrument.

1.5.1 Data collection methods and analysis

Leedy (1993: 96) states that qualitative researchers are often described as being the research instrument because the bulk of their data collection is dependent on their personal involvement (through interviews and observations) in the setting. I see data collection methods as the means that are used to gather or collect data using different types of research instruments such as interviews or questionnaires. Verbal data is collected through semi-structured interviews and non-verbal data through observations. Written documents such as minutes of the SGB, policy documents, news-papers, SGB booklets, articles and field-notes are part of the study. Such documents are read through on request to gather as much data as possible. Semi-structured interviews are used because these allow for follow-up questions.

Written information is gathered from the literature sources like primary literature sources and secondary literature sources. These literature sources assist to develop

a good understanding of and insight into previous research (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2005:41). Primary literature sources are the first occurrence of a piece of work such as committee minutes, secondary literature sources constitute the subsequent publications of primary literature sources such as books (Welman et al. 2005:41).

Interviews are in the form of focus groups so as to save time and shed more light on a phenomenon (Schulze 2002:69) but the principal and the chairperson as key members of SGB are also interviewed as individuals. This is done on purpose to allow them to express themselves freely and to divulge all the information they deem necessary for this study.   The interviews are flexible depending on the situation and the conditions. Observation of the participants i.e. people who are involved in my research help me to find out how they interact with one another and to complement interview data so as to improve the trustworthiness of my research.

Anything that can help me to answer my research questions is used. This includes attending the SGB meeting, and noting announcements that are posted on the walls and other beneficial sources. It is essential to record any potentially useful data thoroughly, accurately and systematically, using field notes, sketches and photographs or a combination of these (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:144). During data collection, notes are made about contextual circumstances and impressions.

The interview data is analysed by identifying themes and categories. Tesch's approach is used whereby a sense of the whole is gained by reading through all transcripts and to jot down ideas as they come to mind. Then one comprehensive interview sheet is selected and analyzed for themes and categories, and these are refined through study of the remaining interview sheets. Appropriate colour coding is used throughout (Schulze 2002:15).

1.5.2   Sampling

Sampling is the process that is used to select representative participants from a large group of people (population). A sample is a group of individuals from whom data are collected (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:129). In this case, such a group

was an SGB. An SGB consists of the chairperson; deputy chairperson, treasurer, secretary and two additional members. Two additional members of Post level 1 teachers and two members of the senior management team including the learner representatives are included as members of the SGB. Focus group interviews were conducted with the whole members of the SGB. Individual interviews were also conducted with the principal and the SGB chairperson (see Chapter 3 for a detailed exposition).

The sample was purposeful because the individuals that I selected would yield the best information about the topic under investigation, namely the role of SGB in conflict management. Due to its composition, the SGB was a valuable source of parent, teacher and learner perspectives on conflict management. Face-to-face interviews help to understand the closed worlds of others (Schulze 2002:60).

In conducting the interviews, care was taken to ensure that all the necessary logistics were in place in the set venue.   Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004: 74) emphasize that when conducting an interview the physical environment should be optimally geared which means that it has to suit the interview with all the necessary equipment. Care should also be taken to avoid interferences.

The staffroom of the selected secondary school served as interview venue. The school was selected due to its suitability for the study: It is a public secondary school that is governed by the SGB and there are continuous conflicts happening in the school which require sound governance and management.

1.6   ETHICAL MEASURES

As far as McMillan and Schumacher (2010:117) are concerned, ethics concerns beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective. They further state that research ethics is focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when accessing archival data. The first step is to acquire all the necessary official, institutional and personal permission (see appendices).

1.6.1 Informed consent

Having asked my participants' permission to involve them in my study, I provided them with an explanation of the research. I informed them that they were at liberty to terminate their participation at any time with no penalty. No one was pressurized to continue with the research. I explained the expectations of the research, as well as the confidentiality of the findings.

The informed consent of participants involved the aspects as highlighted by Johnson and Christensen (2008) in Macmillan and Schumacher (2010:119): Purpose of the study, description of the procedures and the length of time needed, description of any risks or discomforts that may be encountered, description of the benefits, description of the alternate procedure or intervention that would be advantageous, statement of the confidentiality, names of the people who can be contacted about the study, statement that participation is voluntary and participants can refuse to participate at any time without penalty and statement of the amount and schedule of payment for participation.

1.6.2 No harm or risk to participants

I made sure that my participants were well protected from harm, physical, mental discomfort or injury in any way. No embarrassment or danger was endured by my participants.

1.6.3 Privacy

As a researcher, I made use of three practices mentioned below as stipulated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:121) to ensure that the privacy of my participants was maintained namely:

- Anonymity, which means that there is no way that the identity of my participants is identified.

- Confidentiality means that no one except the researcher has access to data and participants' names and the data cannot be linked to individual research participants by name.
- Data safekeeping means that copies of responses and electronic forms of data are stored in such a way that there is maximum protection of the participants' identities.

1.6.4 Plagiarism

I avoided plagiarism by giving appropriate credit to the contributions of others through quotation marks for verbatim use of others' writing or oral communication.

1.6.5 Honesty with professional colleagues

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:103) researchers must report their findings in a complete and honest fashion without misrepresenting what they have done. I did so by ensuring that I provided the data and findings in a trustworthy manner. No data were falsified or fabricated.

Finally, I abided by all the rules and regulations of UNISA's Professional Code of Ethics.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2010:104) validity refers to the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match reality. Reliability refers to the stability or consistency of an instrument when used repeatedly. It also refers to the researcher's ability to be transparent, consistent and dependable in his/her research activities so that research bias is minimized (Kgomo 2006:102).

However, as highlighted by Schulze (2002:79), there are those researchers that suggest that validity and reliability relate to the quantitative research approach and

that these terms are not appropriate for qualitative research. The concept *trustworthiness* is rather preferred.

I used Guba's model for trustworthiness that addresses ways for warding off biases in the results of research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005:346) propose four constructs that accurately reflect the assumptions of trustworthiness in the qualitative paradigm. These constructs are:

- Credibility – I made sure that I described phenomena accurately.
- Transferability – My findings are relevant to another context.
- Dependability – Findings will probably be similar if the inquiry were to be replicated.
- Conformability – the results are a function of solely the participants.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

The following is contained in each of the chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction, conceptual framework, problem formulation, aim of the research, research design, and ethical aspects of the research project.

Chapter 2: Literature study pertaining to conflict management as a function of the SGB.

Chapter 3: Research design and methods, with reference to the qualitative research approach, and the procedures of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 4: Analysis and interpretation of the empirical research data.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations of the research.

1.9 CONCLUSION

The background against which this study took place was outlined. The conceptual framework was discussed. The research design was described. It was indicated that conflict cannot be eliminated as it is part of our daily lives. It can have a positive impact in the organization but it has to be managed effectively to enhance smooth relations amongst the members of the organizations such as schools.

Theoretical perspectives on the nature and extent of conflict management will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1 par 4, I have briefly defined conflict management as one of the functions of the School Governing Body (SGB) and a component that requires the intervention of both the SGB and management. According to Kgomo (2006:12) conflict management is a managerial function which must be equally treated with other functions such as the following: leading/directing, planning, communication, staffing, controlling and budgeting. She further states that conflict management in its own right is a complex notion which must be conceptualized accordingly. In this respect, this chapter examines the literature about conflict management in schools, and the role of the SGB in this to ensure effective teaching and learning. In this chapter, the nature and extent of conflict management is examined according to the following topics:

- Nature of conflict
- Conceptualization of conflict
- Theory on conflict
- Classification of conflicts
- Conflict management
- Principles of conflict resolutions.
- Key aspects of conflict management
- Conflict resolution programmes
- Conflict management strategies
- The school as potential centre of conflict
- Functions of school governing body in conflict management
- Concluding remarks

2.2   NATURE OF CONFLICT

Conflict is generally perceived as something bad, whereas it can be positive, depending on how it is managed (Kgomo 2006).

Poorly managed conflicts can devastate the school in such a way that the culture of teaching and learning may be disturbed but properly managed conflicts speed up the achievement of the goals of the school whereby the mission and the vision of the school are realized.   Conflict naturally occurs when people interact with one another, sharing certain ideas about a variety of issues.   Conflict originates from disagreement between the parties which may include tension and stress.   As discussed earlier, conflict can be productive or destructive, thus it is evident that the SGB needs to be knowledgeable about the nature of conflict, which can be functional or dysfunctional.

According to Robbins (2005: 14) functional conflict is conflict that supports the goals of the organization and improves the performance. This type of conflict is constructive in nature. Dysfunctional conflict is conflict that hinders organizational performance and harms, or interferes with, organizational members (Robbins 2005:14). This kind of conflict is dangerous and destructive in nature and the more "glory" is staked, the more bitter the conflict becomes and the less easy it is to achieve a solution (Van der Merwe 2003, in Tshigwane 2008: 16-17). The extent to which these conflicts occur differ depending on the source of conflict. It is also practically impossible to establish the extent of conflicts at schools because some incidences are not taken seriously or reported.   Most of these conflicts have a negative impact, but others have the potential to stimulate organizational effectiveness.

The managers must be able to detect and determine the possibility of conflicts before these erupt into disputes. Unfortunately, many disputes in schools involve malevolent hostility which involves feelings or actions that result in destructive behaviour. Malevolent hostility is dangerous and destructive because it focuses on people rather than issues and is characterized by hateful and emotional language and a reluctance or inability to listen to, or respond to, new ideas. This is unlike non-malevolent hostility, which is constructive as it focuses on ideas and not people and is characterized by rational or philosophical arguments (Kowalski et al. 2007:176).

Constructive conflict encourages open communication in conflict management. Parties that are involved in disputes are able to air their views openly and freely.

2.2.1   Conceptualization of conflict

What is conflict? What does it entail? How does it occur?

This section conceptualizes conflict according to its many definitions. According to Owens (2001) in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:67) a literature review indicates that there is no consensus on what constitutes a specific definition of conflict.

Kowalski et al. (2007:168) concur with Owens (2001) to say that the term conflict has no single or clear defined meaning.   There is, however general agreement that two things are essential elements of conflict: (1) divergent (or apparently divergent) views and (2) the incompatibility of those views (Owens 2001:306). According to Kgomo (2006) the common perception in our society is that conflict is always destructive; consequently managers often do not know that it can also be constructive.

Kowalski (2006:159) asserts that constructive conflict encourages open communication that prompts people to identify and then test their values and beliefs so that a coherent agenda for needed change can be pursued. In the same vein, "conflict can be a valuable catalyst for school improvement" (Kowalski 2006:159). Uline, Tschannen-Moran and Perez (2003) identify five factors in the occurrence of conflict, namely: the specific context, the heterogeneity of the participants, the information available to various members, the group's social skills and the ability to engage in rational deliberations.

According to these authors an essential element for constructive conflict is a sense of interdependence and goal congruence. In order to foster these conditions, a cooperative context should be cultivated in which there is mutual understanding and collaboration (Uline et al. 2003:789). Communication must be open and honest. Trust and responsiveness prevails, the perceptions and actions towards the other party are accurate and constructive with individuals recognizing the legitimacy of

each other's interests. In such a context the conflict is usually in a form of win-win situation.

On the other hand, the context that is opposite to the cooperative one is the extreme competitive context in which the outcome is usually a win-lose situation, there is a breakdown of communication, distrust and exploitation prevails and individuals tend to be selfish denying the legitimacy of other people's interests. Kgomo (2006:17) emphasizes that conflict in this vein must be viewed as a disequilibrium, a disturbance and a problem as well as a power struggle between the opposing parties.   She further mentions that conflict is prone when a minimum of two parties have to acquire an available set of scarce resources.

Thomas (1976) as cited by Owens (2004) in Kowalski et al. (2007:175), describes conflict as a process, beginning typically with feelings of frustration and as these feelings grow, people begin to conceptualize the problem. Hodgetts (1993:3940), in Kgomo (2006) defines conflict as opposition or antagonism towards other individuals or things. A conflict happens when the resources in the organization are very scarce. People will always fight for scarce remaining resources. Hodgetts (1993:3940), in Kgomo (2006) also define conflict as a social condition in which two or more interdependent parties cannot have the same thing at the same time. Roloff (1987) in Kowalski et al (2007:170) highlights the fact that organizational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other collectives, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organisation.

Some scholars have conceived of organizational conflict as pathology to be diagnosed and treated. Other scholars view conflict as "an interactive state in which the behaviours or goals of one actor are to a degree incompatible with the behaviours or goals of some other actor/s" (Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma 1973 in Kowalski 2007:169).   Rahim (2001) in Kowalski (2007:169) says that there is a general concurrence that there are central elements to any conflict: (a) Conflict includes *opposing interests* between individuals or groups; (b) such opposed interests must be *recognized* for the conflict to exist; (c) conflict involves *beliefs*, by each side, that the other will thwart (or already has thwarted) its interest; (d) conflict

is a *process*; it develops out of existing relationships between individuals or groups and reflects their past interactions and the context in which these took place; and (e) *actions* by one or both sides do, in fact, produce thwarting of others' goals.

It is common that when people in organizations work together, conflict may arise among them, due to different perspectives they may have. Similarly within schools, SGBs and principals are engaged in school governance, thus could have different views regarding their governance responsibilities (Khuzwayo 2007:10).   Conflict essentially arises from disagreements between two or more people or groups within an organization (Graffin, 1987 in Khuzwayo 2007:11).   Conflict can either impact positively or negatively for the functioning of the school. Positive conflict implies that through conflict, parties begin to realize alternative approaches that may be valuable in the process of discussing the existing alternatives.   Positive conflict is associated with progress and achievement.

On the other hand, a negative conflict could also be viewed as a competitive process which according to Deutsch (2005), in Kgomo (2006:19) has the following characteristics: communication is usually impaired, obstruction and lack of helpfulness, parties are unable to share the work, members tend to experience disagreements, critical rejection of ideas proposed by others, and conflicting parties seek to enhance their own power. This latter type of conflict is usually featured with forms of coercion in that people are forced into making a choice because of the pressure they experience from the powerful parties (Kgomo 2006:20).   She maintains that a negative conflict is called an avoidance-avoidance entity in which an individual is faced with two equally negative values to choose from.

Kgomo (2006) further highlights that functional conflict is a direct opposite of dysfunctional conflict. The latter is negative in nature because it induces stress on individuals and prevents progress and suspends success. It is a problematic type of conflict as it is destructive in nature. Principals and SGBs need to understand these types of conflicts so as to understand and advise each other in the process of governing the school. Khuzwayo (2007:11) cites an example, saying that in a school situation both the SGB chairperson and the principal may have different views on how funds could be raised for the school. They both have the common aim but perceive different means of achieving it. Squelch and Lemmer (1994), in Khuzwayo

(2007:11) argue that conflict is part and parcel of school life and thus impossible to avoid. There is no alternative to managing it constructively.

Conflict effects change. It often occurs during a period of adaptation to social or educational change. If properly managed, many conflicts are catalysts for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the school. Kgomo (2006:21) regards conflict as a small snake which you feel is not worth killing, whereas you forget it might sting you in the near future. On the same note, Whitfield (1994) in Kgomo (2006:21) advises that "our problem is that no one really knows whether a conflict is going to be functional or dysfunctional in advance of the event." She further says that we can avoid having to anticipate an uncertain future by controlling and managing every conflict, managing it properly from its inception. The managers must be able to detect and determine the possibility of conflicts before they erupt into disputes.

Constructive conflict encourages open communication in conflict management. Parties that are involved in disputes are able to air their views openly and freely.

In sum: If properly managed, many conflicts are catalysts for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the school (Zuelke & Willerman 1987:9).

2.2.2   Theory on conflict

The theoretical perspectives of conflict assist us to understand the concept of conflict more clearly. Kgomo (2006:24-32) discusses the following theoretical perspectives:

2.2.2.1 Human nature and violence

This theoretical perspective on conflict explains that some individuals are naturally violent. These individuals tend to bully others in the workplace. Kgomo (2006:24) refers to Boucaut (2003) defining workplace bullying as persistent ill treatment of an individual in a workplace by one or more other persons. This type of treatment has a negative impact on the victim since it is a repetitive action. The victim is coerced to do an action that is against his/her will. Domineering is a form of natural violence

whereby a domineering person will stand up for a weaker person. A domineering person has a tendency of shouting other people down. Kgomo (2006:24) also mentions that if this behaviour is not identified early in its development it can stress the employees.

Aggressiveness is another type of personality that upsets people. Aggressive people tend to think and act fast, thereby causing chaos and feelings of uncomfortability. Such people are often insecure and need recognition as well as personal power. Jay (1995), in Kgomo (2006) emphasizes that this condition causes stress, and its consequences must be identified and dealt with accordingly.

2.2.2.2 Frustration aggression hypothesis

This theoretical perspective on conflict refers to what happens when individuals are prohibited from gaining access to what they want. This is evident when an employee is unable to attain his /her task due to the interference of another person or due to the failure of the equipment that is provided to perform such a task. It becomes very difficult to work with an angry person within an organization. Therefore it is the task of a manager to focus their clients towards a constructive way of dealing with anger. Some principals have a tendency of undermining the expertise of other employees. They can also favour particular employees to gain access to scarce resources while others are denied access to such resources.

Discrimination breeds conflict. Chapter II of the Employment Equity Act prohibits unfair discrimination. According to section 5 of this chapter, every employer must take steps to eliminate unfair discrimination and promote equal opportunity. Section 6(1) of the Constitution clearly stipulates that no person may unfairly discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language or birth.

Affirmative action was introduced by the South African Government to deal with workplace discrimination. The purpose of this measure is to ensure that all groups of people, who were previously discriminated against, are equally represented in the public service. Affirmative action implies that certain categories of the society were denied access to promotion on the basis of race, gender or disability. The special legislation that was developed by the South African Government to address discrimination, affirmative action, sexual harassment and others is embodied in the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998). The government's main purpose with this Act is to promote equality in the workplace by creating equal opportunities and fair treatment of people through elimination of unfair discrimination.

According to the Constitution (South Africa, Act 108 of 1996), particularly Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, subsection (4), no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). The Constitution (South Africa, Act 108 of 1996), Chapter 2, subsection (1), further maintains that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection. Equity entails that all the people must be treated in an equal manner. Discrimination and inequality are major sources of conflict in schools.

2.2.2.3 Psychoanalytic perspective

Kgomo (2006:29) mentions that once a person views the other party as an enemy, his/her unconscious mind blocks the possibility of harmonizing with the other. This theory further maintains that conflicts are caused by the stereotypes which we project upon others. Stereotypes occur in the workplace when we regard others who hold different methodologies, knowledge, skills and attitudes as threats to our well-being. Lacking understanding of diversity is a major cause for conflict. Diversity implies that one has a right to differ from other individuals without being manipulated or harmed in any way.

2.2.2.4 Deprivation

According to Jeong (2000) in Kgomo (2006:29), deprivation results from the combined effect of rising expectations and a lack of progress towards demands for a better life. Essentially, deprivation concerns the perception of discrepancy between value expectations and the value capabilities. If much is expected from a person's effort and that person does not achieve what s/he is expected to achieve due to lack of capability, this situation results into a deprivation conflict. This theoretical perspective concerns, for example, children from a wealthy family background, of whom it is expected to exhibit their parents' characteristics, only to find that these kids fail to pursue life just like their parents. Eventually such kids can end up losing self-control, indulging themselves into drugs and social misbehaviour.

2.2.2.5 Basic needs

Du Preez, Campher, Grobler, Loock & Shaba (2003:21) refer to the work of the psychologist Abraham Maslow, who developed the needs hierarchy theory. According to this theory, the most fundamental of all needs are physiological. These basic human needs are the basic requirements that we cannot live without. Such needs are food, water, shelter and clothing. The basic needs tend to be scarce and because people cannot live without them, these needs can become arenas for fierce competition. What we deduce from Maslow's theory is that people will fight for scarce commodities. The scarcity of these commodities or resources can cause conflict whereby people start to cheat, deceive or coerce one another. In the school context, the principal needs to assist educators to alleviate stress accumulated by the shortage or lack of scarce resources.

Jeong (2000), in Kgomo (2006:30) mentions that we need to satisfy basic needs for human development. He goes on to say that without these basic needs we are transformed into dead organisms. Basic needs differ from wants. People can live without wants, unlike needs which lead people to compete for measures and resources to fulfil them. This competition eventually leads to the development of conflict. SGBs can play a major role in alleviating such conflict by making sure that they support the educators and the learners that are needy in whatever respect. In

practical terms, the SGBs have the task to initiate fundraising to augment the school funds for the acquisition of essential resources.

2.2.2.6 Identity formation

Identity formation is viewed by Korsgaard, Brodt & Sapienza (2005), in Kgomo (2006:31) in relation to social identity which they define as that aspect of a person's self-concept that is determined by his/her membership of a particular group. There are various social groups such as political, cultural, language and religious groups in which members' sense of belonging and identity is shaped. These groups tend to view themselves as different and superior compared to others, and this can cause conflict.

An example of this perception is seen in sometimes found among high school learners, especially the boys, who went to initiation school. These boys look down on those whose culture does not allow them to participate in initiations. They regard them as ordinary boys, not men.   They even go to the extent of undermining teachers who did not participate in initiation schools, causing unnecessary conflicts because of the myths and personal beliefs that are unfounded.

2.2.3 Classification of conflict

Conflict stems from a variety of factors, therefore it can be classified into different types such as organizational conflict, peer conflicts, and others. Conflicts are conceptualized by Anderson & Kyprianou (1994) in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:76) on four levels namely:

- Intrapersonal conflict or intra-individual conflict
- Interpersonal conflict
- Intergroup conflict and
- School-community conflict.

Zuelke and Willerman (1987:12,14-15) and Tillett and French (2006:11) further mention other types of conflicts such as intra-group conflict, intraorganisational conflict, role conflict, value conflict, worldview conflict, symbolic conflict, structural conflict, habituated conflict, symbiotic conflict, power conflict, displaced internal and external conflict, territorial conflict, stress related conflict, individual dysfunction conflict and change conflict. The school as an organization is mainly affected with the following conflicts: intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, intergroup conflict, school-community conflict, intragroup conflict, intra-organisational conflict, role conflict, conflict of values and beliefs, and cognitive conflict.

2.2.3.1 Intrapersonal conflict

Kowalski et al. (2007:172) concur with Anderson & Kyprianou (1994) that intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual. Intrapersonal conflict is also known as intra-individual conflict. Conflict exists within an individual when he or she has to choose between two opposing goals (Anderson & Kyprianou 1994:126; Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:29, in Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:76). According to Zuelke and Willerman (1987:9) there are three types of intrapersonal conflict. These occur when there is a choice (1) between two positive outcomes, (2) between a positive and negative outcome and (3) between two negative outcomes. It becomes easy to choose between the positive and negative, but it becomes difficult to choose between two positives.

Intrapersonal conflict mostly arises when individuals have to choose between two negative outcomes. As far as Zuelke and Willerman (1987:9) are concerned, another source of intrapersonal conflict is cognitive dissonance, the holding of two incompatible beliefs. These authors continue to say that when individuals are in such a situation, they become psychologically uncomfortable and try to achieve a new state of cognitive equilibrium or consonance, by either obtaining more information or by changing a belief. Educators may have to choose between something that has both positive and negative outcomes, such as accepting a promotion but having to move from his/her comfortable zone (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:76). Many choices that we make as human beings involve some degree of

intrapersonal conflict because of the very common question: "Should I do this or that" (Kowalski et al. 2007:172).

Kgomo (2006:33) sees this conflict as a struggle which takes place within an individual when he/she cannot achieve organisational expectations and objectives. This researcher further says that intra-individual conflict is evident when too much is expected from an individual whilst not providing the necessary resources to that individual. Deutsch (2005) in Kgomo (2006:33) refers to intra-individual conflict as a way of blaming others for one's own inadequacies, difficulties and problems so that one can avoid confronting the necessity of changing oneself. An internal conflict does not give a person a time to rest because he /she is continually fighting within his /her mind about the right option to choose. This type of conflict becomes very intense when individuals are faced with two equally attractive options. The condition of choosing in a win-win situation can cause severe stress.

2.2.3.2 Interpersonal conflict

Interpersonal conflict as explained by Anderson and Kyprianou (1994), in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:172) occurs between two or more individuals.

Owens (2004) in Kowalski et al. (2007:172) maintains that the conflict that occurs between two or more people working at the same school may be simultaneously interpersonal and intra-organizational. Chen (2003:204) adds that interpersonal conflict provides a natural opportunity for children to confront others and, thus, to begin to consider other's point of view.

Interpersonal conflict involves an emotional component, such as anger (Schaffer 1997 in Chen 2003:205). Kgomo (2006:34) refers to Korsgaard et al. (2005) and mentions that interpersonal conflict can occur when members of the group fail to work cooperatively with each other, mainly on emotional grounds. There should be collaboration for efficient and effective achievement of the organizational goals whereby members continuously interact and consult one another. It is of the best interest for the organisation that colleagues must share ideas harmoniously. Working in isolation may result in stress that may eventually cause conflict. Kgomo

(2006:35) refers to Hodgetts (1993) who rightly noted that in an organisation, no one operates in a   vacuum.   People interact with other people and by so doing they develop values, perceptions, attitudes and to a large degree, personality.

2.2.3.3 Intergroup conflict

This type of conflict involves groups of people, irrespective of the size of the group (Kowalski 2007:77).   Intergroup conflict occurs when there is a disagreement between groups. Zuelke and Wellerman (1987:13) suggest that the school principal may be faced with situations that involve intergroup conflict as a result of initiatives like team-teaching, age-grouped unit planning, sports activities and contests between classes in the school. Intergroup conflict mostly occurs due to stereotypes which groups hold about others, as in the case of xenophobia where a certain group of people dislikes or even fears people from other countries.   As far as Hall (1993) in Kgomo (2006:35) is concerned, stereotypic distortion happens when the parties only see evidence that supports the hypotheses they have developed about the other side. According to Deutsch (2005) in Kgomo (2006:36) intergroup conflict as a form of ethnic conflict is bitter, destructive and dehumanizing. Corrective measures, such as the establishment of social justice, transforming the patterns of exclusion, inequity and oppression can fuel further tension and fighting.

 Kgomo (2006:36) is of the opinion that groups need to interact frequently and she refers to the nature of interactions as group cohesion. Frequent interactions enhance sympathy, cooperation and collaboration and lessen conflicts because people are talking directly to one another; and there is no distortion of the messages or talking behind the backs of other people.   She further emphasizes that group cohesion should be enhanced by ensuring that members cooperate with one another. Kgomo (2006:36) further mentions that convening a meeting to discuss issues would be the best initiative to ensure that groups could bond and develop a sense of mutual belonging.

2.2.3.4 School-community conflict

Factions in a community often use schools to achieve their own objectives. These objectives may be religious, political, or social (De Witt 1990:307, in Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:78). School–community conflict is a conflict that takes place between the school as the organization and the community at large. This type of conflict is often caused by the organizational restructuring process which poses threats for others (Bowen 2005 in Kgomo 2006:37). It can also be caused by the organizational culture, says Kgomo (2006:37) in that outsiders may not be conversant with it.

The SGB is responsible to intervene in such conflicts because of the responsibility to ensure that buildings and grounds of the school are taken care of. It is also a SGB function to ensure that the community works harmoniously with the school. Unfortunately some community members may have a tendency of disrespecting the school, making it a centre of conflicts by taking their fights from the community to the school yard in the form of political meetings. These meetings sometimes end up in violence whereby the school properties are eventually damaged and vandalized.

2.2.3.5 Intragroup conflict

Intragroup conflicts take place within groups. According to Zuelke and Wellerman (1987:12) teachers can be divided into different formal and informal groupings such as union and non-union members, ethnic majority and minority, traditional and progressive. These authors highlight the fact that teachers tend to be biased and take sides when there are sensitive issues at school. The principal should assess the origin of the conflict, whether it is intellectual (substantive) or emotional (affective) (Zuelke & Wellerman 1987:12).

2.2.3.6 Intraorganisational conflict

Kowalski et al. (2007:173) suggest that intraorganisational conflict is probably a more pervasive concern for school principals. Zuelke and Wellerman (1987:14) indicate that intraorganisational conflict has many faces, and they categorize it into four categories: (1) vertical, (2) horizontal, (3) line-staff and (4) role conflict. Vertical conflict is seen as a problem within the hierarchical structure of authority in the school. The principal communicates with teachers by sending the directives, circulars, written memos or bulletins according to a top-down hierarchical structure. If it happens that teachers are against any policy that was communicated by the principal, and that they feel is infringing their rights, a vertical conflict may rise.

Horizontal conflict happens across the ranks of the teachers. Zuelke and Willerman (1987:14) continue to say that teachers may be assumed to have the same educational goals, but they could differ in terms of their specializations. There are education specialists, counsellors, regular educators, pupil personal specialists - all having different perspectives in terms of their viewpoint about education. The interdependence of these professionals in terms of their duties will definitely result into horizontal conflict.

Line-staff conflict occurs typically between the principal and the district office personnel. The district office personnel have a control over most of the resources used at school, if not all. They have extensive expertise in terms of rules and regulations on material and human resources and they execute demands of reports together with regular submissions on different co-curricular activities. The principals are depending on the district officials for support for innovations and development. Yet the principals sometimes feel offended or undermined by impressions that their authority and power is belittled. Officials are often demanding too much compared to what is expected of principals. The pressure that is felt by the principals may result in line-conflict.

Schermerhorm et al. (1997) in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:74) define role conflict as the set of expectations associated with a given position in a group or organization. It occurs when different people, including the person filling the role, disagree on how that role should be performed. Zuelke and Willerman (1987:14) believe that role conflict may also occur if there is insufficient or inconsistent

information about the requirements of a position in the school. These authors emphasize that if roles are not well clarified, the principal stands a chance of subjecting him/herself to unnecessary crisis management situations and stress. Marshall and Hooley (2006:8) report that deputy principals experience role conflict when the immediate demands of the school interfere with doing the work they value as an expression of their professionalism.

Other types of conflict, as mentioned by Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:74) are the following:

2.2.3.7 Conflict of values and beliefs

This conflict often happens between the principal and the teachers whereby the principal appears to be strict or bureaucratic to teachers by merely following what s/he believes is right. People differ in terms of values and beliefs. Our actions and behaviours are mainly determined by our values. Some people are offended by other people's behaviour while the latter are not even aware of this because they believe that what they are doing is right according to their values and beliefs.

2.2.3.8 Cognitive conflict

This type of conflict happens between groups of teachers when they have differences of opinions in, for example, the implementation of the curriculum policies. According to Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:73) cognitive conflict occurs when two parties become aware that their thought processes or perceptions are incongruent.

In view of the possible extent and intensity of the above mentioned conflicts, SGBs have a crucial role in supporting the school and community to ensure that these conflicts are handled professionally.

2.3   CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Kgomo (2006:13) sees conflict management as a term which is composed of two constructs, namely conflict and management. The concept *conflict* has been dealt

with already. Management is about ensuring that the arrangements of an organization are properly maintained. As far as Kgomo (2006:13) is concerned, management means that the activities of an organization are effectively coordinated, planned and executed in a manner which produces the required and executed results. Stevenson (1999:15,) in Kgomo (2006) asserts that management is the process which is conducted by a single entity, usually at the top of the organization, in order to address the complexity of the organization in performing its different activities. According to Bush (2003:1) management is a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilization of organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals. In sum: Managing is maintaining current organizational arrangements efficiently and effectively (Bush 2003:8).

According to Kgomo (2006:13) *conflict management* is a process through which management encourages the interaction of differing knowledge, skills and attitudes towards the effective running of an organization. She further states that conflict management involves negotiation to bring diverse groups into deliberating the problems of the organization. She believes that it is actually a communicative process because it attempts to understand the sources and types of conflicts and their impact on the work environment. She also maintains that conflict management is a component of strategic communication which must be thoroughly articulated by principals in maintaining good working relationships with the heads of departments (HOD)s, teachers, the parents, SGBs and other stakeholders (Kgomo 2006:1).

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:78) view conflict management as referring to the deliberate intervention, by managers, to stimulate and encourage beneficial or helpful conflict and to resolve, or suppress or prevent harmful conflict. An essential element of a conflict management process is recognition that there are stages of conflict, with appropriate interventions at different stages. Tshigwane (2008:50) defines conflict management as a process that takes cognizance of the stages of its unfolding, from a potential conflict situation to outbreaks that might require conflict resolution strategies.

As mentioned earlier, for the purpose of this study I view conflict management as a process whereby school managers with the support of the SGB intervene in a

responsible manner to strengthen the positive effects, and minimise the negative effects of conflicts in the school in the interest of quality teaching and learning, using effective conflict resolution strategies. I concur with Zuelke and Willerman (1987:18) when they say that the methods of conflict management have direct bearing on the principal's (and in effects the SGB's) effectiveness in educational leadership and governance.

The principles of conflict resolution are discussed next.

2.3.1 Principles of conflict resolution

According to Tillett and French (2006:2) conflict is inevitable and pervasive. Some conflicts can be eliminated; some can be minimized; some need to be managed. Conflict is essentially based on perceptions rather than reality, and feelings rather than facts. It can only be resolved by dealing with perceptions and feelings, as well as facts and reality. There is no simple formula that makes conflict go away but there are approaches that can minimize the destructive effects of conflicts and maximize the possibility of resolution. There are also approaches that maximize the risks of escalation, and minimize the possibility of resolution.

Tillet and French (2006) continue to say that there are some common negative responses to conflict that maximize its destructive effects and reduce the likelihood of resolution. Stress increases the risk of destructive conflict, which in turn increases the level of stress. Therefore, effective stress management is an integral part of conflict resolution. Most conflict is predictable. The most effective approach to conflict resolution involves predicting and preparing for the conflict. A flexible, adaptive, collaborative approach to conflict resolution is generally the most effective. Such a soft approach can be changed to a more directive or even coercive approach where necessary. A collaborative, cooperative approach should usually be attempted first by assuming cooperation. One can often promote cooperation. The type of approach can be changed if cooperation fails. Direct confrontation (including threat) usually provokes an aggressive response, and should be avoided.

The effective resolution of conflict almost inevitably requires talking about it, preferably with the person or people involved. Not all conflicts can be resolved externally, and therefore effective internal (intrapersonal) techniques of resolution may be necessary. These may include stress management, peer support, counselling or therapy. Not all conflicts can be resolved.

Therefore if there is to be an on-going relationship between parties, behaviour and interactions may need to be managed to avoid on-going conflict. Repetition of conflict may be indicative of a systemic problem or of habituated dysfunctional behaviour.

In addition to the above principles, Tillett and French (2006:280) further mentioned other basic principles applicable to all types of conflicts that promote effective conflict resolution. These are the following:

Table 2.1 Principles of effective conflict resolution

Principles of effective resolution	Explanation of the principles
Analysis	This means that one needs to think about the problem from all angles. This includes identifying, mapping and recognizing multiple factors and dimensions.
Evaluation	Processes should not be selected haphazardly. They need to be selected on the basis of an effective evaluation, and sound analytical decision-making.
Preparation	There should be a thorough preparation for the resolution. This includes taking account of perceptions, feelings and needs.
Effective communication	This involves effective use of language.
Collaboration	This means working together by involving all the participants to be on board.
Process	Conflict resolution is regarded as a process and it changes relationships.
Problem-solving	This principle relates to the solution of a real problem by means

	of a process in which the relationship between the participants changes. The emphasis is put on identification and resolution of a problem.
Negotiation	The form of negotiation determines the success of conflict resolution.
Third-party facilitation	This is the last resort to conflict resolution. The first option should be direct collaboration between the participants in the conflict. Third party facilitation can include mediation, arbitration and expert appraisal.
Flexibility	There is a need to be flexible during the process and with regard to any outcome. Any suitable resolution selected may be revised and changed if there is a need.
Resolution	There is a need for a resolution itself. The participants must agree that after all the collaborative interactions they have reached consensus to solve the problem. This agreement is usually in the form of shaking hands, signing an agreement or making an announcement.

From the researcher's experience it is important to add that there is a need for training if conflict resolution is to be effective.

The next discussion covers key aspects of conflict management.

2.3.2   Key aspects of conflict management

According to Uline, Tschannen-Moran, and Perez (2003:783), effective conflict management is a prerequisite to management because it "breathes life and energy into relationships and production." Kowalski (2006:159) asserts that effective conflict management requires an accurate diagnosis and proper selection of resolution strategies. Zuelke and Willerman (1987:18) highlight that if conflict management is properly understood and acted upon, it can be the basis upon which people are integrated into the school, and the school becomes a better place to work and learn.

People differ in their ways of dealing with conflict. Management of conflict requires an understanding of how the situation developed (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:78).

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable; therefore, the real goal for a leader is not to perpetuate or eliminate conflict but rather to develop strategies to manage it effectively.   Coser (1964) in Vestal and Jones (2004:13) mentions that conflict can be a constructive avenue for needed change, if managed properly. Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher (2003:6,) in Kowalski, Petersen and Fusarelli (2007:176) recognize the rising need for conflict management systems in organizations today, largely due to an "increasingly litigious society."

Kgomo (2006) refers to Henkin, Cistone and Dee (2000:146), mentioning that conflict management is essentially communicative behaviour.   Both conflict and conflict management are interactive processes (Kowalski et al., 2007:180).   The way in which managers communicate with stakeholders can impact positively or negatively, depending on their directive or consultative approach. Conflict management can be viewed as a measure to binds the different perspectives of people within an organization into one. Without effective conflict management the trust that glues the organization together and oils the operation is lacking (Kgomo 2006:15).

An effective conflict management initiative must be applied that will suit the nature and seriousness of the conflict. Any conflict management policy must allow for a variety of interventions, from informal methods, such as persuasion, facilitation, conciliation, or negotiation, to formal methods, such as structured negotiation, mediation, or series mediation. Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53-54) state that contact between divergent cultures may entail conflict, therefore South African principals, teachers, learners and parents must be empowered with the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills to manage conflict in a constructive manner.

According to Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53-54), teachers receive little practical training in how to deal with manifest and latent conflict and this disempowers them when they encounter conflict. They consequently react defensively, thereby exacerbating the conflict.   Managers need to be proactive in identifying the stimulants of conflict and should act immediately to prevent minor conflicts before

they become major disputes. In order to achieve this effectiveness, the school principal, supported by the SGB, needs to learn how to identify conflicts and how to manage them appropriately; they need to be aware of the types of conflicts and the positive approaches for resolutions (Zuelke & Willerman 1987:9). Early recognition of conflict and a proper level of intervention must be a primary objective of conflict management.

In this sense, conflict management is a means to establish a cooperative learning and performance culture in which all the stakeholders, including SGBs, know and understand their roles, support each other in them and learn from each other. Conflict management should not be handled as a perfunctory process designed to merely shut down disputes. Rather, it should be considered as a process to open difficult situations to effective discourse, resolution and learning. Finally, Snodgrass & Blunt (2009:56) highlight the fact that the challenge for conflict management is to find an approach that will produce enduring change.

Conflict resolution programmes are discussed next.

2.3.3   Conflict resolution programmes

Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) mention that literature reviews reveal that relatively little attention is given in South Africa to the tuition of conflict management and peace education in schools. When provided, these programmes are presented by the staff of non-governmental organizations, educators, social workers, psychologists, community development practitioners and independent consultants, working with institutions, organizations and communities. Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) argue that these programmes are mostly not related to the South African context and are not learner centred. One can nevertheless learn from such programmes, and some approaches are discussed next.

2.3.3.1 The Peacemakers programme

The Peacemakers programme is derived from the theory and research on constructive conflict resolution (Deutsch 1973), integrative negotiations (Johnson 1974), dual-concerns theory (Johnson 1967; Pruitt 1981), perspective reversal

(Johnson 1971), communication in conflicts (Johnson 1974), and dual concerns-theory (Johnson & Johnson 2003). According to Johnson and Johnson (1995) in Stevahn et al. (2005:4), most school-based training programmes are not linked to existing theory and research in the field of conflict resolution and they address pragmatic disciplinary and behaviour management concerns in schools rather than to manage, test, and generalize theories on constructive conflict management. Therefore, researchers need to investigate the effectiveness of theory-based conflict programmes (Johnson & Johnson (1995) in Stevahn et al. (2005:4). Based on this context, Johnson & Johnson (1995) in Stevahn et al. (2005:4) examined the effectiveness of a total-student-body conflict training programme, teaching students to be peacemakers. Johnson & Johnson (1995) in Stevahn et al. (2005:17) state that this school-based program of conflict resolution is important in conflict situations for the following reasons: firstly, educators need comprehensive information on classroom conflict training and student outcomes across diverse school settings to make wise decisions regarding the adoption of such programme. Secondly, a yet-unstudied population, namely elementary school children in a bilingual context, is examined. Thirdly, the effectiveness of a total-student-body approach to conflict resolution training by including all teachers and all students across all classrooms in the school is explored.

It is indicated in this programme that students need to be taught how to manage conflict constructively. Johnson & Johnson (1995) in Stevahn et al. (2005:17) highlighted that mere exposure to procedures will not produce good results but instead educators need to teach all students in the school the procedures and skills necessary for resolving their own conflicts constructively, as well as for mediating conflicts of and with peers. It has been proved that cadre approaches to conflict resolution are unlikely to meet the challenges of conflict resolution as the process seems to be time consuming because learners are not reached simultaneously. Instead, the emphasis is placed on a whole-school approach whereby all learners are involved.

Stevahn, Munger & Kealey (2005:17) concur with Boardman and Horowitz (1994) that constructive conflict management must be taught at schools. They further state that direct training and on-going practice appear to be necessary for students to

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become skilful conflict managers. These authors conclude by saying that educators can adopt a conflict resolution or peer mediation programme as the foundation for a comprehensive school discipline and classroom management system.

Stevahn, Munger and Kealey (2005) proved from their research that students who received and learned higher levels of conflict training in their classrooms demonstrated increased willingness and ability to apply the procedures to resolve conflict scenarios, compared to students with lower levels of conflict training. Mere efforts to display posters reflecting conflict resolution procedures in the schools' main entrances throughout the whole year, proved less successful.

Peer mediation and process curriculum programmes are discussed next.

2.3.3.2 Peer mediation and process curriculum programmes

Bodine et al. (1994), and Gilhooley and Scheuch (2000), in Brinson, Jeffrey, Kottler and Fisher (2004:296) mention the most common programmes used in schools as *peer mediation* and *process curriculum* programmes. Osier and Fox (2001) in Brinson et al. (2004:296) explain a peer mediation programme as one that uses a limited number of trained students who mediate school disputes. It is assumed that these students will disseminate their experience to others. Students can, for example, exchange perspectives and come with decisions that will be acceptable to both parties to solve their problems. These authors further explain the process curriculum as an approach that uses specific class time to teach students conflict resolution concepts and skills. The disadvantage found in both of these approaches is that there is a lack of emphasis on cross-cultural conflict resolution.

The next section deals with an elecitive model for developing conflict resolution training programmes.

2.3.3.3 An   elecitive   model   for   developing   a   conflict   resolution   training programme

Snodgrass and Haines (2005:26) refer to this programme as elecitive because it involves a wide variety of ideas or perspectives.   Mainly two approaches are used in this model, namely the prescriptive and elective approaches (Snodgrass & Haines 2005:26).   Prescriptive and elecitive approaches are basic to most conflict management programmes. The emphasis in both of these approaches as stated by Snodgrass and Haines (2005:35) is on the transference of particular knowledge, skills and attitudes.   This is a school-based conflict management programme that originated after a thorough review of the literature on school-based conflict management training. According to Snodgrass and Haines (2005:38) it was decided that an eclectic model which uses elements of both approaches, namely prescriptive and elicitive, would be ideal for the conflict management training of learners in the multicultural school.

According to Lederach (1995, 2000), in Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) a review of the literature in South Africa reveals that relatively little conflict management and peace education are taught in schools. The programmes which are presented are loosely based on western models of conflict resolution and are not really learner centred.   Lederach (1995, 2000), in Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:54) view these programmes as not necessarily appropriate for South African learners engaged in conflict.

Lederach (1995; 1997) in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:36) reports that the *prescriptive approach* means that the trainer is the 'expert' and knows what the participants need – the trainer's knowledge is the key resource to be transferred. The knowledge is provided to the participants as a model made of strategies suggesting how conflict is resolved.   Learning and mastering the model is the primary goal of the training. The prescriptive model is criticized as having cultural and ideological underpinnings that are rarely made explicit.

The *elecitive approach* builds on the knowledge in the setting.   According to Snodgrass & Haines (2005:38) the elective approach is very appealing because it emphasizes creativity and discovery.

Lederach (1995), in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:20,21) highlights the importance of the elecitive approach and its application in multicultural settings as a reorientation of the ways we think about training. It differs from the prescriptive approach in that cultural aspects are explicit, in other words it cannot bracket culture. The cultural, natural and baseline knowledge in a given setting is understood as the foundation and seedbed of model development and creation. Rather than depending on the trainer as expert, this approach to training creates a mutually facilitated learning environment. The relationship between participants and trainers redefines knowledge as implicit in the setting rather than in the trainer (Lederach 1995, in Snodgrass & Blunt 2009:55). Many scholars have stressed the fact that the western perspectives on conflict management and interventions have generally failed to consider the cultural contexts involved and have attempted to construct universal models and techniques applicable across all social domains (Augsberger 1992; Avruch & Black 1990, 1991, 1993; Kimmel 2000; Ross 1993a; 1993b; 2000a in Snodgrass & Haines 2005:36).

According to Snodgrass and Haines (2005:28) an elecitive model requires the consideration of the following aspects:

2.3.3.3.1 Understanding the nature of conflict

People involved in conflict must acknowledge the existence of the conflict in order to manage conflict constructively (Snodgrass & Haines 2005:28). The conflict exists among individuals and groups when incompatible activities occur (Deutsch 1973 in Snodgrass & Haines 2005: 28). Educators and learners tend to have an incomplete and inaccurate understanding of conflict, they associate conflict with extreme acts of violence whereas conflict can be productive. (Deutsch 1973, in Snodgrass & Haines 2005:28).

Deutsch 1973 (ibid.) also mentions that it is not the goal of conflict management to eliminate conflict because it is an inevitable and pervasive part of school life and has many positive outcomes.

Johnson & Johnson (2004), in Snodgrass & Haines (2005:28) mention these positive outcomes of conflict, namely the ability to strengthen relationships, addition of fun and drama to life, provision of insights into other perspectives and life experiences, the increase of disputants' ability to cope with stress and to be resilient in the face of adversity, and the increase of general psychological health. In the same vein, Kowalski, Petersen and Fusarelli (2007:170) accentuate that conflict is now seen as inevitable, endemic, and in many cases, legitimate and desirable, as opposed to the traditional view which focuses on the elimination of conflict as quickly as possible.

2.3.3.3.2 Choosing an appropriate conflict solution strategy

When choosing an appropriate conflict solution strategy it is important to enhance awarenes of various conflict behaviours such as aggression, avoidance and constructive problem solving (Kowalski et al. 2007). They further emphasize that communication is central in choosing an appropriate strategy. Effective communication includes taking account of perceptions, feelings and needs and involves effective use of language (both verbal and non-verbal communication, and active listening (Tillent & French 2006:281). These authors accentuate that conflict resolution is essentially a communication process that works with and through language. Tillet and French (2006:281) argue that not all conflict is caused by miscommunication or lack of effective communication. They further say that clear and effective communication can, in fact, cause or escalate conflict. Another issue which is central to communication is power.

Keitner (1994) in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:29) mentions that people use communication to execute power. The research indicates that conflict management processes are strongly influenced by the power relations context in which the conflict occurs. For an example, in competitive environments the focus is on antagonistic interests, which exhibit distrust and suspicion, and communicate in misleading ways. In contrast to the competitive environment, there is the cooperative, "power free" climate where there is a perceived similarity of goals, trust and open communication, and learners have more time to engage in critical thinking (Harris 1990, in Snodgrass & Haines 2005:30). Researchers maintain that open, cooperative interaction is a critical factor in fostering positive intergroup relations (Snodgrass & Haines 2005:30).

2.3.3.3.3 Experiential learning

According to Kolb (1984) in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:31), experiential learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. In conflict management, skills and knowledge are learnt so as to apply them in solving the conflict in a constructive way.

Learning results in new insights and new sets of behaviours. Learning to appreciate and make constructive use of the different perspectives and experiences of various organizational actors helps to create a context where trust and respect are cultivated rather than depleted. Respect and trust then become the foundation upon which future collaborative experiences are built (Uline et al. 2003:805).

Maas (1990), in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:31) defines experiential learning as referring to learning activities that engage the learner directly in the phenomena being studied. This approach involves experiential learning through role play, and subsequent learner reflection on their experiences. Marsick and Sauquet (2000:384) report that reflection is central to every phase of learning from experience, because it sensitizes people to surprises and mismatches that signal the inadequacy of the prior stock of knowledge and helps them to interpret and reinterpret experience. Critical reflection is a process whereby one tends to look back on past experiences and events and the meaning of these. According to Whitaker (1995:14) we reflect on past experience in order to sort out what we consider to be specific successes and difficulties.

2.3.3.3.4 Appreciating diversity

The shift to a multicultural education system means that learners from divergent cultures are in a position to benefit from contact with one another (Banks 1999; Gumbo 2001 in Snodgrass & Blunt 2009:53). According to Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53-54) there is a distinct need to empower principals, teachers, learners and parents with the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills to manage conflict in a constructive manner because contact between various cultures may entail conflict. Conflict emerges as part of the interdependence between the individual and the socio-contextual learning environment. As far as Vogel et al. (2003) in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:32) are concerned, in multicultural school settings, barriers between learners can emerge as variations in language, ethnicity or culture, social class, and gender. Personal and social differences become part of these interactions and infiltrate relationships.

 Multicultural education is of particular relevance in conflict resolution. Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students and parents as a particular way in which schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning (Nieto 1999:208). Multicultural education furthers the democratic principles of social justice because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection and action as a basis of social change. Wheelan (1994) in Snodgrass & Haines (2005:32) maintains that the multicultural school environment presents an ideal opportunity for skills training aimed at improving interracial contact situations whereby the culturally mixed group should undergo training that encourages shared problem solving and greater awareness of individuals and their personal issues. The conflict will be managed effectively if people can learn to appreciate diversity and accept and respect people as they are, with their own cultures, identities and values.

2.3.3.4 The application of conflict management training

The next discussion focuses on the application of conflict management training. The various steps are mentioned and explained as Snodgrass & Haines (2005:40) have indicated them.

2.3.3.4.1 Setting the stage for the conflict management training

According to Snodgrass and Haines (2005:40) the initial step is setting the stage which involves activities of 'ice breaking'. The intention of these activities is to generate an atmosphere of mutual trust that will be conducive to free and open participation. Firstly the programme is introduced, explaining the purpose, process and the envisaged outcome. This is followed by the introduction of the participants, and setting the ground rules for cultivating a safe and respectful training environment. This includes issues such as treating one another with respect, maintaining confidentiality, and demonstrating tolerance.

Games and activities are used to initiate contact between the participants. These games open the way to cooperation and positive relationships. Games are used at the beginning and end of the session. According to Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53), play can facilitate change by allowing learners freedom to change their behaviour and creating opportunities to explore new identities. Preconditions are important for promoting positive contact. In this stage of warming up the participants would be expected to explore their views of what they consider a conflict to be. By way of brainstorming, they are requested to look at conflict from both sides, as constructive and destructive, and how it can lead to violence.

2.3.3.4.2 Setting up role –play

Role play and simulations play an integral part in conflict management training (Lederach ; Lupton-Smith, Carruthers, Flythe, Goettee & Modest 1996; Kimmel 2000 in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:41). According to Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:60) they enable learners to practice given skills or techniques, and to learn the steps in negotiation and mediation. In the prescriptive approach the trainer often prepares the simulations and scenarios in advance, with detailed descriptions of the situational circumstances and the instructions for the various roles.

In the "elicitive approach", the use of role-play is a means for discovery and creation rather than for practicing a given model. The facilitator structures the role plays loosely, trusting the participants' creative abilities to identify and create their own

scenarios. Five steps are involved in analysing the role plays, namely to discover, categorize, describe, evaluate and adapt/create (Lederach, 1995 in Snodgrass & Haines 2005:41). The purpose of the discovery process is to induce participants to engage with their understanding of how conflict occurred. The participants are requested to divide themselves into groups of six and to think about a conflict situation they once experienced. They are given a choice of interaction to create their scenarios, such as parent/child, teacher/learner, pupil leader/learner and girlfriend/boyfriend. This scenario is to be enacted in front of the whole group.

2.3.3.4.3 Staging the conflict role-plays

Lederach (1995) in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:41) further explain the roles that are played by individual groups in front of the whole group. Parent/child role plays can involve a girl who has a boyfriend much older than her of which her parents disapprove. This girl does not want to listen to her parents; she anyway goes to her boyfriend. All the other role plays are done accordingly. The purpose of this role play is to ensure that the diverse participants interact with one another in a harmonious manner. At the end of each play the participants reflect on the play.

2.3.3.4.4 Discovery and description

Through interaction and understanding, the participants are able to discover on their own what could be the causes of the conflict. Staging the conflict helps the participants to realize and categorize the manner in which conflicts are handled by looking at the different behaviours of the participants. All the enacted scenarios are thrown open for facilitated group discussion, new understandings are generated in the process and new mutual understandings emerge through open and supportive communication.

Different viewpoints, debates about various beliefs, assumptions, gossips and rumours, the role of drugs and alcohol and the use of violence are discussed as these topics are related to the participants' environments. The facilitator guides the participants to seek for new information and perspectives that will give rise to constructive alternatives. The debates avoid a competitive orientation that may end

up in a win–lose orientation. In this stage the participants are mainly expected to discover and describe what happened while they were role-playing.

2.3.3.4.5 Evaluation

The participants are now reflecting on what happened thus far. They reflect on their actions and behaviour according to the standards and values of their particular setting without judging. Reflection is done following the questions formulated by the facilitator, such as: What is helpful and good in this situation? How could this conflict be managed differently? What needs to be changed? These questions open up the discussion and allow the participants to see the conflict from a generalized third-person perspective and from different viewpoints. Throughout the whole discussion participants learn alternative ways of dealing with conflicts.   In this stage, disagreement among learners increases learning and intellectual development. Controversial issues increase problem solving, accuracy of perspective taking, and the evolution of moral reasoning (Snodgrass & Haines 2005:45).

2.3.3.4.6 Adaptation and recreation

In this stage, the groups learn new, alternative ways of handling conflict. They adapt to alternative, constructive ways of solving problems.   These new ways involve problem solving and critical thinking skills that are generated after the enactment of each scenario. The groups adapt old approaches and create more effective ways in which conflict should be approached.   The participants re-write scripts they had presented after the group discussion and re-enact the new ways of dealing with a conflict situation. Finally, new strategies and models that emerge are experimented with, and refined.   This process helps the groups with the opportunity to practice the lessons learnt from the evaluation (Lederach, 1995 in Snodgrass & Haines 2005:45).

The eclectic model can be applied successfully in conflict resolution and the elimination of harmful conflict as it equips learners with competent resolution skills. Managers should be well trained to give the required support in the creation and implementation of suitable methods to deal effectively with conflicts in schools. Brinson et al. (2004:299) emphasize that principals should be trained to provide

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mentoring and leadership, and in establishing an atmosphere that is receptive to diverse cultures.

Horowitz & Boardman (1994), in Brinson et al. (2004:299) presented a number of policy recommendations to be used in the development and implementation of conflict resolution models. They mention the following:

The first recommendation is to include different cultural perspectives in models and applications of conflict management. To meet the needs of different groups, culturally relevant programs should be developed along with the expansion of current constructive conflict management interventions. Tillett and French (2006:204) confirm that culturally relevant programmes are helpful because culture generally defines behaviour in terms of what is appropriate to particular roles. Rubin 1994, in Brinson et al. (2004:299) reports that culture-sensitive models are needed to fully understand and address various conflict and conflict resolution styles.

The second recommendation proposed by Horowitz (1994) in Brinson et al. (2004:299) is to emphasize longer pre-negotiation and negotiation time. According to these authors, negotiations are often not successful because participants become frustrated with the process when the quick results that they expect are not realized. They highlight the fact that conflict management skills that accommodate longer pre-negotiation and negotiation times should be used in more serious conflicts.

The third recommendation as outlined by Boardman and Horowitz (1994) in Brinson et al. (2004) is to institutionalize constructive conflict management in schools and organizations. Conflict management should be made part of the core curriculum in schools with emphasis on diversity issues and broadening of perspectives. They plead that constructive conflict management skills be taught and practiced as any other life skill.

Vestal and Jones (2004:140) also proved the importance of teachers being trained to teach learners conflict resolution skills. They report that preschool children from at-risk neighbourhoods can be taught to think of more ways, particularly pro-social ways, to resolve interpersonal conflicts. When these learners are taught by

motivated teachers who have undergone thorough training in conflict resolution strategies, they can acquire significant conflict resolution and problem-solving skills.

According to Uline (2003), educators experiencing conflict due to on-going rigorous reform efforts need to receive support of a structural nature. These structures can be school improvement committees, team teaching groups, and critical friends groups. Uline (2003) maintains that within these structures teachers will tend to practice constructive conflict resolution based on cooperation, rather than competition.

Conflict management strategies are discussed next.

2.4   CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Conflict management strategies and resolutions are approaches applied to ensure that harmful or destructive conflict is prevented or eliminated.   Competent conflict resolution behaviour involves a social, rather than an egocentric orientation, an effort and ability to balance one's own interests with those of others and the ability to discover relevant social norms and others' interests, to assess conflict situations accurately and to decide on the most appropriate resolution approach (Putallaz & Sheppard 1992; Selman 1980 in Chen 2003:203). According to Kgomo (2006:39) a strategy is an action which involves two or more individuals coordinating, planning, implementing and evaluating an activity in pursuit of a goal.

Vestal and Jones (2004:139) see conflict resolution as a socially competent behaviour, based on knowledge of emotions and diversity. According to Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:78) conflict management requires an understanding of how the conflict situation developed. Johnson (1994,) in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:78) lists three key questions that should be asked when analysing a conflict situation: What are the issues involved? Who are the disputants? What really matters to each party? It is the responsibility of managers to cultivate a culture of constructive conflict and in order to do this, attributes like assertiveness and openness are important to develop (Steyn 2007:58). Destructive conflict is totally unacceptable because it eventually can lead to violence.

Stevahn, Keally and Munger (2005:5) provide guidelines for the cultivation of constructive conflict by mentioning the following components:

(1)   Recognizing that the conflict exists and expressing a desire to resolve it constructively
(2)   Stating a need
(3)   Providing underlying reasons
(4)   Expressing feelings
(5)   Communicating understanding of others' wants, reasons and feelings
(6)   Inventing multiple solutions to maximize mutual gain; and reaching an agreement by shaking hands on one of the options.

Chen (2003) as referred to by Steyn (2008:58) states that these actions include the use of reasoning, willingness to compromise and the use of conciliatory gestures such as apologizing and sharing. Tillett and French (2006:2) explain conflict resolution as a multidisciplinary, analytical, problem-solving approach to conflict that seeks to enable the participants to work collaboratively towards its resolution.

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:78) report that Thomas (in Greenberg & Baron 1995:427;Tosi, Mero & Rizzo 2000:289-292; Owens 2001:318-323; and Cleary 2003:52-53) identified five major styles of conflict management that managers can adopt: force, avoidance, compromise, accommodation and problem solving. I will also discuss cessation and mediation, and cross-cultural conflict resolution techniques.

2.4.1   Forcing (dominating)

Using force, authority or power to resolve conflict leads to a forced or imposed solution (Cleary 2003, in Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:79). Force can include the use of institutional authority and power, reward and punishment, bribery and even physical force (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:79).

2.4.2   Avoiding (withdrawing)

This style is applied in a situation whereby one party tries to avoid the conflict by accepting the other party's offer irrespective of him/her being not satisfied, just for the sake of peace. It is an unassertive and uncooperative style because this person avoids or postpones the confrontation to a later stage. The conflict is not yet solved. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:79) further state that this management style may be used when an issue is trivial or more important issues are pressing, when you believe that there is no chance of your concerns being attended to, when potential disruption outweighs the benefits of the solution, to let people cool down and regain perspective, and when others can resolve the conflict more successfully.

2.4.3   Compromising (agreeing, bargaining)

Compromising means that you give in order to receive. This style of management is applied when resources are limited and the demand overweighs the resources available. Both parties come to an agreement to share the resources equally. It becomes a win-win situation; there is no loser and both parties are in some way involved in the decision taken. This strategy is often used to achieve temporary solutions to difficult problems (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:80). These authors further state that this strategy has the disadvantage of the parties ending up with less than what they hoped for and this may result in dissatisfaction which may lead to parties trying to negotiate again in order to get what they wanted initially. Compromising is used when goals are important, but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes. It is also used as a backup when collaboration or force is unsuccessful.

2.4.4   Accommodating (smoothing)

This style involves resolving the conflict between two parties or more whereby one party satisfies the interest of the other party at his or her own expense. Accommodating is applied when you find that you are wrong, to find a better position to be heard, to learn and to show your reasonableness.   This style is also used to build social credits for later issues, it minimizes loss when you are outmatched and

losing, when harmony and stability are particularly important and to allow subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes.

2.4.5 Problem solving

Problem solving involves an attempt to satisfy the concerns of both sides through honest discussion (Cleary 2003:53; Vecchio 1991:422 in Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:80). Negotiation is the focus of this style whereby solutions that suit both parties are applied.

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:81) report that collaboration is often difficult to achieve, but yields innovative results. These authors further state that problem solving is regarded as the most effective form of conflict management in which the main idea is to cooperate in order to resolve the conflict permanently (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:81). The problem-solving or collaboration model has the disadvantage of consuming a lot of time, therefore it cannot be applied in isolation, and it has to be incorporated with other management styles.

Problem solving is applied when your objective is to learn, if you want to find an integrative solution to a situation where both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised, when you merge insights from people with different perspectives and when you want to gain commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus. Problem solving, according to Harris (1999); Sarthiparsad (2003); Vogel; Seaberry; Barnes and Kelly (2003) in Snodgrass and Haines (2005:30) is considered a foundation skill in most school-based conflict management programmes. According to Rutherford et al. (1979:35) it involves a systematic procedure for resolving differences, reaching solutions or discovering sources of difficulties.

Tillet and French (2006:282) are of the opinion that conflict resolution is synonymous with problem-solving and the emphasis needs to be on the identification and resolution of the real problem through a process in which the relationship between the participants changes - the problem can be solved because the relationship is changed. These authors further state that the principle of problem solving draws attention to the fact that conflict resolution needs to focus on the problem , not on the

people, or positions that may be taken in relation to the problem. They proceed to say that effective conflict resolution can lead to creative conflict, characterized by innovation, collaborative problem-solving and enhanced relationships. Being skilled in social problem-solving provides learners with a sense of mastery that is needed to cope with stressful life events (Vestal & Jones 2004:132).

Problem solving requires interactions and brainstorming of different ideas, as well as collaborative critical thinking skills for managing conflict effectively. Where learners lack problem solving skills and critical thinking skills, they eventually resort to avoidance tactics. As far as Snodgrass and Haines (2005:30) are concerned problem solving is closely linked to the cooperative learning experience where people engage in activities that have some clear goal - they are challenged through interaction and joint problem solving to achieve this goal.

Cooperative learning and conflict resolution are seen as two interrelated movements in education that develop learners' skills in perspective-taking, improved communication and problem solving. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:81) indicate six steps in problem-solving as follows:

Firstly, they suggest that the problem needs to be defined. Secondly, you analyse the problem and determine its causes and the criteria for solving it. Thirdly, possible solutions are determined. Fourthly, the best solution is selected. Fifthly, the solution is implemented, and finally, the implementation is evaluated.

2.4.6   Cessation and mediation

According to Chen (2003:205) two main types of conflict intervention strategies emerge from the literature on teachers' conflict intervention: ***cessation*** and ***mediation.*** Chen (2003) explains cessation strategies as interventions focused on the external management of conflict situations by telling or directing children on what they should do, physically separating the children , and/or by removing the source of conflict to end the dispute. He further adds that teachers act as judge or umpire, by generating solutions to children's conflicts without involving them in the development

of the resolution. On the other hand, mediation strategies are interventions focused on helping the conflicting parties resolve their own conflicts.

Mediation strategies may vary in the extent of teacher-directedness, ranging from the suggestion of words to use to the provision of a supportive adult presence (Bayer et al. 1995 in Chen 2003:205). The mediator seeks to terminate the conflict and restore social relations between the groups to some level of legitimacy (Vaught 1997, in Brinson, Kottler & Fisher 2004:296). Attempts are made to help people refrain from assigning blame and instead to focus on understanding the origins of the dispute and to find common ground for consensus (Kottler 199, in Brinson et al. 2004). Mediators also hope to help people develop a better understanding of each other's positions in order to develop a relationship based on mutual respect. Thus parties are encouraged to reflect on each other's view points in such a way that they will be more willing to resolve their own disputes (Winslade & Monk 2000 in Brinson et al. 2004:296).

De Vries, Rees-Learned and Morgan (1991) in Chen (2003:205) compared the conflict resolution strategies of children from kindergarten classrooms, each representing a different type of programme, namely direct-instruction, eclectic and constructivist. These conflict resolution strategies view conflict and its resolution as an important part of the curriculum, rather than as a problem to be managed. This comparison was done where children were observed in pairs, playing a board game in the laboratory setting. The observations indicated that children in classrooms characterized by teachers' use of mediation strategies were found to resolve more of their conflicts in the board game situation, to use higher levels of negotiation strategies, and to be more collaborative in their conflict resolution than children from classrooms in which cessation strategies predominated. Chen (2003) confirms that there is empirical support for the use of mediation rather than cessation strategies.

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:84) mention that neutral parties enter in mediation and arbitration situations to help resolve the conflict. These authors explain that in mediation, a third party uses various techniques to try to bring about agreement between disputing parties. Mediators usually have no formal power and cannot impose an agreement on the conflicting parties. They therefore seek to clarify the

issues involved optimally, and to improve the communication between the parties (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007:84).

2.4.7 Cross-cultural techniques and strategies

Brinson et al. (2004:296) present several cross cultural conflict resolution techniques and strategies that have merit when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The principals must place a professional emphasis on cross-cultural problem solving. Firstly, the manager needs to define, understand and make sense of conflict within the cultural context of the groups involved in the dispute (Lederach, 1995 in Brinson et al. 2004:296). Secondly, overreliance on traditional problem-solving techniques and strategies when working in cross-cultural situations could increase vulnerability to emotional and behavioural problems. Thirdly, Tyler, Lind and Huo 2000 in Brinson et al. (2004) emphasize that cross-cultural strategies provide a framework for understanding the role the culture has in influencing human behaviour and interactions, and consequently, how culture can affect the problem-solving process.

In their research, Brinson et al. (2004:297) found the following techniques and strategies that are helpful when mediating disputes within and between culturally diverse groups:

2.4.7.1 Community assembly: *The Semai Becharra*'

According to Brinson et al. (2004:297) the tradition of African culture requires disputes not to be handled in isolation or to be between the disputants only. Disputes are a concern of everyone in the community or the school. The headman in the community gathers people in the 'becharra' (discussion session) to share the discussion and the disputants are each afforded a platform to state their story to the listeners. Thereafter, the dispute is discussed by the listeners. Eventually the headman, or the principal in a case of the school, judges the case and imposes a verdict. The one who is found to be guilty is fined and both parties are strongly rebuked. The collective responsibility of handling the conflict is emphasised, and the disputants do not address one another.

2.4.7.2 Qai-Chewing sessions

This strategy originates in Yemen (Brinson et al. (2004). The disputants are given a plant called the "qat" to chew which after seconds of chewing starts to have a tingling sensation to the tongue and mouth. The leader is the only person who is not allowed to chew this qat and he/she has the antidote that eliminates the tingling in the mouth. It is believed that both parties will cooperate quickly with the intention of getting the antidote. In order to get the antidote, the members must listen to each other and reach a resolution as quickly as possible. In the school context the manager can choose any object, such as a cell phone and withhold it until both parties cooperate to come up with the solution to resolve their conflict.

2.4.7.3 The role of poetry

According to Brinson et al. (2004) poetry is a powerful resource in schools, primarily because many students across various racial/ethnic groups love to listen to lyrics. For example, rap music can be used to pass a message that condemns destructive conflict.

2.4.7.4 Dia

The concept of Dia originates in some African cultures whereby its payment is used as a common way to prevent or settle a feud. It is used by members of the group who work together and support one another in collective social responsibility. The Dia (fine) is used for compensation and upliftment. This approach can be applied in a school context whereby the principal together with the SGB could create a judicial system run by students. The jury (formed by elected students) would make judgments against students who are accused of an offence. Such guilty students would have to pay for each other for damages in a form of community service that is helpful to the school.

2.4.7.5 Mythodrama

This is an intervention used to help students discover specific dynamics relating to intergroup conflict. The intervention involves a manager telling a story that will depict or portray the nature of the current conflict and this story should also paint a picture of the consequence of the conflict if it is left unsolved. The story is left without an ending and the students are expected to fantasize the ending.

The above mentioned strategies are some of the examples that can be effectively used by the SGB in their efforts to support educators in conveying the necessary skills to the learners.

I would like to conclude with the view of De Vries and Zan (1994) in Chen (2003:205) when they emphasize the need for educators to assist learners in acquiring constructive conflict strategies, to let them recognize and utter their feelings and listen to one another, to clarify the problem and if the conflict becomes destructive, how they can intervene to stimulate children's abilities to generate possible solutions. De Vries and Zan (1994) in Chen (2003:205) further urge teachers to be calm and to control their own emotions and reactions. Whether teachers like it or not, they must acknowledge that conflicts are not something that can be avoided or prevented. Instead Chen (2003:207) wants to know "why these conflicts cannot be used as opportunities to develop strategies for peaceful resolution of differences?"

In sum: According to the American Health Lawyers Association (1988:18), foundational principles necessary to support conflict management include: a) a willingness to acknowledge the existence of conflict; b) open communication; c) dealing with conflict within an environment of mutual respect; d) acceptance and tolerance of different perspectives through the process; e) commitment to fundamental fairness; f) educating all stakeholders about conflict management; g) developing a conflict management process with policies and procedures, with input from the stakeholders; and h) holding stakeholders accountable to use the conflict management process responsibly.

2.5   THE SCHOOL AS POTENTIAL CENTRE OF CONFLICT

The following discussion refers to conflicts that normally occur in schools. This discussion also highlights the reasons why a school can become the potential centre of conflicts.

The Oregon Mediation Center (2006), in Kowalski (2007:173) suggests that the following can be the sources of conflicts in the school:

2.5.1 Relationship conflicts

According to the Oregon Mediation Center (2006), in Kowalski (2007:173) this type of conflict occurs between people as a result of the presence of strong negative emotions, misinterpretations, or stereotypes, poor communication or miscommunication, or repetitive negative behaviours. This is mainly interpersonal conflict. The author continues to say that when the "going gets tough" in terms of communication breakdown, people get angry and overreact by doing things that are irreparable.

2.5.2 Data conflicts

This conflict stems from the lack of information to make wise decisions. When people are misinformed or disagree on which data is relevant, they interpret information differently or have competing assessment procedures (Oregon Mediation Center (2006) in Kowalski et al. 2007:174).

2.5.3 Structural conflicts

According to Kowalski (2007:174,) this type of conflict can occur over tangible issues, physical constraints, and organizational changes. Changes that are implemented to school procedures for dealing with various issues such as learner absenteeism, late-coming for both teachers and learners, discipline and others, may result in conflict as teachers' roles and responsibilities shift. Individual teachers have their own perspectives about the school procedures and their way of implementation.

2.5.4 Philosophical conflicts

This conflict originates from people's values and beliefs. Through values, people give meaning to their lives, and explain what is good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust (Oregon Mediation Center 2006, in Kowalski (2007:174). People can have different value systems, but that does not mean that they cannot get along; it is how people choose to manage their differences that matters. Conflicts arise when people try to force their values on others. This can happen in school when some teachers disagree with the values which underpin a policy, and by so doing a conflict is likely to arise.

The school is an organization; it is occupied by groups of people with different ideas, opinions and perspectives. Because people are working together in a school, and are having different values and beliefs, there is always a likelihood that they may disagree on certain issues. Understanding the values underlying such disagreements is a significant step in preventing and resolving conflicts in schools.

The next discussion elaborates on other conflicts that may arise in schools.

2.5.5   Other conflicts that often occur in schools

It can happen that some hostile parents visit the school with the intention of intervening in their children's academic performance. Their disagreements with teachers can result is serious conflict.

Some parents do not accept the academic failure of their children. They then come to school in a bad mood to complain, stimulating the potential for conflict. Home background may be a complicating factor in resolving such conflict. As pointed out by Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:301) the learner's background is considered to be a crucial factor that influences the learner's performance. Therefore, children that come from a family with domestic problems are not likely to perform satisfactorily.

Learner and teacher conflicts in schools can have multiple causes. These conflicts can stem from *inter alia* cultural activities which are perceived as offending, teenage pregnancies, crime, year-end results, and lack of parental involvement. The school

eventually can become the centre of these conflicts because the school is the place where conflicting individuals and parties meet. According to Squelch (2001: 139) many schools are situated in communities that are racked by crime and violence, which can spill over into the schools. In these schools, gangsterism, intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment and assault, vandalism, death threats against teachers and learners, use of dangerous weapons, drug trafficking and theft are common occurrences.

These occurrences usually pave the way to conflict which eventually can lead to violence. Due to the lack of efficient conflict resolution skills, many innocent learners suffer emotionally, physically and psychologically. Some of them eventually leave the school before time. According to Brinson, Kottler and Fisher (2004:294) many children are afraid to go into the restroom or out in the playground because of the level of violent conflict. In some cases, learners are molested and raped in the school premises.

Other contributors to destructive conflicts at schools as stated by Brinson et al. (2004:295) are the proliferation of gangs, violent images portrayed in the media, particularly TV, and the use of violent video games and internet sites. Learners experience exposure to violent measures of resolving conflict. Roberts (2008:89) adds that many children today struggle to learn in a group environment, their problem-solving skills have been learned from television and video games where problems (translated : people) are beaten, blown up or shot. Children with this mind-set have little empathy for their peers, unless these peers are seen as valuable to the attainment of personal goals.

Resistance to change is a contributing factor that may lead to schools becoming centres of conflict. Some staff members at school resist changes that are brought in at school. These staff members create potential conflict by defying the authorities' orders to follow certain policies and regulations.

Family background is another factor that can contribute to schools becoming the centre of conflicts. Brinson et al. (2004:295) suggest that families characterized by low levels of cohesion often demonstrate higher levels of conflict and hostilities, which can easily affect healthy growth and development. This is evident especially

in families characterised by low income. In such situations children learn to resolve their own problems through observed violent strategies and they take these to school. High academic failure rates often contribute to the aggression. On the other hand, more affluent families are generally made up of parents with higher levels of education, with easier access to resources for the educational development of their children. Children from such families are more inclined to resolve their conflicts in a constructive manner.

In the next discussion the functions of the SGB in conflict management are discussed.

2.6   FUNCTIONS OF THE SGB IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Brown & Duku (2008:435) highlight the fact that the key legislation giving legitimacy to school governance is the Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996). It stipulates that the governance of a public school is vested in the SGB that stands in a position of trust towards the school (Mestry 2006:27). According to Heystek (2004:308) parents constitute the majority in the SGBs and therefore they have an important role to play in the effective functioning of their children's schools. The SGB must make sure that conflict is kept to a minimum for the effective functioning of the school. The SGB has the responsibility to support the principal and staff in managing conflict, using constructive approaches to ensure that teaching and learning is not hindered and to ensure that the vision and mission of the school are achieved through smooth interactions.

As already mentioned, conflict will always exist in human interactions. Therefore the SGB must intervene immediately to alleviate conflict, especially if it has the potential to be destructive. The SGB governs the school by making the rules, plans and setting the framework for the operation of the school (MGSLG 2010:11). It is added that SGBs are tasked with addressing specific aspects and functions and they are mandated with roles and responsibilities (MGSLG 2010:11). The members of the SGBs have to study and apply the Schools Act in order for them to govern the school effectively and efficiently (Bisschoff & Mestry 2003:47).

Naidoo (2005), in Brown and Duku (2008:435) indicates that in terms of the official conceptualization of governance, the SASA does not mandate the SGB to lead or manage the day-to-day operational issues of schools linked to teaching, learning and assessment. Rather, the Act specifies that SGB leadership responsibilities include the following: Determination of admission policy, setting of language policy, making recommendations on teaching and non-teaching appointments, and the financial management of the school. The latter is a key function and involves *inter alia* the determination of school fees and engagement in fund raising.

Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:41) list the functions of all SGBs as stipulated by section 20 of SASA. Subject to this Act, the SGB a public school must administer and control the school's property and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including hostels, if applicable; encourage parents, learners, educators and staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school; recommend to the head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act, 1994 and the Labour Relations Act 1995; recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, subject to the public Service Act 1994 and the Labour Relations Act, 1995; at the request of the head of Department, allow the reasonable use under the fair conditions of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school. The SGB may allow the reasonable use of the facilities of the school for community, social and school fund-raising purposes, subject to such reasonable and equitable conditions as the SGB may determine which may include the charging of a fee or tariff which accrues to the school.

According to Section 21 of SASA (South Africa 1996) the SGB may apply to the Head of Department in writing to be allocated any of the following functions: To maintain and improve the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable; to determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy; to purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school; to pay for the services to the school. Makhubela (2005:10) indicates that some of the functions of the SGB are not explicitly mentioned but they are implied in other functions.

Such functions as stated by the Department of Education (1996:12) in Makhubela (2005:10) include the following: To promote the best interest of the school and to ensure development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school, to adopt a constitution for the school, to develop the vision and mission of the school, to develop the language and religious policies for the school which means that the SGB must develop the code of conduct for learners in that school; to support the educators in whatever they try to achieve in the school as long as it is for the betterment of quality education; to hire additional personnel, I both educators and non-educators, and to pay them. The educators hired should or must be registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE). The SGB must also decide on school times within the conditions of employment of the staff, to determine school fees, and after approval by parents, charge and enforce the payment of school fees and deal with exemptions.   Evidently, most of these SGB functions can be sources of conflict.

Makhubela (2005) argues that although the SASA provides that SGBs may apply to provincial education departments for additional functions in areas like curriculum, policy development and improvement of infrastructure, only parents in former white schools, whose SGBs usually include individuals with skilled professional and managerial identities, have been granted these powers.

It is also the responsibility of the SGB to promote the best interest of the school and develop a plan for its development and growth.   In terms of the Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996) SGBs have a legal responsibility to ensure that schools are safe, secure and conducive to teaching and learning by ensuring that the necessary policies, procedures and structures are in place.

However, according to (Squelch 2001:138) a pressing problem in many schools is that many SGBs do not have a clear understanding of their roles, duties and liability. Squelch (2001) proceeds to report that many governors, especially parent governors, do not have the necessary experience and skills to fulfil their duties, thus in many schools SGBs are not functioning as the law requires them to.

Cullingford (1985:62) agrees with other scholars that some SGBs are uncertain about the bases of their legitimacy. The participation in some of them is limited by lack of skills to read, write and count. Heystek (2004:310) emphasizes that the competency and literacy level of parent members of the SGB may place restrictions on the execution of their duties.

Brown and Duku (2008:433) concur with Heystek (2004) that while parents participate in school governance, the social tension, rejection and psychological stress is often evident when affluent and destitute parents gather for school events. I personally witnessed this as I was once a member of governing body. He further emphasizes that in a school where parents have limited skills, knowledge or experience or even lower levels of literacy, the SGB may find it difficult or impossible to assume responsibility for drafting and managing the budget as one of its functions. According to Chaka (2005:2) there is a need to provide direct specific training and support that will suit the needs of SGBs so as to acquire the skills and knowledge needed.

Chaka (2005:2) proceeds to report that in such cases, it is the responsibility of the principal, as *ex officio* member of the SGB, to support the parents by drafting and managing the budget (SASA section 19(2), South Africa 1996). This kind of support depends on how the parents trust the principal. However, Chaka (2005) quoted a principal in a Soshanguve school stating that if the parents do not trust the principal as often happens, it may lead to constant conflict because the parents may feel disempowered. The limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, makes it sometimes difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously (Heystek 2004:308).

Amongst the duties of SGBs, conflict management is one of the functions which are not explicitly stated, but are implied. According to Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53) conflict in schools has become synonymous with overt behaviours involving coercion, violence and aggression. These authors continue to report that teachers spent a disproportionate amount of time and energy trying to manage classroom conflicts and disputes that arise with administrators, other teachers and parents.

Nelson-Hayes (1995); Vogel, Seaberry, Barnes & Kelly (2003) in Snodgrass and Blunt (2009:53) confirm that these conflicts contribute to dysfunctional relationships, which become an obstacle to establishing a dynamic culture of teaching and learning. It is therefore crucial to put in place efficient resolution practices that will help both educators and learners to establish a culture of learning and teaching.

SGBs are elected to represent and bring together the principal, educators, parents and learners in the common task of building a better school. These stakeholders must debate and decide on the best way forward for their school and on how conflict can be managed properly. The SGBs represent these role players and consult them when developing policy and plans (MGSLG 2010:11). They oversee the implementation of government policies and work together to solve the school's problems. The SGBs must also support the culture of teaching and learning by working closely with the principal and school management team (SMT) to create a good learning environment, free of destructive devastating conflicts so as to improve the quality of education (MGSLG 2010:11).

As mentioned earlier, section 8 of the Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996) requires the SGB to adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school (Squelch 2001:141). Joubert (2009:238) adds that this compelling function of the SGB, read together with Section 8(4), which places an obligation on learners to comply with the code of conduct, clearly provides the legal framework for dealing with learner discipline. According to Squelch (2001) the primary aim of a code of conduct is to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. A code of conduct, based on human rights principles, contains school rules, regulations, sanctions and disciplinary procedures. Squelch (2001) continues to state that a code of conduct should include rules dealing with school safety and security, and the consequences for breaching safety and security.

A code of conduct may also deal with matters such as school outings, the after-hours use of school facilities, late-coming, criminal acts (vandalism and assault) and conducting searches. The SGB is also directly involved in managing discipline

matters. A parent member of the SGB is generally required to serve as a chairperson in the disciplinary hearing of the learner. The SGB must decide on the appropriate sentence or penalties for the learner's misconduct.

Suspensions and recommendations for expulsion of learners are also the responsibility of the governing body. Due processes must be followed at disciplinary hearings based on the right to administrative justice, including the right to appeal against the decision (Joubert 2009:238). Squelch (2001:142) maintains that the SGB has a duty to ensure that the code of conduct includes appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with matters such as drug peddling, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse, bullying and possession of dangerous weapons, in the interest of effective conflict management. Such policies must be revised on an on-going basis.

Based on the guidelines of MGSLG (2010:14) the SGB plays only a supportive role in the management of the school to ensure optimal teaching and learning. Practically, according to MGSLG (2010:14) the SGBs cannot interfere in the professional duties of educators and non-educators.

According to Uline et al. (2003:798) the role of the manager (principal) as SGB member is to find ways to (1) acknowledge and reinforce the interdependence of all members of staff in meeting organizational goals; (2) set the tone for acceptable behaviour and prevent behaviours that may stimulate violence; (3) facilitate open discussion among educators and encourage team spirit to collectively solve problems, and (4) encourage cognitive debate. Mestry (2004:129) adds that the principal has a dual role to play namely as *ex officio* member of the SGB on the one hand and on the other, as employee of the Department of Education. This means that the principal is at the centre of both management and governance in terms of guidance and support. He /She can direct the support he/she gets from the SGB to the staff, and can support the SGB wherever it needs support, *inter alia* in conflict management.

Conflict management is basically the function of the SMT and the educators, with the support of the SGBs, bearing in mind that the SGBs are directly involved in

disciplinary matters, in adherence to a code of conduct. The SGBs formulate the policies on how learners should conduct themselves in schools and the educators implement this policy to ensure that what has been formulated by the SGBs is realized. At the same time the SGB is responsible for disciplining learners that defy policy, e.g. the code of conduct. This denotes the necessity for professional collaboration between all governance stakeholders in ensuring a constructive climate for teaching and learning, *inter alia* through efficient and effective conflict resolution.

2.7   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The literature review indicates that people usually perceive conflict negatively but this is not necessarily the case. There is agreement in the literature that conflict may be functional or dysfunctional; it all depends on how it is managed. Conflict is part of us, it cannot be avoided but it can be controlled to be effective. Destructive conflict must be eliminated because of its negative consequences. Chen (2003:207) reports that conflicts between children do not necessarily lead to violence. It is when people are unable to resolve their own conflicts and when they are not supported in their efforts at conflict resolution that violence is likely to occur.

It is the responsibility of the SGBs to ensure that it supports the educators in their efforts to help learners and themselves to acquire the skills and knowledge required for effective conflict management. SGBs can work hard to develop suitable policies that will guide the conduct of learners and educators. The literature findings indicate that learners cannot cope on their own to apply effective conflict strategies. They need the assistance of their teachers and the teachers also need to undergo thorough training that will empower them in problem solving and reaching consensus.   The proper selection of suitable conflict resolution programmes will ensure that educators are equipped with relevant skills to manage conflicts among themselves, and those between learners.

The findings in this chapter show conclusively that SGBs are directly involved in managing conflict on the community, educator and learner levels. Through a code of conduct, the SGB is mandated to manage conflict and guide conflict resolution.

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The SGBs are also given the powers to reprimand educators as part of conflict management. Central in the SGBs role in conflict management is the principal, due to his/her professional training and experience in this field. Occasionally, he/she will have to guide the SGB, and in other instances the SGB will take the initiative regarding conflict resolution. Through these reciprocal initiatives and actions, the SGB can ensure that school conflict becomes an opportunity for growth and development.

In the next chapter the research design and methods are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I discussed the viewpoints and perceptions of scholars about conflict and its management.   Terminology, principles, and conflict resolution strategies were discussed, as well as the functions of SGBs, also in respect of conflict management.   In this chapter, I introduce the chosen qualitative research design and methods.   The rationale for the empirical research, the research paradigm, research design and methods are discussed. Trustworthiness and ethical measures are also dealt with. According to Yin (2009:24) research design is the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study.   Maree (2010:70) sees a research design as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done.

Maree (2010) continues to say that there are six types of qualitative research designs often discussed in the literature, namely conceptual studies, historical research, action research, case study research, ethnography and grounded theory. As far as Maree (2010:34) is concerned, qualitative modes of inquiry include both interactive studies and non-interactive studies. In this study a case study is used as an example of an interactive study whereby a single entity (the SGB) is investigated.

This study makes use of an exploratory case study because the researcher explores and examines the activities and events of the SGB in terms of conflict management. The SGB as unit of analysis is investigated in depth to develop rich and comprehensive understanding about its role in conflict management. Methods refer to the ways, strategies and techniques that are employed to collect the data in the field. Stringer (2007:176) adds that research methods are the procedures used to conduct the research. The rationale for doing empirical research as part of this study is discussed next.

3.2   RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The justification for conducting this empirical research is to determine the role that is played by the SGB in managing conflicts at school and to understand the perceptions of the SGB on this. The functions of the SGB in managing conflict are investigated by interviewing the participants to determine the typical nature and extent of conflicts in schools, as well as the management of such conflicts. Appropriate sources and techniques are used in the field to ensure that the participants provide the necessary data. Empirical research highlights participants' lived experience regarding the research focus, in this case the SGB's role in conflict management.

3.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2001:55) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct research. This research is in the form of a case study. The objective of the research design is to plan, structure and execute the relevant project in such a way that the validity of the findings is maximized (Mouton 1996:175). The term *case study* according to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:193) refers to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis are studied intensively which could include individuals, groups and institutions. In this study the SGB is the unit of analysis and is studied in depth for a defined period of time in its natural setting, which is the school.

The SGB interactions with the educators and learners with respect to conflicts in the school and how they are managed are investigated.   According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:137) a case study is suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation. Relatively little is reported in the literature about the role of the SGB in conflict management.

3.3.1 Research paradigm

In this section I define and discuss the research paradigm in which my research is situated. A research paradigm gives a clear picture of assumptions that are made by researchers on how they view the world, based on ontological and epistemological perspectives.

A research paradigm refers to a typical example or pattern in which research is done. According to De Vos in De Vos Strydom, Ä′ and Delport (2005:39) the term *paradigm* originated in linguistics, where it means the various forms that a word can take in some languages. Kuhn (1970), in De Vos in De Vos et al. (2005:443) refers to paradigm as the way in which the researcher views his material. A paradigm is further seen as a building block of science (De Vos in De Vos et al. 2005:443). A paradigmatic perspective refers to a way of viewing the world, and holds that a researcher, when he chooses a perspective or paradigm, makes certain assumptions in favour of others (Maree 2010:32). According to Mouton (1996:208) a paradigm explains the problem area for the researcher, it gives guidance on what to research and also guides the researcher with clues towards the suitable solution. It finally suggests what may be seen as an acceptable solution. Mouton (1996) accentuates that the paradigm can also indicate what may not be an acceptable solution.

This study follows an interpretive paradigm. Interpretivism originated in hermeneutics, the study of the theory and practice of interpretation (Maree 2010: 58). According to Thomas (2009:75) interpretivism started (more or less) with the American sociologist George Herbert Mead. Thomas (2009) further states that no clear beginning can be indicated, as there were several strands to the line of thinking on interpretivism. Maree (2010) explains that interpretivism developed in the 19th century as a philosophical theory of meaning and understanding, and also of literary interpretation.

According to Maree (2010:60), the ultimate aim of interpretivism in research is to offer a perspective on a situation and to analyse the situation under study to provide insight on the way in which a particular group of people (the SGB in this regard)

makes sense of their situation or the phenomena they encounter. Thomas (2009:75) concurs with Maree (2010:59) that the main issue for interpretivism is, people and the way they interrelate – what they think and how they form ideas about the world and how their worlds are constructed. Where texts are involved, a researcher conducts a reading to determine the meaning embedded in the text (De Vos, Schulze & Patel in De Vos et al. 2005:6). The researcher/reader tries by all means to understand the viewpoint presented as a whole and to develop a deeper understanding of how its parts relate to the whole.

Maree (2010:59) indicates that interpretivism is based on the following assumptions:

- Human life can only be understood from within.

Interpretivism focuses on people's subjective experiences. It looks at people's perspectives in terms of the way they construct meaning about the social world. This is done through interactions within the social environment.

- Social life is a distinctively human product.

Interpretivists assume that reality is not objectively determined, but is socially constructed. According to Hussey and Hussey, 1997 in Maree (2010:59) there is a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions the people have of their own activities when viewed in their social context. Thomas (2009:75) accentuates that the world in which we are interested as social scientists is not straightforwardly perceivable because it is **constructed** by each of us in a different way.

- The human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning

Maree (2010:59) emphasizes the importance of exploring the richness, depth and complexity of phenomena to develop a sense of understanding of the meanings attached by people to phenomena and their social context. By understanding how meanings are attached or constructed we can start to look into the meanings imparted so as to improve our understanding of the whole.

- Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world.

The way we behave is determined by the knowledge we have and what the world means to us. Interpretivism suggests that there are multiple realities of phenomena that can differ across time and place. The more understanding and knowledgeable we become about the social world and the realities being constructed, the richer our theoretical and conceptual framework becomes.

- The social world does not exist independently of human knowledge

Our knowledge and understanding are always limited to the things to which we have been exposed, i.e. to our own unique experiences and the meanings we attach to them. We cannot know and understand what we have not experienced. Our understanding of the phenomena under investigation is determined and influenced by our values and beliefs. We are often directed and guided by our humanness and the knowledge that informs us (Maree 2010:60). We are actually part of our social world; the world cannot exist independently of human knowledge.

3.3.2 Ontological and epistemological perspectives

Crotty (1998), in Gray (2009:16) suggests that there is a connection between the theoretical stance adopted by the researcher, the methodology and methods used, and the researcher's view of the epistemology. Harding (1987), in Alasuutari, Bickman and Brannen (2008:82) refers to methodology as a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed. Alasuutari et al. (2008:82) highlight that the connection between methods, methodology, epistemology and ontology is complex. According to Gray (2009:17) ontology is the study of being, that is, the nature of existence. The ontological question is: W*hat is the nature of reality?* It is about what you are looking at – the kind of events that exist in the social world (Thomas 2009:87). As far as Creswell (1994:4) is concerned, qualitative researchers view reality as subjective and multiple. The only reality is the one that is constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation.

Thomas (2009:87) reports that epistemology is about *how* you look and investigate events occurring in the world. It is the study of our knowledge of the world. Epistemology tries to understand what it means to know. Gray (2009) continues to say that epistemology provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate. According to Gray (2009:18) three positions have emerged in terms of epistemology. The first is objectivist epistemology which holds that reality exists independently of consciousness and the research has to discover this reality. The second position is constructivism. Constructivism is against objectivist epistemology in the sense that it postulates that truth and meaning do not exist in some external world, but are created by the research participants' interaction with the world and that meaning is constructed, not discovered. Therefore research participants construct their meaning in different ways. The third position in epistemology is subjectivism. As opposed to constructivism, it is accepted that meaning does not emerge from the interplay between the research participant and the outside world but it is constructed and imposed by the research participant on the object on the basis of cultural and religious beliefs.

According to Maree (2010) objectivity is recognized as an ideal that can never be achieved, and research is conducted with a greater awareness of subjectivity. Postmodernism is taken as an example of a theoretical perspective linked to subjectivism. A postmodern perspective, as Stringer (2007:196) reports, attempts to understand people's lives on the basis of scientific knowledge about power relationships. An exploration of postmodern perspectives helps us to understand the frustrations experienced by educators as they work in social, community and organizational contexts (Stringer 2007:197). De Vos, Schulze and Patel in De Vos et al. (2005:7) see postmodernism as a rejection of modernism. These authors further explain modernism as referring to basic assumptions, beliefs and values that arose in the Enlightenment era.

Postmodernism emphasizes that no language can show reality. Reed (1992) in Wilkins (2002:125) regards effective schools as postmodern organizations with characteristics such as network structures based on multi-skilled workforces,

informal division of labour, high trust work relations, participative decision making and advanced information and communication technology. According to Gray (2009:26) postmodernism is far from being a unified system of thought. The concept is sometimes used interchangeably with concepts such as deconstructionism and post structuralism.

Maree (2010:63) mentions that postmodernists reject the emphasis on rational discovery through the scientific method. Postmodernists concur with interpretivism that reality is socially constructed. Michel Foucault's (1972) exploration of social life (in Stringer 2007) emphasizes that there can be no objective truth because of the essential relationship between the ways in which knowledge is produced and the way power is exercised. Maree (2010:64) highlights that postmodernists reject the idea of a fixed and eternal foundation to reality due to the fact that people have different perspectives in terms of their cultural activities.

Postmodernists are concerned with knowledge creation through interaction. They reject the idea of discovery of general laws but instead are concerned with the uniqueness of a particular situation (Maree 2010).

Williams and Mary (1996), in Gray (2009:26) report that the primary task of postmodernism is the deconstruction of text to expose how values and interests are embedded within them. Postmodernism focuses on the analysis of themes in multiple fields, such as advertising, lifestyles, subcultures and gender. Attention is paid to how the social world is represented, and to the meanings which underpin these representations.

My study conforms with postmodernism in accepting that reality is socially constructed. In an attempt to investigate the nature of conflicts and the role of the SGB to manage such conflicts, the lived experiences and constructed realities of the participants are focused on.

3.3.3   Research approach

This research follows a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is taken from a postmodern perspective (Quantz 1992 in Creswell 1994:4). According to Creswell (1994) the qualitative approach began as a counter movement to the positivist tradition. This happened in the late 19th century through writers such as Dilthey, Weber, and Kant (Smith 1983, in Creswell 1994). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:91) qualitative research is research that seeks cultural description and it elicits tacit knowledge, subjective understandings and interpretations. The focus of qualitative research is to comprehend a particular social situation, individuals, event, or group. Qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on meanings and interpretations (Halloway & Wheeler 1996, in Maree 2010: 51). Welman et al. (2005:193) report that qualitative research originated from the ethnographic methods applied by cultural and social anthropologists in their field studies of social groups and communities. The purpose of a qualitative approach is to construct a detailed description of social reality (Fouché & Delport in DeVos et al. 2005:75).

I have decided to use the qualitative approach because firstly, it provides an in-depth description of people in their natural setting. Secondly it reveals the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people (Leedy & Ormrod 1993:134). Thirdly, it enables me as a researcher to gain new insights from the particular phenomena and finally to seek in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences as members of the SGB. According to Maree (2010:55) qualitative researchers believe that the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values. Reality is constructed by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon – an attempt to see how others have constructed reality by asking about it.

Because I focus closely on the routine practice of the SGB and the manner in which they interact with the staff members, qualitative research is suitable. Maree (2010) indicates that in qualitative research the focus is on a holistic "picture" of human events that attempts to locate individual actions in their social and cultural contexts.

Qualitative research has thus an exploratory and descriptive focus. Welman et al. (2005:193) concur with Maree (2010:79) that the researcher becomes an instrument that collects the data. In order to collect rich, informative data, more than one method should be used.

Qualitative researchers believe that the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values and that the way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon (Maree 2010:55). In this regard, I believe that SGB members have their own beliefs and values on what constitutes a conflict. I want to explore these assumptions concerning the management of conflicts at schools.

In my own understanding, qualitative researchers collect data on human events and activities and try to link or locate these events according to participants' cultural and traditional context. For example: In Zulu culture when you are very young, you cannot talk with an elderly person while you are standing and looking directly into that person's eyes. Adults interpret that action as lack of respect. In qualitative research, human activities are continually investigated and interrogated from every angle to determine the reasons why people express themselves and behave in the way they do, and what meaning can be attached to such expressions and behaviours.

3.3.4   Case study design

Stake (1995,) in Simons (2009:19) defines a case study as the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, in order to understand its activities within particular circumstances. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:24) report that a case study examines a bounded system, or a case over time and in depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. A case may be a programme, an event, an activity or a set of individuals bounded in time and place (MacMillan & Schumacher 2010:24). Bromley (1990,) in Maree (2010:75) defines case study research as a "systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest."

He also mentions that a case study can be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental to understanding the phenomenon being examined. What appears to be common in most definitions of a case study is the fact that they are concerned with a particular situation or event in its natural context.

Simons (2009:21) refers to Stake (1995), who distinguishes three types of case studies, namely *intrinsic*, where a case is studied for the interest in the case itself; *instrumental*, where a case is used to explore an issue or research question and *collective,* where several cases are investigated to create an understanding that is clear to all. I have chosen a case study because it offers a multi perspective analysis either through multiple data collection methods or through the creation of multiple accounts from a single method (Lewis 2003, in Gray 2009:169). It also allows flexibility and the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. A case study is unique and evolves throughout the research process. There are no general fixed steps that should be followed, and design cannot be exactly replicated (Fouché & Delport in De Vos et al. 2005:75).

A case study enables the voiceless and powerless to have a say, like children and marginalized groups (Maree 2010:5). It also enables the researcher to explore the experience and complexity of programmes and policies in depth and to provide interpretations in a way that will suit the particular context. A case study allows me as a researcher to gain more insight into school conflict and the SGB's role in its management, because case studies are descriptive, interpretive and evaluative (Merriam 1988, in Simons 2009:21).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Selection of participants

The process of sampling is used to select the participants. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) sampling is the process of selecting the participants from a large group of people (population). Purposive sampling was used to select my participants as it is regarded as the most important type of non-probability sampling. According to Maree (2010:79), purposive sampling means that participants

are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them holders of the data needed for the study. I have decided to choose this type of sampling because I am relying on my experience as a researcher to deliberately obtain units of analysis that will be representative of the relevant population (Welman et al.2005:69). My participants are the members of the SGB. These participants represent the main stakeholders in the school which form the population from which a sample is taken.

The population of the school comprises of the teachers, learners and the parents that form units of analysis. The SGB represent each of them, therefore it serves as a sample as it is a body in which teachers, learners and parents are well represented in a small size. According to Mills (2007:67) the popular and most generally accepted criterion is that the size of the sample should be small, for reasons of time and cost, while being large enough to ensure that it is representative enough. The SGB is thought to be well vested with rich data that provide answers needed to address the research focus.

The SGB consists of a teacher component which has been democratically elected by the teaching staff representing teachers, and parents who have been democratically elected by other parents including the learners who have been democratically elected by other learners. The members of the SGB are two post-level 1 educators, a head of department, the principal, a chairperson, the deputy chairperson, treasurer, secretary, who are the parent member and additional parent member and the learner representatives. All these members are democratically elected following the right procedures. The principal as ex-officio member represents the educational authorities.

In total, ten people were interviewed. These participants were chosen purposively because they could provide rich information about the members they represented. They were also exposed to school conflict. They were also responsible for the management of such conflicts because they were directly involved with the formulation of policies in the governance of the school. The SGB is responsible for school governance and liaises closely with the School Management Team (SMT), which is responsible for school management. The SMT consists of the principal of the school, the deputy principal(s) and the HODs. As the SGB and SMT work and

interact with one another on teaching and learning aspects, it does happen that at some stage they tend to disagree on certain issues, and this can lead to conflict.

A particular school was chosen because it met the requirements of this research study, namely: It was a public secondary school governed by an SGB and there were continuous conflicts that required management. My research took place in Gauteng Province, specifically in the Sedibeng West region at a secondary school in Sebokeng District 8. I chose a secondary school because its SGBs have learner representatives, who can give valuable inputs regarding aspects of school conflict.

3.4.2   Data collection

Data collection is a process whereby the data is gathered and collected from the participants, using suitable and varying tools. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:322) refer to this as Direct Data Collection. The information was collected directly from the "horse's mouth" meaning that the researcher received the information directly from the participants. Both verbal and non-verbal data were collected. Verbal data were the responses from the participants and the non-verbal data were all the written documents found at the site, including minutes of the SGB meetings. Richards (2009:34) saw data as the 'stuff' the researcher works with and the records of what the researcher studied. The researcher formulated no hypothesis; the data were collected and synthesized inductively to generate generalizations (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:322).

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:137) qualitative researchers typically rely on four primary methods for gathering information namely: participating in the setting, observing directly, interviewing in depth and analysing documents. Bernard and Ryan (2010:18) also state the techniques for producing qualitative data, namely indirect observation, direct observation, elicitation technique and mixed methods. The researcher is the primary research instrument for data collection. In the case of this research, the data was collected directly from the participants to determine the functions of the SGB in managing school conflict.

In qualitative studies the investigator usually acts as an observer in the setting that is being studied, either as an interviewer, the observer, or the person who studies the artefacts and documents (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:322).

Interviews are discussed next as the first data collection method that was used in this study.

3.4.2.1 Interviews

Gray (2009:369) explains an interview as a conversation between people in which one person has the role of researcher. Gray (2009) reiterates that interviewing may pose challenges in the human interaction between the interviewer and the participants. The interviewer must ensure that his/her questions are not embarrassing and that they must also be clear to avoid ambiguity. The participant must feel comfortable to respond to any question. Qualitative interviews are described as "a construction site of knowledge" where two or more individuals discuss a "theme of mutual interest" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009 in Marshall & Rossmann 2011:142).

According to Richards (2009:35), interviews provide the opportunity to record observations and the participants' responses. I conducted face-to-face interviews because according to Alasuutari et al. (2008:266), face-to-face interviews are flexible and provide support and motivation to participants. Interviews were conducted at a secondary school to collect the data. The SGB was interviewed as a group, where-after the SGB chairperson and principal were interviewed individually. This was mainly done to alleviate fears from other members who could be unwilling to express themselves in front of other members.

A group interview is essentially a qualitative data-gathering technique that relies on the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:126). These authors also mention that group interviews can take different forms, depending on their purposes. Denzin and Lincoln (2008:128) state that group interviews have some advantages over individual

interviews, namely a) they are relatively inexpensive to conduct and often produce rich data that are cumulative and elaborative, b) they can be stimulating for participants and aid in recall, and c) the format is flexible.

The problems encountered in group interviews are that the results cannot be generalized; and that the emerging group culture may interfere with individual expression (i.e. a group can be dominated by one person).

Group interviews are usually designated focus group interviews, even though there is considerable variation in the nature and types of group interviews (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:126).

My intention as a researcher was to ensure that I gathered all the information that was relevant. I did not want to leave any stone unturned. In order for me to ensure that the participants revealed every detail and that no information was omitted or withheld, I created an environment that was conducive for them to express themselves freely. The chairperson and the principal were interviewed as individuals because Welman et al. (2005) state that the disadvantage of using a focus group is that it often inhibits the responses of participants because some participants are not willing to express their feelings in front of other group members. For example, it was anticipated that the chairperson of the SGB could feel inhibited to express his /her personal opinions in the presence of the school principal, and *vice versa.* The chairperson and the principal were again interviewed with the rest of other members of the SGB as a focus group. The size of the focus group was ten members of the SGB.

According to Gray (2009:370) interviews may be divided into five categories, namely structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, non-directive interviews, focused interviews and informal conversational interviews. In this study the participants (SGB) members were interviewed using semi-structured interviews because these interviews allow for follow up questions for additional information, as required. According to Greeff in De Vos et al. (2005:296), semi-structured interviews help a researcher to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic. They also allow the researcher to probe initial

responses. Bernard and Ryan (2010:31) indicate that semi-structured interviews produce a lot of qualitative data quickly and are particularly useful for interviewing people whom you cannot interview formally – like children. The participants were interviewed after formal school hours.

 The researcher compiled questions in advance but other questions emerged from the site. I preferred the use of the focus group interview because it saves considerable time in approaching a number of participants simultaneously. According to Welman et al. (2005:203) focus group interviews have advantages of providing sources of information that can be obtained rapidly and at a low cost.

Krueger and Casey in Greeff in De Vos et al. (2005:300) mentioned that the purpose of the focus group is to promote self-disclosure among the participants. Questions were open-ended to allow more responses and elaborations. According to Bernard and Ryan (2010:34) open – ended questions allowed people to respond in their own words and capture people's own ideas about how things work. Probing questions were used to elicit further explanation and clarification of responses (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:358).   Since the researcher communicated directly with the participants, I could easily clarify some aspects of the questions and they could easily be requested to elaborate on their answers (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990 in Welman et al.2005:203). A particular advantage of focus group interviews was that they enabled the participants to discuss their opinions and experiences in such a way that rich information comes to the fore.

The individual interviews (with the SGB chairperson and principal) were likewise semi-structured, with ample opportunities for further discussion.

Observations are discussed next as data collection method in this study.

3.4.2.2 Observations

Participant observation is a typical qualitative approach to data collection (Strydom in De Vos et al. 2005:275). In this study, the participant observation was also used as data collection instrument. Strydom in De Vos et al. (2005:275) describes participant

observation as a qualitative research procedure that studies the natural and everyday set-up in a particular community or situation. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350) explain observation as a way for the researcher to see and hear what is occurring naturally in the research site. The nature of the observation is comprehensive in the sense that it is prolonged, continuous and open to any relevant information (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:350). As the observer I only considered the details that helped me to answer the research question. Not all the details are helpful. Observations seek to understand the natural context of the participants, including their behaviour in that particular context.

According to Gray (2009) observation involves the systematic viewing of people's actions and the recording, analysis and interpretation of behaviour. The participants' actions are observed while they are aware or not aware that they are being observed. Gray (2009:397) refers to such observation as overt and covert observation respectively. In this study my participants were made aware that they were observed.

The participants were observed closely in the parents meetings and field notes were taken on impressions.   I worked carefully to ensure that I did not contaminate or disturb any proceedings According to Dane (1990) in Strydom in De Vos et al. (2005:275) the researcher becomes part of the situation but at the same time nothing should be changed in that situation. I spent a considerable amount of time in the participants' natural context in conducting the investigation. Spending this time with them helped me towards increased understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication.

My field notes were as comprehensive as possible. Strydom in De Vos et al. (2005:281) are of the opinion that field notes should ideally contain a comprehensive account of the participants themselves, the events taking place, the actual discussions and communication, and the observer's attitudes, perceptions and feelings. This is done while observing the participants. According to Maree (2010:84) there are four observer roles used in qualitative research, namely *complete observer*, where the researcher is a non-participant observer who looks at the situation from the distance*, observer as participant* whereby the researcher gets

into the situation, but focuses on his or her role as observer in the situation, looking for patterns of behaviour, *participant as observer* which is typically found in action research projects where the researcher becomes part of the research process, and *complete participant* where the researcher gets completely immersed in the setting to such an extent that those being observed do not know that they are being observed.

I was the *observer as participant,* focusing mainly on my role as observer in the situation and trying to understand the assumptions, values and beliefs of the participants. Participant observation focuses on explaining the natural occurrences of the phenomenon and thus the results may be of a high standard (Strydom in De Vos et al. 2005:277).

The researcher was flexible to ensure that enough data were collected, i.e. the data were saturated. The data were gathered, and synthesised inductively. Participants' requests, for example if they wanted to present evidence to prove their statement, were honoured as long as such evidence helped me to collect the relevant information effectively. With permission, I made use of the SGB minutes to collect data on how different aspects concerning conflicts had been handled.

Newspaper reports, circulars and memorandums found in the field concerning the programmes, workshops or any activities of the SGBs were consulted to ensure that enough data were collected.

Data analysis is discussed in the next section.

3.4.3 Data analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367) explain qualitative data analysis as an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. The researcher synthesises and makes meaning from the data, starting with the specific data and ending with categories and patterns. According to Krueger and Casey (2000), in Greeff in De Vos et al. (2005:311) analysis begins by going back to the purpose of the study. Welman et al.

(2005:211) report that in order to analyse the raw field notes, they have to be processed and this entails converting the notes into write-ups which must be intelligible products that can be read.

According to Maree (2010:99) qualitative data analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined, and not merely a number of successive steps.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:153) comment that in most qualitative research data analysis and interpretation are closely interwoven, and both are often enmeshed with data collection as well. De Vos in De Vos et al. (2005:333) describe data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data or textual information. According to these authors the aim of data analysis is to look for trends and patterns that reappear within a single data sheet or among various data sheets. They further state that the sources for analysis can be transcripts, tapes, notes and memory. When analysing the data the researcher needs to be creative and explicit.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:370) highlight that there are mainly three kinds of data in qualitative studies - notes taken during observation and interviewing, audiotape-recorded interviews and visual images. These authors further describe transcription as a process of converting recordings into a format that will facilitate analysis (such as typed text). Maree (2010) presents the model of Seidel (1998) which consists of three essential elements: noticing, collecting and reflecting. Creswell (1998), in De Vos in De Vos et el. (2005:334) believes that the process of data analysis and interpretation can best be represented by a spiral image. This study utilizes the data analysis spiral of Creswell (1998) as presented by Leedy and Ormrod (2010:153). Data processing was done following the following steps:

I organised the data; mainly using index cards. Large bodies of text were broken down into smaller units, such as sentences or individual words.

I went through the entire data set several times to get a sense of the whole. In the process I jotted down a few memos that suggested possible categories or interpretations.

I identified general categories or themes, and some subcategories or subthemes as well, and then classified each piece of data accordingly. At this stage I already got a general sense of patterns.

I integrated and summarized the data.

This spiral data analysis was integrated with the process as described by Marshall and Rossman (1999) in De Vos in De Vos et al. (2005:334). Initially, planning was done for recording of data, followed by data collection and preliminary analyses, managing and organizing the data, reading and writing memos, generating categories, themes and patterns, coding the data, testing the emergent understandings, then searching for alternative explanations and finally representing in writing the report.

I made sure that the data was well organised for analysis. In analysing, I considered the words, context, the internal consistency, frequency of comments, extensiveness of comments, specificity of comments and what was not said, as well as finding the "big idea"(Morgan & Krueger 1998 in De Vos et al. 2005). Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) in Greeff in De Vos et al. (2005:312) also mention that data analysis involves, at the very least, drawing together and comparing discussions of similar themes, and examining how these relate to the variation between individuals and between groups. Segmenting involves dividing the data into meaningful analytical units whereby the text is read line by line while the researcher keeps on posing a question to himself/herself about this segment of text.

Maree (2010:101) mentions different data analyses such as *content analysis* which identifies and summarizes message content and focuses on things like books, brochures, written documents such as minutes, transcripts, news reports and visual media, *conversation analysis* which is the study of talk in interaction, *discourse analysis* which focuses on the meaning of the spoken and written word, and

narrative analysis which refers to a variety of procedures for interpreting narratives generated in research in search of narrative strings. In this study as a researcher I have almost used all the above modes of data analysis. Documents that were analysed in this study included the SGB constitution, code of conduct for the learners and the minutes of the meetings. I checked on the manner in which the minutes were written and read. These documents provided clues on how the SGB members interacted with each other. I listened to the conversations and analysed their responses.

According to De Vos in De Vos et al. (2005:335) data analysis in a qualitative inquiry necessitates a twofold approach. The first aspect involves data analysis at the research site during data collection and the second aspect involves data analysis away from the site, following on a period of data collection. These authors continue to say that data collection and analysis work hand in glove in order to build a coherent interpretation of the data. The researcher alternates between data collection and analysis to create meaning from raw data. The researcher is responsible for data collection and analysis. At this stage the analysis is of an interim nature. Memoing is considered to be a helpful tool for recording ideas generated during data analysis.

The researcher should always be flexible in data analysis; there is no right or wrong approach. Patton (2002), in De Vos in De Vos et al. (2005:336) highlights that analysis begins when ideas that make sense of the data emerge while still in the field. According to Patton (2002) the researcher needs to revisit the fieldwork if there are ambiguities and gaps that are identified. The researcher can go back to the site to recollect additional information for clarity purposes. In the case of my research, this was not necessary.

3.4.4 Data interpretation

Interpretation is a clarification of meaning (Stringer 2007:96). He also mentions that interpretation builds on description through conceptual frameworks - definitions and frameworks of meanings that enable the participants to make better sense of their experiences.

Simons (2009:117) views interpretation as a highly skilled cognitive and intuitive process, often involving total immersion in the data, re-reading transcripts, field notes, observations and other forms of data in the data set.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:295) the interpretation of the data is the essence of research. Without inquiring into the intrinsic meaning of the data, no resolution of the research problem or its sub-problems is possible. These authors suggest that the researcher needs to fully exploit the data by looking at the data set from different angles to make sense of it. The researcher tries to gain a holistic understanding of the data and reflects his/her thoughts about that particular data. The intent of qualitative research is not to generalize findings, but to come to a unique interpretation of events (Creswell 1994).

Creating codes and categories while analysing the data represents some level of interpretation but it is intimately related to the kinds of descriptions and interpretations that people use in the milieu, data community or setting investigated (Maree 2010:111). During the process of interpretation, Maree (2010:111) reiterates that the researcher should search for emerging patterns, associations, concepts and explanations in the data. Stringer (2007:96) suggests that an interpretive perspective identifies different definitions of the situation, i.e. the assumptions held by various interested parties.

Denzin (1994), in Simons (2009:119) is of the opinion that data do not speak for themselves. The researcher makes sense from the gathered data, and the latter are reduced accordingly. According to Simons (2009) data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing and abstracting key data from interviews, observations and field notes. This author further emphasizes the important aspects of interpretation as the instinctive feelings or insights the researcher has that certain issues are crucial, such as metaphors, or puzzles in the gathered data.

In the stage of data interpretation, while searching for meaning, I made use of the literature study in accordance with my research question to ensure a resolution of my research problem.   New meanings and understandings were formed by what

emerged from the data. Data interpretation exhibits the structures or theories which show the way in which people conduct themselves. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:296) mention that it is important that the researcher conveys the truth as it is while interpreting the data, because it could happen that the results disapprove the researcher's assumptions. In interpreting my data my ultimate aim was to come to meaningful findings and to draw conclusions.

Simons (2009:117) reports that analysis and interpretation are perhaps two aspects of case study research that are written about least because of three reasons: Firstly, the qualitative case study depends largely on the interpretive skills of the researcher and these skills differ from one person to the other, as they are personal and intuitive. Secondly, it is difficult to set guidelines for analysis that are replicable or suitable in all situations. Thirdly, it consumes time to formulate ways of analysing case study data that are not simply an attempt to apply analytical tools more apposite for other kinds of inquiry.

Thanks to my long experience as a teacher and a former SGB member, I regarded myself as competent to do the data analysis and interpretations meaningfully.

3.5   MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is crucial in qualitative research. It refers to the way in which the inquirer is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of high quality (Johnson & Turner 2003, in Maree 2010: 299). It is used to justify validity in terms of quality assurance. This section summarizes different methods in which readers can trust my findings.

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2010:104), validity refers to the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match reality. The validity of a measuring instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:28).

Reliability (as an inherent component of trustworthiness) refers to the stability or consistency of an instrument to the extent that if used repeatedly it would yield the

same results. It also refers to the researcher's ability to be transparent, consistent and dependable in his/her research activities so that research bias is minimized (Kgomo 2006:102). Guba (1981, in Rule & John 2011:107) offered the concept of *trustworthiness* as an alternative to reliability and validity. As highlighted by Schulze (2002:79), there are those researchers that suggest that validity and reliability relate to the quantitative research approach and are not really appropriate for qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) demonstrate how the concepts of validity and reliability can be inappropriate to qualitative inquiry, because these terms originated in the conventional positivist research paradigm. Therefore I prefer the use of the concept trustworthiness.

According to Maree (2010:113), assessing trustworthiness is the acid test of data analysis, findings and conclusions. Rule and John (2011:107) mention that the concept of trustworthiness promotes values such as scholarly rigour, transparency and professional ethics in the interest of qualitative research gaining levels of trust and fidelity within the research community.

Maree (2010:113) proposes that trustworthiness can be enhanced by using the following pointers, namely using multiple data sources, verifying raw data, keeping notes of research decision taken, stakeholder checks or member checking, controlling for bias, greater trustworthiness in coding data, verifying and validating findings, avoiding generalization, choosing quotes carefully, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, and stating limitations of the study up front.

Richardson (2000), in Maree (2010:81) dismisses the concept of triangulation as a method to enhance trustworthiness as it is based on the assumption of a fixed point 1or object that can be triangulated. Richardson (2000) proposes the concept of crystallization instead, because the qualitative researcher is dealing with something that is not absolutely exact or measurable. According to Richardson (2000), in Maree (2010:81) the concept of crystallization enables us to shift from seeing something as a fixed, rigid, two-dimensional object towards the idea of a crystal. A crystal has a variety of shapes. Ellingson (2009:3) reports that crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thorough understanding of the topic. This author further states that crystallization fits within social constructionism. Therefore it is suitable to

use in this research study because it allows the participants to construct the meaning on the basis of their daily experiences.

Lincoln and Guba (1985), in De Vos et al. (2005:346) propose four constructs that more accurately reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm on truth value. Rule and John (2011:107) refer to Guba, suggesting that the trustworthiness of qualitative studies is achieved by giving attention to these four constructs, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

1. *Credibility.* This is the alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry is conducted in such a way that the research participant is accurately identified and described. It is the assurance that the researcher's conclusions stem from the data (Durrheim & Wassenaar 2002 in Maree 2010:299). Rule and John (2011:107) add that the strength of a qualitative study that aims to explore a problem or to describe a setting, a process, a social group, or a pattern of interaction, is its validity. Parameters are described in-depth to set a boundary around the study.   Thus the participants in my study were requested for their biographical details in advance, whilst their identity remained confidential. I described the research participants in full in terms of gender, age, employment status, level of education, and their position as SGB member.

    I also investigated the ways in which the research participants talked to one another. I further interrogated SGB members extensively to examine ways in which they managed conflict. A full description of the setting was also presented (see next chapter) to contextualize my study. The credibility in my study was also ensured by checking for discrepancies in the data analysis and interpretation. I did not shy away from presenting negative or inconsistent findings, in the interest of the credibility of my study (Maree 2010:299).

2. *Transferability.* Lincoln and Guba (1985), in De Vos (2005:346) propose this as the alternative to external validity or generalisability, in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context

rests more with the reader who would make the transfer than with the original investigator. According to these authors, the researcher needs to refer back to the theoretical framework to show how the data collection and analysis were guided by theoretical concepts and models.   My data collection and analysis were guided by the models and concepts in my literature study. Transferability is also ensured by thorough description of the participants as well as their context.

3. *Dependability.* According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in De Vos (2005:346), dependability is the alternative to reliability. It refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did (Durrheim & Wassenaar 2002, in Maree 2010 :299).   Positivists' notions of reliability assume an unchanging universe where inquiry can be replicated. This notion is in direct contrast to the qualitative/ interpretive assumption that the social world is always constructed, and thus difficult to replicate.

Dependability is ensured by member checking and the discussion of the identified themes with the participants to make sure that they are correct and can be trusted. As a researcher I also crystallized the data and findings with the intention of searching for common themes that one may depend on. In this research I applied dependability by going back to my participants with the identified themes to verify whether what was written was what was said by the participants. I hold the discussion with my participants about the identified themes to any discrepancies.

4. *Conformability.* This construct, captures the traditional concept of objectivity. De Vos in D Vos et al. (2005:347) refers to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in stressing the need to ask whether the findings of the study can be confirmed by another. According to Rule and John (2011:107), conformability is described by Guba as a way of addressing concerns about the researcher's influences on, and biases about the study. I tried to alleviate any bias and influences by being truthful and considerate, and to ensure that the principles of research ethics were honoured. In addition to this, I also strived

to continuously reflecting on the direction and meaning of the research process.

The next discussion refers to the ethical measures taken in my research.

3.6   ETHICAL MEASURES

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:117) are of the view that ethics is generally concerned with beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective. These authors also mention that research ethics is focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when accessing written data.

The following ethical measures as stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:117) are applicable to my study:

Informed consent

I asked for permission to do research at the school from the provincial education department, the principal of the school, the district office and from the SGB, as well as from the parents of the learners who participated (See the attached appendixes A&B) for the letters of approval.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118) informed consent implies that the research participants have a choice about whether to participate or not and this is achieved by providing research participants with an explanation of the intended research. I explained to my participants that they could terminate their participation whenever they wanted. My participants gave their written consent to participate.

Johnson and Christensen (2008), in McMillan and Schumacher (2010:119) list a number of informational points that can be included in a consent form, namely purpose of the study, description of the procedures and the length of time needed, description of any risks or discomforts that may be encountered, description of the benefits from the research, description of an alternate procedure or intervention that would be advantageous, statement of the extent of confidentiality, names of people

who may be contacted about the study, statement that participation is voluntary and participants can refuse to participate at any time without penalty, and statement of the amount and schedule of payment for participation (if applicable).

Full disclosure

I was open and honest to my participants. I disclosed all the details about the research, including the purpose of the research. In this study no one was deceived in any way. I did not withhold any information with the intention to keep my participants in the study.

Voluntary participation

The participants were requested formally to participate in the proposed research on a voluntary basis. No participant was forced to participate, and each one could withdraw when he/she wanted to.

No harm or risk to participants

I made sure that my participants enjoyed their involvement in this study by protecting them against any harm, risk or discomfort.

Questions that were posed to the participants were phrased in such a way that participants felt at ease or relaxed to answer the questions. Participants were never nervous or uncomfortable in responding to the questions put to them.

No violation of privacy

I ensured that my participants' privacy was well protected. According to Strydom in De Vos et al. (2005:61) privacy implies the element of personal security. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:121) privacy means that access to participants' characteristics, responses, behaviour, and other information is restricted to the researcher.

Anonymity

I did not disclose the participants' identity. The participants were given numerical or alphabetical identities to protect their real names. Anonymity means that no one is enabled to identify any research participant afterwards (Babie 1990, Baker 1988, in De Vos et al. 2005:62).

Confidentiality

According to Dane (1990) and Babie (2001), in De Vos et al. (2005:62) confidentiality implies that only the researcher must be aware of the identity of participants. In this regard I ensured that my participants' information and responses were kept confidential. In this study the scribe who was assisting the researcher with the note-taking was also involved with the participants' approval.

Actions and competence of researcher

I regarded myself as competent and skilled enough to undertake the proposed investigation and I also ensured that the entire research project ran its course in an ethically acceptable manner.

Cooperation with contributors

I fully cooperated with all contributors to my study, including my supervisor.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, as explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), means a failure to acknowledge others' work. I made every effort to ensure that I avoided plagiarism.

Honesty with professional colleagues

I reported my findings in a comprehensive and honest fashion, without misrepresenting what I had done or intentionally misleading others about the nature of my findings (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:103). Falsification and fabrication of data were strictly avoided.

3.7   SUMMARY

In this chapter, the qualitative approach to the research project is elucidated. It is indicated that qualitative research attempts to gather rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon. Qualitative researchers are mainly concerned about understanding perspectives and actions in the social and cultural context. The natural setting (the typical functioning of the SGB in conflict management) is the focus and core of the study. It is clear that the qualitative researcher has a paramount task in acting responsibly as the primary research instrument. The interpretavist research paradigm played a vital role in selecting the research design and methods for this study. The chapter also indicates how the principles of trustworthiness and ethical accountability were adhered to.

The next chapter is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the empirical research findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In chapter three the research methodology, sampling, data collection, data analysis techniques and trustworthiness were discussed. This chapter reports briefly on the data capturing, and presents and discusses the analysis and the interpretation of the responses of the interviewees. The responses of the participants are interpreted in view of the literature findings.

4.2   REPORT ON DATA CAPTURING

I secured permission to conduct research from the Gauteng Department of Education, the SGB, the principal, as well as the participants before I could start with the actual data collection. I personally conducted semi-structured interviews with the SGB.   The interviews were guided by the prepared semi-structured interview questions (see Appendice G).   The participants were assured about the confidentiality of the information given and that the information would solely be used for research purposes.   The participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any time if they wished to do so without any prejudice against them.

At first I thought that it would be better if I used a tape-recorder but my participants felt uncomfortable about my idea. I therefore opted to replace the tape-recorder with a scribe to ease my participants' uneasiness and assist me in the note-taking. This scribe was a colleague and was selected based on her familiarity with the school setting and minute taking and due to the fact that she was available after hours for the SGB meetings. The same scribe was used throughout my investigation.

I made sure that I first had the consent of all my participants before I could start with my interviews. As far as document analysis of minutes of the meetings, code of conduct for the learners and the SGB constitution and observation were concerned, the permission was sought from the school authorities and as soon as the

permission was granted, I personally visited the site to do the reading and observations.

I carefully read through the code of conduct for the learners, the minutes of the SGB meetings and the constitution of the SGB. I compared their practice of doing things with the relevant legislation and the procedures applicable in settings such as official meetings.

I arranged the interviews in the afternoon after the tuition time so as not to disturb the educators. The interviews took place in the staff room.

Fortunately, I was also invited to the fare-well of the outgoing SGB members which gave me an opportunity to observe and have an idea of how the outgoing SGB members used to govern the school. The fact that some members were re-elected, made my work much easier. The participants were eager to participate in the study and they welcomed me warmly. Questions were asked and the participants took turns in answering the questions. The main interview questions were as follows:

Semi-structured interview schedule: Focus group question for the SGB committee
1. How long has this committee in existence?
2. As SGB members, what would you say is your role?
3. Do you agree with this statement? **Conflict management is the concern of all stakeholders in the school.** Is so, how do you contribute in ensuring that the conflict is well managed?
4. How do you support the educators and the learners in managing the conflict?
5. How do you co-operate with the rest of the staff including the learners?
6. How best can you ensure that the conflicts are well resolved at school?
7. What, if any, are some of the issues of disagreement between you and the principal?
8. What challenges do you face in working with staff?

4.3   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis of data was done following the conventional procedures in qualitative research data analysis.   I made use of the spiral approach (Creswell 1998) as presented by Leedy and Ormrod (2010:153). The following steps were followed:

The data was captured during the interviews and observations. Notes were jotted down in large bodies of text. These large bodies of text were broken down into smaller units according to particular themes. I went through the entire data set several times to get the sense of the whole. I jotted down some memos that suggested possible themes, and then I identified general themes and categories and classified each piece of data accordingly. In analysing, I considered words, context, internal consistency, frequency of comments, specificity, what was not said and finding the bigger picture or idea.

Particular themes were examined on how they relate to the variation between individuals and group. The researcher made use of different data analyses as suggested by Maree (2010: 101) namely discourse analysis, conversation analysis and content analysis where documents such as minutes of the meetings, the SGB constitution and the codes of conduct were scrutinised.

In discourse analysis I focused on the meaning of the spoken and written word and the related reasons why issues were raised in a particular way. In conversation and content analysis, I analysed the data in search of narrative strings.

The composition and the level of experience of the SGB, causes of conflict and resolving conflict in schools will be discussed in the following subsections.

4.3.1   Composition and level of experience in SGB.

Table 4.1: Experience and gender profiles of SGB members

GOVERNERS	SGB EXPERIENCE	GENDER
Principal	14 years	Male
Chairperson (parent)	04 years	Male
Deputy chairperson (parent)	06 months	Male
Secretary (educator)	06 months	Male
Deputy secretary (parent)	06 months	Female
Treasurer (parent)	06 months	Female
Educator	10 years	Female
Educator	06 months	Male
Additional member (parent)	04 years	Male
Additional member (parent)	06 months	Male
Additional member (parent)	06 months	Male
Additional member (parent)	06 months	Female
Additional member (parent)	06 months	Female
Additional member (parent)	06 months	Female
Additional member (non-educator) Staff member	06 months	Female
Additional member (non-educator) Staff member	06 months	Female
Learner representative	06 months	Female
Learner representative	06 months	Male
Learner representative	06 months	Female

The total number of SGB members in this school was nineteen in all.   The composition of the SGB was 10 parents, three educators, two non-educators, three learners and a principal. Only ten members of the SGB were interviewed including three learners which make up to thirteen members that were interviewed. Others

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had some excuses probably due to lack of co-operation or unwillingness. The above table 4.1 shows that the principal was well vested with governance responsibilities while the chairperson had only four years' experience which is relatively sufficient time to have acquired experience in governance duties.

One of the educators was also well vested in school governance as she had been in the SGB for 10 years. Some members, one parent and a chairperson were re-elected, increasing their experience. It was now the fourth year since they were members of the SGB, but others were involved for the first time in school governance. This was not seen as a problem for this research, due to the fact that all SGB members had considerable prior involvement with the school as parents or learners. The following section focuses on the findings regarding the causes of conflict in school.

4.3.2   Causes of conflict in school

The main issues as identified by my participants were related to four groups of stakeholders namely parents, educators, learners and the Department of Education. The researcher asked the SGB members about the primary causes of conflict at school. The principal together with other SGB members listed several causes of conflicts at school and the principal highlighted that these causes of conflict had a major impact in hindering the smooth running of the school. He continued to say that he was working hard together with the SGB to ensure that they tried harder to alleviate such causes before they could lead to serious or even violent conflicts.

The discussion and interpretation of the themes which ensued from the data analysis are presented next.

4.3.2.1 SGB factors in school conflict

(1)   Training of newly elected SGB members

The researcher enquired about the date on which the elections took place. The chairperson answered on behalf of all members that the elections took place on

(particular date mentioned). This meant that the new SGB had been functioning for only six months, which implied the need for mentoring, guidance and assistance, *inter alia* on school conflict management. When asked about her role as SGB member, a parent member of the focus group was uncertain of what exactly was expected from her.

We have just been elected and I am still not sure what to do and how to do it. I need supervision.

According to Xaba (2011:205) educators blamed the difficulty in promoting the best interests of the school on parent governors' low education levels, which, according to them, resulted in parent-governors being unable to execute their roles and responsibilities. Unfortunately this causes tension that may lead to conflict because of lack of knowledge. Therefore it is imperative that the newly elected SGB members should be taken through extensive training and be continuously monitored and evaluated on what was learnt from the training. For SGBs to fulfil their duties they need the necessary resources, skills and training (Squelch 2001:149). It is the responsibility of the Department of Education to train newly elected SGBs.

The interview with the principal also revealed that the current SGB members were still learning because they had just been elected, but fortunately a few members like the chairperson, one teacher, one parent member and secretary in the outgoing committee had been re-elected, thereby increasing the body of experience in the SGB. The outgoing secretary was co-opted based on her expertise as a school administration clerk to assist the current elected secretary. According to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 23 (1) (South Africa 1996), the SGB may also co-opt members from the community to serve on it to enable the SGB to draw on their skills and expert knowledge.

Despite the fore-seen assistance of the old members, the principal emphasised that the newly elected SGB members had to undergo training for development. Section 19 of the Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996) stipulates that the provincial department should provide introductory training for newly elected SGBs to enable them to perform their functions. Mestry (2006: 32) asserts that SGBs should also be

provided with continual training to promote effectiveness in performing their functions and to enable them to assume additional functions.

Van Wyk (2004), and Bush et al. (2004), in Mestry (2006:32), argue that the training given to SGBs by school districts is usually ineffective. These programmes do not even stipulate clearly the guidelines that will direct the SGB members in simple terms for them to understand the procedures to be followed when managing conflicts and other related matters in schools. Therefore, it is evident that the principal's support and assistance is essential to enhance training provided to the SGB.

(2) Lack of expertise of some SGB members

Some SGB members felt powerless because of not being well capacitated and this was revealed in the interviews as posing a challenge when support was to be provided to the educators. According to the principal the school was compelled by the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 23 (2) (South Africa 1996) to elect members of the SGB from the parents of the learners enrolled in the school. Unfortunately some of these parents did not have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform SGB functions as required by the Department of Education. Some of these functions include overseeing the financial aspects of the school which needs thorough financial knowledge and skills. Conflicts are likely to arise if the SGB members mismanage the finances of the school due to lack of expertise.

(3) Selection and appointment of educators

The principal revealed that some educators tend to be judgemental in terms of the decisions of the SGB. This is what he said:

This is the worst nightmare. Some people are never satisfied no matter what. They always complain when their expectations are not met. As a principal I have the ability to determine the strengths and weaknesses of my staff members based on their performance. So if we as the SGB recommend such people looking at their

abilities and qualifications then I am criticised. Some will even say that those people are my favourites.

The principal further said that according to South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 20 (i) (South Africa 1996) it is the responsibility of the SGB to recommend the educators.   The SGB's preferences are taken more seriously by the Department of Education.

(4)   Lack of support from the teachers

According to learner members of the SGB the principal informed them that the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 36 (South Africa 1996), requires the SGB to supplement the funds of the school as the allocation is not enough to cater for all the needs of the school. The only way that they could do that was to think of various ways to raise funds. Yet, if they tried to organise the events of fundraising such as concerts, they did not get the support they expected from the teachers.

This means that some teachers in this school did not share in the learners' loyalty towards the school. For a school to run effectively, funds are needed and the stakeholders need to work collaboratively to achieve the desired goals.

(5)   *Delays*

The SGB members complained about the procedural delays that are sometimes caused by the principal. They reported that the principal sometimes took a long time to respond to the problems that were brought to his attention. This included the need for quick decisions when trying to solve certain problems. If such decisions were delayed, problematic issues could become more complicated and could lead to conflict.

4.3.2.2 Teacher factors in school conflicts

(1)   Workload versus deadlines

The principal reported that some educators fail to manage deadlines due to the huge amount of work that is expected from them from different angles of the school including the requirements from the district office. When confronted about their lack of submissions, they tend to personalise issues. Others absent themselves from work to avoid confrontations by their Head of Departments (HODs). Ultimately educators find themselves with a backlog, being unable to finish the syllabi coverage in due time.

This can have a negative impact on the results of the learners and triggers conflict between the school and the parents.

(2)   Personal commitments and family life of educators

The principal mentioned that he often finds himself in a corner because he needs to be sympathetic to the educators' sorrows. At the same time he needs to take the needs of the school into consideration. This is what he said:

Some educators can take you for a ride whilst others truly mean what they say. Personal commitments and family life of educators have a potential of causing conflicts at school because the educators are perpetually absent from work due to a number of varying reasons which are sometimes valid that as a principal you cannot even attempt to dismiss them, on the other hand they are causing a gap in the curriculum delivery, learners are eventually suffering.

(3)   Educator absenteeism

The principal highlighted that it becomes very difficult to manage a situation whereby educators are often absent due to various reasons, including sickness because everyone is engaged. Educators usually complain when obliged to take the work of the absent educator. If the principal insists, a conflict is triggered. He further

reported that absent educators create a bad image in, and of the school. They also set a bad example in the school premises. According to the principal these educators do not finish their work and when they are criticised they start to pass negative remarks, especially when good teachers are being rewarded (through various awards) for their good performance. This habit eventually divides the school, causing conflict. The principal is then criticised that he is taking sides or he favours those who are rewarded.

(4)   Use of cellular phones

The response of the principal revealed that the use of cellular phones has made the school staff's live easier in terms of instant communication, but it sometimes hinders smooth teaching and learning in the classroom. Both teachers and learners have a tendency of using cellular phones in the classrooms. This habit tends to be a source of conflict because tuition time is wasted by teachers while chatting on their cellular phones.

(5)   Tension from home

The learner members of the SGB indicated that both teachers and learners come from various backgrounds. Some come from home being already upset due to certain personal matters. When they arrive at school they fail to control their emotions and by so doing they involve innocent people in their personal tensions.

(6)   Conflict between teachers

The learner members of the SGB revealed that some teachers quarrel in front of them and sometimes they even use the learners in their fights. This is what they said:

For an example if a learner can delay in the previous period of the teacher who is not in good terms with the teacher on the following period, as a learner you are in for it. You will either be referred back to that teacher or be punished not because you are late just to make that teacher to feel bad. If we are late from teachers that are in

good terms to each other nothing happens. Automatically learners start to capitalise on their differences, some will start to be defiant.

This shows that interpersonal conflict amongst the teachers can be very detrimental in striving for high quality in teaching and learning.

(7)   Teachers disrespecting the Representative Council of Learners (RCL)

According to learner members of the SGB some teachers undermine them. They tend to discourage them, thinking that they are taking over their authority. These learners further said that they are sometimes disrespected by these teachers; they even go to the extent of labelling them with all kinds of names. Some will even ask them who they think they are to teach them their duties. One learner said:

It becomes difficult for me. Then I become disappointed and lose confidence to such teachers. But still I try my level best to serve my school mates.

The learners' response indicates that there are bad elements in the teaching fraternity that perpetuate conflicts in school. They lead through bad example. Such teachers may demoralise the learners who could be the leaders of tomorrow.

(8)   Workload versus pressure

One learner member of the SGB reported that some teachers fail to manage their work smartly and in time, thereby creating stress for them. He continued to say that teachers often give them a lot of work within a short space of time. Yet they have a number of subjects and they are expected to submit a number of assignments to different teachers.

Furthermore, they have to prepare for tests and examinations. In such situations, learners start to weigh up work and to consider the most important tasks like assessments that will impact on their results. Then the next day, when they are confronted on the work they did not do, they are in trouble. Another learner representative added that many learners are unable to handle the pressure which

teachers put on them, causing severe stress. They resort to absenting themselves from school, making the situation even worse.

This response indicates that it is the duty of the principal to work smartly with his /her management team to ensure that teachers plan ahead. They should use comprehensive management plans and time-tables that give everyone a chance to work positively with learners to avoid the accumulation of unnecessary stress that may lead to conflicts. The SGB also has a distinct role here. According to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 20 (e) (South Africa 1996), the SGB members must support the principal, educators and other staff in performing their professional functions.

(9)   Silent use of corporal punishment

The SGB chairperson mentioned that there are some parents who are concerned about the educators who are still using corporal punishment in classrooms, notwithstanding its abolishment by the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 10 (1) (South Africa 1996) which states that no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner. Some learners are secretly taking photos of corporal punishment. Eventually the secret is divulged to their parents, opening up the possibility for serious conflict and blemishes on the school's reputation. In most cases where the chairperson tried to make a follow up on the matter, he often did not make progress as the truth was hidden or not traced.

It was apparent that some teachers do not know how to alleviate conflicts in the classroom, probably because they either lack knowledge or are ignorant in terms of alternative methods to discipline learners. They resort to corporal punishment which is against the law and a source of conflict. The South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 section10 (1) (South Africa 1996) prohibits the use of corporal punishment and this should be clearly stated in the school's code of conduct. The application of corporal punishment may result in a civil claim for damages (Squelch 2001:141).

(10)   Communication breakdown in terms of protocol

According to the principal, some conflicts originate from a communication breakdown whereby some educators fail to follow the prescribed protocol, which results in conflict. He made the example of the educator who failed to inform his Head of Department (HOD) about his intention to take leave. The HOD must always be informed in order that he/she can make the necessary arrangements for the proposed leave. This educator only informed the principal and his learners, thereby giving impetus to possible conflict.

4.3.2.3 Learner factors in school conflicts

(1)   Ill disciplined learners

The chairperson and the principal revealed that there are some learners that tend to misbehave in different ways just to disturb the culture of teaching and learning. Some of them come to school late purposely; others use drugs within the school yard, making sure that they hide themselves where it would be difficult for them to be identified by school authorities. These learners cause havoc after the intake of these drugs. The conduct and attitude of these culprits can cause conflict in the school, especially amongst the learners. They bully other learners and disrespect their educators.

(2)   Overcrowding

The chairperson indicated that they had a large number of learners and they were short of at least one classroom. He further said that shortages of facilities cause conflict at schools because educators compete for the existing resources, forgetting that they need to share.

(3)   Use of cell-phones by the learners

The principal accentuated that it was lately discovered that some learners do not pay attention to the lessons; they are found busy with *Face Book,* chatting to each

other. What made things worse was the fact that some learners go to the extent of hurting each other by making use of pornographic materials through their cellular phones.

(4)   Family background versus the needs of the school

The responses from SGB learners indicated that the code of conduct required of them to wear a proper school uniform, but not all can afford this. Learners come from different family backgrounds.   They emphasized that some learners come from families that can afford to maintain their children in all aspects but others are unable to provide for their children due to unemployment and poverty.   Conflict can erupt, because some learners are shy to tell the truth as it is. When they are asked about the uniform, they pretend that they have no interest in wearing the uniform, hiding the fact that their parents do not have the money to buy a school uniform.

They accentuated that some of these learners who come from low income families usually form gangs at school and steal other learners' belongings and school property.

Based on this response it can be deduced that some learners are forced to behave negatively due to certain circumstances that are beyond their control, especially if they have nobody to talk to. This is a real source of school conflict.

(5)   Adolescence, initiation schools and teenage pregnancies

The parent member of the focus group highlighted that certain conflicts are caused by the stage of adolescence whereby some learners think that they are old enough and can no longer be controlled by the teachers. They think that they know how to take care of themselves. Others, especially the boys, are misled by the initiation schools. They are told that they are now adults; they have to start to behave like adults.   These learners are usually defiant in that they do not want to listen to teachers, especially female teachers.

Another problematic issue is learner pregnancy. Some girls fall pregnant, bringing stress to teachers who have to keep an eye on them whilst they have the business to teach them.

(6)   Lack of respect and commitment

Some SGB parent members reported that they are undermined and disrespected by some learners.

This was evident while I was observing as a researcher one morning. When the bell had long rang, some learners were walking very slowly as if they had no intention of coming to school. Two SGB parents and some teachers were motivating them to run quickly to school but it was as if they were talking among themselves. Some were seen smoking and chatting to each other while walking slowly towards the gate of the school.

4.3.2.4 Community factors in school conflicts

(1)   Socio-economic factors

The principal highlighted that it is sometimes difficult to enforce all the parents to buy school uniforms and to contribute to other school needs due to some socioeconomic factors in the community. He further said that some parents are struggling a lot due to unemployment. As a principal he needs to take that into account by making a plan to cater for such parents' children. For example, learners that come from unemployed families are classified as needy learners and they are enrolled in programmes of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that provide school uniform to needy learners.

He continued to say that kids of the very same parents are often impregnated, making the situation even worse. The teacher member of the focus group made the following remarks :

Parents can be manipulative; they are taking us for a ride.

As the SGB we need to strengthen the code of conduct for learners for an example the requirements for the uniform had been clearly stipulated. All the learners are expected to comply. As educators we need to implement the policy and deal with the transgressors. Eventually learners from low income families fail to comply with the policy, even if you try to choose the neediest learners and help them, you struggle again with the criteria to select them because it is not only few learners.

According to the SGB members there are a number of learners who struggle to make ends meet. Some teachers quarrel with these learners with the aim of enforcing the school uniform. Some of these learners camouflage their situations until one takes steps to find out the truth. The principal added that these conditions can be so challenging that some regulations were relaxed to accommodate all the learners because they all have the right of access to education.

(2)   Cultural differences

It was highlighted by a teacher member of the focus group that at school they are sometimes faced with some cultural problems that need the attention of both the parents and the school.

There are learners who do not comply with the rules and regulations of the code of conduct. The parents of these learners enforce their cultural or traditional activities on their children. Such activities can be in conflict with the code of conduct of the school. These learners are viewed as being spiritually controlled by their ancestors, therefore they need to wear *muti* on their heads. They are forced to smear their heads with red stuff and to put on beanies (woollen hats) to avoid confrontation by the teachers and other learners. This is totally unacceptable at school especially in summer as such woollen hats are prescribed for the winter uniform. Teachers want to see all learners in full school uniform. A teacher member of the focus group continued to state that cultural conflict is triggered amongst the learners themselves because of different beliefs and myths in the community.

All the SGB members agreed on the above mentioned causes of school conflict.

It was indicated that the SGB was faced with numerous challenges pertaining to conflicts at school. Some of these problems originated from the community and flowed into the school premises to cause havoc at school, whilst others originated in the school and spilled over to the community at large. For example, the principal hinted to the fact that some teachers do not do their work properly as they are often absent and this increases the failure rate, thereby irritating the parents and the Department of Education.

Some angry parents will flock into the school to convey their complaints in a negative way to the principal. Other parents also irritate the educators at school by enforcing their cultures to interfere with the code of conduct for learners. It is the responsibility of the educators to implement the policy after it has been formulated by the SGB.

Some conflicts start at home because learners that are intimidated at school by other ill-disciplined learners report the matter to their parents. This causes conflict in the community between the parents of the parties involved in the quarrel. In this way, the school can be the centre for community conflicts. In this regard it is evident that the SGB must have a comprehensive code of conduct for learners.

The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, section 20(1)(d) and section 8(1) (South Africa 1996) require SGBs to adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school. A code of conduct should be based on human rights principles, contain school rules, regulations, sanctions and disciplinary procedures.

In my observation as a researcher, the code of conduct for the learners in the participating school needed to be strengthened and amended. It was, for example, silent on the use of cellular phones which are a source of school conflict. The issue of teacher work ethics also needed serious attention.

4.3.3   Resolving conflict in school

The principal together with the chairperson of the SGB play a major and a leading role in conflict resolution in the school.   The following discussion is based on the views of both the principal and the SGB with regard to their roles in conflict management.

4.3.3.1 Role of the principal

The principal, when asked about his role as an ex-officio member of the SGB, clearly indicated that he was well informed about his task as the principal in the SGB. He pointed out that his role is to ensure that there is a smooth running of the institution by supporting and guiding the SGB in school governance to ensure that their performance is consistent with the rules and regulations, as well as procedures stipulated by the law.

He further said that as the principal, he liaises with the Department of Education (DoE) on behalf of the SGB. In his own words he said:

I am the ex-officio member of the SGB; I provide guidance towards issues that are topical at school. As a principal I also help with the planning and explanation of rules and regulations, I help the members of SGB with the formulation of the policy framework that needs to be drafted and to point out the gaps in the existing policies since some of these SGB members have just joined us they lack knowledge on policy formulations.

The principal was aware that a code of conduct for learners needs to be developed thoroughly. He further stated that he suggests advice to SGB members on the filling of the gaps that are in the existing policies. The principal further reported that he is also responsible for ensuring that there is peace and harmony amongst the educators. He indicated that he attends to the teachers' concerns and conflicts by following the prescribed procedures set by the Department of Education when resolving conflicts of educators.

When the principal was asked about the strategy he normally uses to manage conflict, he said that he normally involves people concerned in decision making.

Decisions are normally taken collectively. He puts everyone on board about issues that affect them. If he has attended to certain matters in the meetings arranged by the district office that involve sensitive issues he always gives other stakeholders feedback. He also reported that he writes and keeps reports of the conflicts in school. He acts as a mediator between conflicting parties. He indicated that his office is open for everyone. He listens to the problems and finds the solution that will be most suitable for both parties. He accentuated that he always refers to the relevant legislation to solve the problems in the school.

The principal added that in conflicts that involved him as a principal, the SGB chairperson takes over as a neutral person and mediator, and the Institutional Developmental Support Officer (IDSO) is normally involved if there is a need. They talk as a team, discuss issues and implement decisions as guided by educational law. In his response he said that he always encourages his subordinates and the SGB members to work within the framework of the educational law to avoid embarrassments and misconducts. Discipline matters regarding learners are taken care of by the SGB, but he guides them throughout.

Mestry (2006:32) mentions that by law the principal's role is described as provision of assistance to the SGB. Mestry (2006) adds that the principal, by virtue of his position, plays a dual role: one who is responsible for the professional management of a school, and the other as *ex-officio* member of the *S*GB. According to the principal's response it shows that he is aware that principals are expected to render all the necessary assistance to SGBs to help them to perform their functions effectively (South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 section 19(2) (South Africa 1996).

In terms of discipline matters the principal is seemingly aware that some cases need the intervention of the SGB without him being involved. It is stipulated in Section 9 of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996) that in cases where learners are involved in gangs, the principal should not confront them but the

SGB should set up a negotiating mechanism.   As a researcher I realised that the principal is able to stimulate the effectiveness of the functions of SGB through his dedication and eagerness to supervise the SGB members on how governance matters should be handled.

Certainly without such efforts, these members would find it difficult to take initiatives due to limited, or lack of knowledge, as they themselves stated. I also observed and witnessed that they needed a workshop on how to facilitate a meeting.

4.3.3.2 Role of the SGB

The principal had this to say about the role of the SGB regarding the resolution of conflicts:

The SGB chairperson advises me, put control towards issues that involve disagreement between the stakeholders. He appoints people to intervene in the conflict between the people in the school. He acts as a regulatory factor where there are disagreements. In my opinion, the SGB chairperson is an elder who needs to intervene between the staff and the learner's conflict. The SGB chairperson acts as liaison officer between the parents and the school. I personally regard him as a peacemaker in the school.

The principal added that the chairperson also plays a major role in terms of the planning, organisation of both the SGB and parents meeting and to further chair such meetings. He also said that the chairperson discusses the agenda of the meetings with him prior the meeting. Other members of the SGB pointed out that they work hand in hand with the chairperson and the principal in resolving issues of disagreements. They mentioned the following about resolving conflicts at school.

(1)   Conflicts between learners

The SGB members stated that they support educators in rebuking learners, reminding them of the classroom rules and their code of conduct. In case the particular learners persist with the conflict, they invite parents to intervene in the

matter. The SGB also made it clear that they highly depend on the principal to examine the departmental law in terms of the directives to be followed when disciplining learners guilty of serious misconduct. The chairperson of the SGB plays a major role in this regard whereby he chairs the disciplining session.   Squelch (2001) emphasises that the SGB is directly involved in managing discipline matters.

The parent members of the focus group even referred to a certain learner who was disciplined as a result of using drugs within the school premises. They recommended suspension of that learner after a hearing using a disciplinary procedure. The SGB expressed their dissatisfaction with the departmental officials as the latter had rejected the SGB's plea to suspend the learner. In any case the SGB still applied the relevant punishment to the offenders.

The SGB further said that they make use of sports to create better relationships among the learners and this alleviates conflicts because when learners play together they put their differences aside and focus on the play.

They further said that learner representatives in consultation with the NGOs or sometimes the district office organise the workshops based on life-skills that teach learners on how to combat conflicts in schools. The SGB encourages teachers to emphasise conflict resolution in learning areas such as Life Orientation.

The SGB also highlighted that they make use of the safety patrollers which is the initiative of the Department of Education whereby learners are being closely watched to ensure their safety. The school has a safety team and some SGB members are included in the team. This team takes initiatives to alleviate conflict within and outside the school premises as it is linked to the Community Police Forum (CPF). On its part, the CPF is linked to South African Police Services (SAPS). The SGB also makes use of a strategy that is now used in schools which is called "Adopt a cop" whereby the school is provided with a police member who has a child in the school.

According to the principal and the members of the SGB all these people work hand in hand with them to solve the problems that arise in terms of conflicts in and outside

the school premises. Learner members of the SGB reported that they even motivate other learners to join in different activities or organisations of their choice that will help them to solve their personal problems such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM) and others where they pray together about the problems they encounter both at school and at home.

In accordance with the United Nations Children's Fund (2008:1-5) the Department of Education has initiated a programme that is referred to as the Girls Education Movement/Boys Education Movement (GEM/BEM) that involves girls and boys at the secondary schools. There is no intervention of a teacher or parents so as to allow learners to be free to solve their own problems. Teachers and parents only give support and assistance on resources. Learner members of the SGB are responsible for the success of this programme as they encourage other learners to participate in this programme so that conflicts and other issues can be addressed. Learners play a key role in this programme in terms of its management, focus and activities.

This programme is an international movement and is practiced in many countries in the world. In South Africa it was first launched in three provinces in 2002, namely Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. After the launch in these three provinces, the National Department of Education (DoE) formalised the GEM/BEM and launched it as a national programme in 2003.

The SGB also encouraged parents and educators to cooperate with the Social Development Probation Unit which has been developed for school children and others that are in conflict with the law (Frank 2005:3). It also deals with the learners who are at risk.

In this unit, the Departments of Correctional Services, Social Development and Education are working in collaboration to prevent crime and conflicts in schools. This unit runs a crime prevention programme whereby the learners are taught leadership skills. Many learners already possess such skills but in a negative way, therefore this unit converts these negative skills into positive leadership skills. This unit further brings awareness in terms of substance abuse and human trafficking. According to Frank (2005:3) the unit encourages educators and parents to

incorporate this crime prevention programme in the existing Life Orientation Curriculum. If implemented outside the school curriculum, the sessions may be added on to an appropriate youth development programme.

(2)   Conflicts between educators

According to the SGB the principal is involved in making sure that there is peace among the educators. They further said that they sometimes face some challenges in terms of disputes that occur as a result of recruitment of staff and as the SGB members, their duty is to recommend the suitable candidate. The conflicts that will follow as a result of such disputes are taken care of by the principal using the right channels. The SGB reported that they only advice the principal and give him the support in terms of the conflict between teachers. The SGB chairperson was asked about his role in conflict resolution and he replied as follows:

Amongst other things I am highly engaged in the planning and the organization of the SGB and parents meetings whereby I give direction of these meetings after consultation with the principal. I work together with the principal in the issues that need the attention of the SGB and the principal also seeks the advice from me as the SGB chairperson where he faces problems regarding the conflicts that crop up from the staff in relation to curriculum issues.

The teacher member of the focus group highlighted that they share topics for discussion during the parents meeting. They take part in discussing with the parents sensitive issues related to learners.

(3)   Conflict between SGB members as well as conflict between parents.

According to the SGB chairperson's response, the SGB members do sometimes have some disagreements amongst themselves. He recalled:

We relate very well with the principal apart from certain occasions whereby the principal tends to overstep in my position by chairing the meeting.

All I needed is to be shown how to do things not those things be done for me in my presence unless I am not available and if so my deputy should occupy my position not the principal.

The chairperson's response revealed that he does not want to rely on the principal; he has an interest to learn to do things on his own. There was another disagreement that was noted by the researcher. The SGB members were quarrelling about the procedure used by the SGB chairperson to conduct the meeting. The teacher member of the focus group further complained about parents that do not do their work properly as expected. This is what they said:

The invitation of the meeting has an incomplete agenda; some issues are omitted but included in the discussion not even under any other business.

The teacher member of the focus group asked the question in terms of the decision that was taken in the previous meeting and other members wanted to refer to the previous minutes. Unfortunately the chairperson did not arrange with his secretary to ensure that the minutes were readily available so that they could be read and adopted.

The teacher members of the focus group were very upset about that. One of them continued to say:

You have already attended the training where you were told what to do and we also discussed about things that need your attention but to my surprise not even a single thing had been done. Currently our classes and toilets are very dirty and it is one of your functions to ensure that the buildings and grounds are kept clean by motivating the ladies that are responsible for cleaning and assist them with the resources they need. It seems as if you are either lazy or afraid to stand for your duties

Eventually the chairperson asked for forgiveness but in his apology he clearly stated that teacher members must stop to act as spectators because they are also the members of the SGB. Instead they must also devise some means to assist where possible. The apology was accepted.

In my observation this meeting was very tense. One could feel the tension between the SGB members but as far as they were concerned, they talked to one another as a team. Where there are problems they face them and deal with the causes of such problems. If the disagreements continued, especially in terms of decision making, they ended up voting. They continued to say that parents are usually invited to the meeting if there are conflicts to ensure that issues are cleared and they reach consensus.

The principal added that they have a code of conduct for parents which stipulates the requirements that need to be met by all the parents of the learners in general. This is the tool they use to regulate the conduct of the parents in the event of conflicts. All the expectations from the parents are listed. The chairperson tries by all means to lead other members of the SGB but he also needs to be guided by the principal as well. In one of the teachers' responses it was revealed that there is a need for the Department of Education to revise the criteria of selecting the SGB members. By the look of things teachers are in favour of enlightened SGB members that will understand all the aspects in the school.

(4)   Conflict between the school and the officials of the Department of Education

The SGB indicated that they experienced problems in terms of the Grade 12 learners whereby the school was told to join other schools in the Secondary School Improvement Programme (SIP) which is an initiative of the Department of Education to assist Grade 12 learners with the examination preparations. The principal and the educators felt that this programme was not in line with their plans; therefore they opted to work on their own to prepare their Grade 12 learners.

Some parents were also not happy because of this programme as their children were to attend every weekend. Some learners used this opportunity for their own business other than education, causing conflicts between parents and the school. The SGB reported that they supported the teachers in designing their own strategy to assist Grade 12 learners and they further requested parents to be part of this programme.

(5)   Parental involvement in terms of financial support

In a meeting I attended, I observed the SGB members having an argument about the funds needed to transport learners to different developmental activities. The question was: Who should pay for such activities? The school or the parent?

Members of the SGB argued strongly about this matter. The principal made it clear that the school coffers were dry and could not cater for such activities. The disagreement continued for a while whereby each person was given a chance to air his/her views and personal opinion until all the members reached consensus. Thereafter a collective decision was taken that the SGB should raise funds for the school so as to cope with the financial needs of the school and the support of the parents was deemed to be crucial for the success of this fundraising. It was also decided that parents must meet the school halfway.

Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:259) argue that comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools.

It is clear that the SGB made use of parents to solve their financial problems. It is stipulated in South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 section 36 (South Africa 1996) that a governing body of a public school must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the state in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school.

(6)   Suggestions for conflict resolution

When the SGB was asked about the suggestions for conflict resolution, this is what it said:

The teacher member of the focus group suggested that the Department of Education must put more emphasis on, and provide enough funds for sport activities, so as to keep the learners more engaged in sports. The SGB indicated that as far as it had noticed the situation in the school, conflict arises when learners are just roaming

around, doing nothing. Learners must always be occupied with something. The parent member of the focus group mentioned that the involvement of parents will remain crucial in the life of the school. If the parents can assist the educators to keep an eye on their children so as to see what they do in and out of the school premises, conflicts may be reduced. The teacher member also requested that the decisions taken from the meetings to eradicate some problems must be implemented because the longer it takes to solve problems the more complicated they become.

The principal added that it must not be the duty of the SGB alone to support teachers and learners. Other parents must assist as well to manage conflicts at schools and at home because if the conflict is not managed properly either at school or at home, it is carried to school or home. One teacher member of the focus group asserted that if teachers can stop to talk behind each other's backs and face the person with whom they have problems, conflicts may be at minimal. He added that the Department of Education can be a key factor of managing the conflicts in schools by providing teacher assistance that would help teachers with paperwork. According to a teacher member of the focus group teachers are forced to pay more attention to administration rather than to teaching the learners. Ultimately the purpose of teaching learners thoroughly is no longer achieved.

The teacher member of the focus group also highlighted that the continuous curriculum changes that are brought about by the Department of Education contribute to initiating conflicts in the school because they increase the workload of teachers. The teacher member of the focus group added that teachers are bombarded with more work and this causes conflict between the teachers because most of them are unable to cope with the demands of the new changes. They miss the deadlines, and they quarrel with their seniors due to non-submissions of their work. This teacher continued to state that they even take schoolwork home, trying to keep the pace but still there is no difference. On the other hand they lack time to take care of their families because of the school work that is brought home. Ultimately most teachers are suffering; and conflicts arise at home because of lack of care for the spouses and children.

They further said that eventually teachers become stressed, being not aware because of anger. This conflict is transferred back to school in one way or the other whereby innocent people are hurt along the way. The SGB chairperson concluded by saying that it would be much easier to manage conflict if all the stakeholders in schools can work collaboratively as a team and stop pointing fingers at one another. He accentuated the role of the Department of Education to ensure that the workload of teachers is kept manageable so as to relieve the tension that ultimately causes conflicts in the school. Such conflicts make the task of the SGB even more difficult.

(7)   Additional information from the SGB members

The researcher asked from the SGB if they wanted to add some more information that can be relevant to this study. This is what the parent member said:

We need teachers to take us seriously. The Department of Education must at least remunerate us for providing special services to the school because some of us are not working.

A teacher participant said that the Department of Education must develop suitable criteria for electing the SGB members that suit the demands of the work of the SGB. The Department must also revise the work of the teachers because it seems as if teachers are overloaded with paper work.

According to my understanding the SGB's response indicates that conflict in the school will not be totally eliminated but if justice can be done to everyone, conflicts may be minimised. It is also clear from the participants' comments that people should talk about issues instead of ignoring them or talking in the absence of others.

The crucial importance of listening skills became evident in the research, It is essential that everyone's view should be listened to in order to come to a common understanding (Chen 2003:204).

4.4   SUMMATIVE DISCUSSION

The SGB members' responses indicated that they were still learning but were willing to create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning by ensuring that the conflicts in the school are well managed.   It was also discovered that the chances of eliminating conflict completely are slim because people keep on disagreeing on different aspects.   Disagreement will never cease as people think differently.   It was also revealed that no matter how hard the SGB works, they felt relatively powerless because of lack of skills and knowledge to perform as expected.

Evidently, the SGB really needs thorough training and monitoring.   According to Chaka (2005: 2) there must be direct, specific training and support that will suit the needs of SGBs and will assist them with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake their functions.   One other thing that I learnt from this school was that some educator members tend to lose their confidence in the other SGB members, especially the SGB chairperson, forgetting that these members may still be rather inexperienced in SGB matters.   They should rather respect one another and correct each other's mistakes and accept apology.

According to the principal's response, it seems that the SGB chairperson has a vital role to play in joining hands with the principal to alleviate conflict in the school. There must be a good relationship between them for the sake of effective functioning of the school. The SGB chairperson has a key role in liaising with parents. According to Khuzwayo (2007:35) one of the functions of the SGB chairperson is to control parent meetings.   Khuzwayo (2007:35) states that SGB chairpersons are also representatives of the SGB in important school activities.

The response of the SGB chairperson indicates that there is collaboration between himself and the principal, and with all other members. They relate and communicate well with each other. Even though they experience some conflicts amongst themselves, they accept apologies.   They share responsibilities amongst themselves. This was observed during a parents meeting whereby SGB members raised their concerns with the aim of finding solutions concerning the use of cell phones during school hours, drugs, vandalising of the school property, hairstyles,

discipline and lack of parental support. All these problems were mutually motivated by all the members of the SGB.

According to the principal's input, there is still a lot to be done in terms of capacitating the SGB members. The principal should use his expertise to empowered these members because the Department of Education undertook only the introductory training for the SGBs. There is no intensive training, and it remains a responsibility of the principals to continually guide the SGB members on the duties that are expected from them, *inter alia* regarding conflict management.

As far as the learners' responses are concerned, it is clear that serious problems with conflict potential exist. Amongst these, teenage pregnancy seems to be prevalent.   The school has no powers to dismiss a learner due to pregnancy. The teacher members of the focus group clearly indicated that some of the pregnant learners are initiating conflicts at school but schools may not discriminate against learners and deny them access to school education. Dilemmas such as these can cause serious conflict management challenges for the SGB.

4.5   CLOSING REMARKS

From my observations, it was clear that all stakeholders in the school can contribute to an initiation of conflict.   These conflicts differ in the manner and extent in which they happen. Some tend to be hazardous, and others tend to be beneficial as they bring about changes and new thinking.   Conflicts flow from the school to the community, others flow from the community to the school. Ultimately the school can become the centre of these conflicts.

It was revealed that the SGB had just been elected, and was lacking in experience, as many other SGBs (see chapter 2). A need for training SGBs on the skills needed to meet the challenges of school governance (inclusive of conflict resolution) became evident.   According to Squelch (2001:149) it is crucial for SGBs to be equipped to carry out their duties because failure to do so can result in delictual liability. It seems as if the principal is sometimes fighting a losing battle because most members of the SGB are not well capacitated in the legislation related to governance.

From the fieldwork it is clear that SGB decisions are collectively taken to manage conflicts but questions remain on the effective implementation of these decisions.

Notwithstanding the fact that this school is experiencing a lot of problems from different angles, it was found that, fortunately, there is a meaningful extent of collaboration and understanding between the SGB members and the staff, and therefore they try their best to deal with conflicts effectively. They clearly indicated that they try to neutralise tension, thereby creating peace between the conflicting parties and the possibility for utilising resolution strategies.

The principal indicated that he is playing a key role to ensure that the SGB does not falter in conflict resolution; hence he worked so hard to enhance SGB members' skills by guiding them to stick to the departmental legislations.

The overarching finding was that the SGB of this school has an important liaison and directive role in managing conflicts in the school.

The next chapter deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis and interpretation of the empirical data were discussed in chapter four. This final chapter firstly presents a summary of the overall findings of the literature study and empirical research. This is followed by the research conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The researcher investigated the role of the SGB in conflict management. The following findings were made in the literature and empirical studies.

5.2.1 Literature study findings

In chapter two I examined the relevant literature related to conflict management. It explained the conflict phenomenon in detail and the responsibility of the school stakeholders, namely the educators, principal, SGB and learners in managing conflict. The literature findings in chapter two indicate that people usually perceive conflict negatively, whereas it is not always the case as many scholars regard it as a challenge which usually forms part of institutional change. However, it has been indicated that conflict can certainly be destructive; it only depends on how it is managed. The literature findings revealed that conflict cannot be totally eliminated because it is part and parcel of life in organizations. Instead it should be controlled to be productive. According to the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 section 16(1) (South Africa 1996), the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body (SGB).

The SGB has a supportive function in the management of conflict. Its responsibility is to ensure that the educators get the support they need in their efforts to help the learners and themselves to acquire the skills and knowledge required to manage their own conflicts. It has been pointed out that the learners cannot cope on their

own to apply effective conflict strategies without the assistance of their teachers. Teachers also need to be equipped with skills to manage their conflicts within the context of problem solving and to reach consensus.

The literature findings indicate that the SGB is directly involved in the management of conflict in schools by formulating the school's code of conduct, which the SMT must implement. There must be collaboration between and amongst educators, learners, parents and the SGB in conflict management. This means that the principal cannot work in isolation, no matter how experienced he/she is in conflict management, as compared to the sometimes more limited knowledge and skills of SGB members.

5.2.2   Empirical research findings

In chapter four the researcher presented and discussed the empirical findings. The discussion centred on key themes, namely (1) teacher factors in school conflict, (2) learner factors in school conflict, (3) community factors in school conflict, and (4) SGB factors in school conflict. Focused attention was given to the SGB's role in conflict management, as well as to conflict resolution strategies.

5.2.2.1 Teacher factors in school conflict

With regard to workload, the empirical findings show that many conflicts originate as a result of the workload of educators in schools. It was indicated that some teachers fail to meet the deadlines for submissions because of huge amounts of work. Conflicts take place because of arguments due to non-compliance and non submissions. Eventually other educators end up not coming to work, thus trying to avoid confrontations.

The empirical findings indicate that certain conflicts are initiated by the personal commitments and family life of educators, including tension as a result of problems at home. It was highlighted that some educators bring their personal matters to school, and these become the burden of the principal. These personal problems also result in absenteeism, late arrivals at school and early departures. Such

teachers cause conflicts because they leave their classes unattended. Some of them do not even use the required procedures to report their anticipated absence. They fail to follow the stipulated protocol. Such incidents can result in communication breakdowns and ensuing conflicts. It becomes a habit of some teachers to be absent from work. Conflicts erupt due to the fact that absent teachers should be substituted and sometimes everyone is engaged to such an extent that no one is available.

It was also found that teachers with domestic problems do not work peacefully with other stakeholders. The level of stress in teachers may thus be detrimental to provisioning of quality education. The empirical findings reveal that many teachers often take sick leave, which contributes to the extent of school conflict. Such absenteeism affects the school's functioning, and becomes a conflict resolution issue for the SGB. The findings indicate that very little is done directly by the SGB in managing such conflicts because it is the responsibility of the principal to deal with the educators' problems. Yet the SGB participants reported that they support the principal where he/she needs their advice.

Concerning the selection and appointment of educators, it was found that educators usually blame the principal when they are dissatisfied, thinking that he/she is responsible for being rejected, because of favouritism. Yet it is the responsibility of the SGB to recommend the candidate who is most suitable for the post, and it thus has a distinct role in eradicating conflict which may arise due to certain appointments. As a pro-active dispute and conflict avoidance initiative, the SGB can arrange workshops on the procedures applied during the recruitment and appointment of staff members.

The empirical findings show that teachers sometimes demonstrate their conflict by fighting or quarrelling in front of the learners. Such quarrels often erupt over scarce resources. This sets a bad example because learners are inclined to capitalize on teachers' differences to be manipulative. From the responses of the principal it transpired that he is aware that he needs to involve *inter alia* the SGB in issues that affect him/her as instructional leader, and that decisions should be taken collectively to avoid and resolve conflicts.

It was also found that some classes are overcrowded, which contributes to tension in the school. Conflicts which are related to school facilities belong on the SGB agenda for resolution.

The learner members of the SGB reported that they are sometimes undermined by some of the teachers instead of being motivated when they execute their responsibility to deal with ill-disciplined learners and to initiate fundraising for the school. Learner members of the SGB may thus feel alienated. This was proved by learner absence in the meetings that I observed. It was also mentioned that learner members were not always informed about the SGB meetings.

5.2.2.2 Learner factors in school conflict

The empirical findings indicate that some learners are defying the code of conduct of the learners. The SGB is unable to directly manage school conflicts caused by the offences done by the learners, mainly due to loopholes in the code of conduct for the learners.

The empirical findings indicate that the SGB's code of conduct for the learners of this particular school does not clearly provide for addressing **all** the offences and the sanctions relevant to learners in the school. For example: Conflict that can arise from the use of cell-phones by the learners is not properly attended to. Other reported deviations from proper conduct were that some learners bully other learners and disrespect teachers and SGB members, there are learners who do not adhere to the school uniform dress code due to their cultural commitments, and teenage pregnancy occurs in the school and creates the potential and actual cases of conflict which hamper the smooth running of the school. Lastly the code of conduct does not provide for support measures or structures for counselling a learner involved in disciplinary proceedings, as stipulated in South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 section 8 subsection (b). (South Africa 1996).

5.2.2.3 Community factors in school conflict

As far as family background and socio-economic factors are concerned, the findings revealed that the SGB and the educators face serious challenges. Unemployment particularly poses a serious threat and cause for conflict in South African schools. Some learners that come from low income families end up bullying others with the intention to steal their properties. Others are defiant or unapproachable to avoid confrontation by the educators about the school uniform.

It was also highlighted that there are parents who violate the code of conduct for the learners by allowing their children to go to school dressed in an incomplete school uniform, and sometimes coupled with the cultural attire based on spiritual beliefs.

As the essential link between the the school and the community, the SGB has a crucial position in avoiding and resolving community-school conflicts. Allowing such conflicts to run out of control, can have fatal consequences for the school.

5.2.2.4 SGB factors in school conflict

The empirical findings suggest that the lack of expertise amongst SGB members leads to limited actual participation in policy formation. Insufficient knowledge pertaining to school governance roles prohibits collaborative participation of stakeholders in the provision of quality education for all.

SGB members reported that they sometimes become demotivated by delays in the principal's responses to issues raised by teachers and the SGB. Such delays could become a cause for conflict. One may conclude that the principal was fully involved with his own management work, and could not always cope with the additional burden of continuously assisting and monitoring the SGB. Yet the empirical findings reveal that the SGB members found it difficult to work independently without the assistance of the principal.

The SGB made some efforts to manage conflict by making use of strategies at their disposal such as the code of conduct for the learners to discipline the learners,

disciplinary hearings, parental involvement, and liaising with other stakeholders that work in collaboration with the Department of Education to mobilize programmes that assist learners to talk about issues of conflicts in school. The SGB executes its governance role in motivating both parents and learners to give support to such programmes and to contribute effectively to these programmes so that parents, teachers and learners can be well equipped with *inter alia* the skills and knowledge to combat conflicts in the school.

The findings further indicate that the SGB was actively engaged with the community forums and the South African Police Services (SAPS) to manage conflicts in school.

Generally, the empirical findings clearly revealed that the SGB supported the entire staff in managing conflict and they tried their best to maintain an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Conflict management was part of this venture, irrespective of the SGB's lack of expertise to execute this duty to the letter.

5.3   CONCLUSIONS

The research conclusions are presented as answers on the initial research questions as stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.2).

5.3.1   What is the function of the SGB in managing conflict?

This study revealed that it is essential that the SGB should work with all other stakeholders in the school in managing conflict. The SGB acts as a mediator that facilitates peace between the conflicting parties. The SGB also ensures that it motivates learners to attend programmes initiated by the Department of Education to deal with their own conflicts. Section 20(1)(d) and section 8(1) of South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996) stipulates that the SGB must adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school.

The SGB uses the code of conduct as a regulatory measure; therefore it is an SGB responsibility to devise a comprehensive code of conduct which is watertight to avoid

unforeseen types of conflict. The principal, as a member of the SGB, is responsible for managing conflict between educators according to their code of conduct and related labour laws governing the conduct of educators. The SGB may advise the principal and give him the support he needs in managing all kinds of school conflict effectively.

5.3.2   What is the typical nature of conflicts in schools?

This research revealed that there are different kinds and types of conflicts in schools and the extent in which they occur varies. Some of these conflicts are disruptive; others are constructive as they can stimulate institutional change. Some of the conflicts in schools are so serious that some teachers become stressed to the extent that they eventually fail to offer productive work. Others end up being continuously ill and unable to report to work.

In this study it is reported that conflicts are coupled with tension that continually haunts teachers and learners. Some learners resort to staying at home in fear of being bullied by other learners. Destructive conflicts which are left unattended can spill over into physical violence.

5.3.3   What are the reasons that a school can become the centre of community conflicts?

A school can be the centre of community conflicts because a community conflict can originate within the school premises and flow into the community or *vice versa*. Some learners form gangs in the community and they fight against each other in schools, making the school the centre of community conflicts. Sometimes it happens that learners of the same school live together as neighbours. Their differences at school or home are sometimes settled either at home or school, and eventually they meet at school continuing with their fighting, and teachers can become directly or indirectly involved in these conflicts.   The school facilities such as halls are sometimes used by the community to discuss *inter alia* sensitive and problematic issues that affect the community. Such discussions can become heated and can

lead to extended conflict. It is also not uncommon that community quarrels lead to school property being damaged and vandalised.

5.3.4　What conflict management strategies and resolution methods can be implemented by the SGB to solve problems in schools?

The SGB, and the chairperson in particular, can act as a mediator between the conflicting parties. Together with the principal, the SGB facilitates peace by means of negotiations whereby people's views are listened to and suitable resolution decisions are jointly taken.

The SGB should accept that it is human to err, and be strongly convinced that showing remorse, asking for an apology and learning from mistakes are effective ways of solving problems. The SGB should also make use of classroom rules together with the code of conduct to assess the discipline of learners. Rules are emphasized to facilitate constructive learning. Learners are encouraged to participate in extra-mural activities as a method to remove them from the streets.

The SGB should do its utmost to alleviate lack of teaching resources, thus minimizing a particular source of school conflict.

The SGB should capitalize on the value of constructive parental involvement *inter alia* in conflict resolution. Parents should be motivated by the SGB to take turns to visit the school and to give support where it is essential.

As a matter of principle, the SGB should ensure that issues and differences are addressed in the presence of all the parties involved and people should be afforded the opportunity to be heard. The SGB should also work in collaboration with other stakeholders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and departmental offices to manage conflict, using various motivational and diagnostic programmes.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Recommendation 1

The Department of Education at national level must strengthen the criteria for the appointment of parents on the SGB.

Motivation: Many scholars have indicated that SGB members must be thoroughly trained to acquire skills and relevant knowledge. Many parents have no basic education. Appointment criteria must ensure that parents can cope with the training programmes.

5.4.2. Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the Department of Education at the national level revisits the policies dealing with the workload of educators and the allocation of teaching resources, in order to ease the way for SGBs to facilitate school conflict resolution.

Motivation: Work load and teaching resources appear to be one of the main sources of conflict amongst teachers.

5.4.3. Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the provincial Departments of Education design and present a series of practical, continuous workshops for SGBs, apart from the extensive introductory training of SGB members. These workshops should equip the SGB with knowledge and skills to lessen its dependence on the principal's expertise.

Motivation: The SGB's reliance on the principal can easily overload the principal's work, thereby causing delays as sources of conflict.

5.4.4. Recommendation 4

The Department of Education at the provincial level must allocate enough funds for learner sport activities.

Motivation: The SGB's task in school conflict resolution will be significantly eased when learners are optimally involved in extra-mural activities.

5.4.5. Recommendation 5

SGB members should be given the respect they deserve locally and their efforts and service be acknowledged financially.

Motivation: SGB membership is a responsible and arduous task, and proper incentives will stimulate SGB functioning.

5.4.6. Recommendation 6

The Department of Education at provincial level must equip the SGBs and School Management Teams (SMTs) with explicit guidelines on how to collaborate efficiently in issues of conflict management.

Motivation: The principal seems to be the only person in the SGB who is well equipped with the expertise to manage and resolve conflicts in school and other related governance matters. This causes him/her to be dominant in the discussions and decisions taken. This dominance is often not in the real interest of the school and community, and can be a source of conflict.

5.4.7 Recommendation 7

Further research should be conducted on the effective training of the SGBs in selected issues of school governance.

Motivation: Ineffective training programmes for newly elected SGB members can contribute significantly to conflicts in schools.

5.5   CLOSING REMARKS

This research was quite daunting, but nevertheless meaningful.   It was a positive experience because I learnt many things that I did not know, for example about the existence of stakeholders that work in collaboration with the Department of Education to assist learners to manage their own conflicts with the support of SGB members. Through the research I also learned more about the role that is played by the learners in the SGB to ensure that conflicts are well managed at school.

This case study has raised concern about the current lack of SGB skills in conflict management, and non-existent or ineffective training programmes to address this problem. An SGB which is well versed in conflict management can ensure that the school is a beacon of hope and safety, with a stabilising and empowering impact on its surrounding community.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO DISTRICT MANAGER

45 Anton-Stegman Street

Homer

1939

The District Manager

Sedibeng West

PO Box

Sebokeng

1983

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at a Secondary School

I hereby request permission to conduct the research in one of the Secondary School in Sedibeng West district. The research will focus on the role of School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management. This research is a requirement of the M Ed program at the University of South Africa. Based on personal experience, the selected school is regarded as an appropriate case study for the research.

For the purpose of this research, this study involves semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. Photographs will be taken on permission. I will conduct interviews with the principal, head of department, chairperson of the school governing body (SGB), a learner and the other members of the SGB at the selected school. All members of the SGB will be interviewed. They will benefit in a sense that they will exactly know their function in conflict management. They will know how to support the school in terms of managing the conflicts. Their participation in the study will be voluntarily if anyone wishes to withdraw may do so without any penalty.

No anticipated discomfort or risks that will be endured by the participants.

The interviews should not exceed 40 minutes. All the information will be dealt with confidentially and anonymity will be assured at all times. I request your permission to conduct these interviews on_____ 2012. As the researcher, I will ensure that this research will not in any way interfere with the normal functioning of the school. Summary of the findings can be made available on request. The institution that

gives ethical approval is UNISA. Should you have any concern about this research, feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor G D Kamper at tel. No. 012 654 7352.

Thank you for giving attention to my request.

Yours faithfully

V J Majola (Mrs)

Cell: 0789584210

APPENDIX B : LETTER OF APPROVAL - GDE

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference number: D2013/90

Date:	**21 June 2012**
Validity of the Research:	**21 June 2012 to 30 September 2012**
Name of Researcher:	**Majola Vangile Joyce**
Address of Researcher:	**45 Anton-Stegman Street**
	Homer
	Vereeniging
Telephone Number:	**0789584210; (016) 4514907**
Fax Number:	**(016) 5942815**
Email address:	**vjmajola@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**The role of a school governing body (SGB) in conflict management: a case study**
Number and type of schools:	**One Secondary School**
District/s/HO	**Sedibeng West**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following applies to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to conditions being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

Director: Knowledge Management and Research
Room 525, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001 P.O.Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000
Tel: (011) 355-0488   Fax: (011) 355-0286

4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.

5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.

8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.

10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.

13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Makado

Dr. David Makhado   2012 / 06 / 21

Director: Knowledge Management and Research

APPENDIX C : LETTER OF APPROVAL - DISTRICT

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: M.J Sithole
Tel: (016) 594 9210
Ref: Policy and Planning

Ms Vangile Joyce Majola
45 Anton-Stregman Street
Homer
Vereeniging

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SEDIBENG WEST DISTRICT

The Sedibeng West District hereby grants permission to conduct research in its school as per application.

Research Topic : The role of a Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management: a case study

Schools : One Secondary School.

The District wishes you success in your academic pursuit.

Regards

BV Thetha
District Director
Date: 18/07/2012

Making education a societal priority

Office of the District Director: Sedibeng West District

NO 6 Samuel Street
Sebokeng College of Education
Zone 18 Sebokeng
1983
Tel: (016) 594 9120

Private Bag X067
Vanderbijlpark
1900

Fax: 016 594 9399

APPENDIX D : LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The Chairperson/Principal

XXXXXXX Secondary School

Zone 12

Sebokeng

1983

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

I am a registered M. Ed student at the University of South Africa. I am doing a research study as requirement of the M Ed program. It is a one year study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the function of the School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management.

The participants will be the principal, the chairperson of the SGB, HOD and the other members of the SGB including the learner. The study involves interviews, observations and school document analysis.   Photographs will be taken on permission. I am the researcher who will be doing the interviews. You are assured that the information provided by all the participants will remain anonymous and it will be used for research purpose only. The participants' identities will be held confidential.

No anticipated risks or discomforts will be endured by the participants. Participation is voluntary and termination is without penalty. Selection of participants is based on their experience and by being the member of SGB. The participants will benefit from this study as they will be in the position to understand clearly their role or function in terms of managing conflicts at school. A summary of the findings of this study will be made available to school on request. UNISA is the institution that gives ethical approval. Should you have any concern about the project be free to contact my supervisor, Professor G D Kamper at tel. 012 654 7352.

Attached please find a letter of permission granted to me by the Department of Education.

Thank you for giving attention to my request.

Yours faithfully

V J Majola (Mrs)

Cell no. 0789584210

APPENDIX E: LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS (FOCUS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW)

Dear Participant

Interview on the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management

I am currently studying for a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA). My student number is 43483739. The study is concerned with the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management. The study is a requirement of the M Ed program.

I am the researcher and the purpose of this study is to collect the data in order to determine the function of SGB in conflict management. There are no anticipated risks or discomfort expected. The study involves interviews, observations and school document analysis. Photographs will be taken with participants' permission. As one of the selected participants due to your experience as a member of SGB, I am requesting your assistance in the study, where you will be interviewed about your experiences relating to the study. Interviews will be done with all the members of SGB and they should not exceed 40 minutes. Debriefing session will be held after the interviews to confirm what has been said. The date, time and venue will be decided in consultation with you.

You are assured that participation is voluntary and involves the benefit of contributing to your child 'school's successes and as a member of SGB you will know exactly your function in terms of conflict management as your information in terms of your experience may help to determine such function. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to you including penalty. All the information will be regarded as confidential, and no personal details will be revealed. All information collected and used during the study will be safeguarded for five years, and then be destroyed. Refreshments will be served at the end of interview sessions. Summary of findings will be issued on request. UNISA is the institution that gives ethical approval.

Should you have any concern about the project, be free to contact my supervisor, Professor G D Kamper at 012 654 7352.

Yours faithfully

Majola V J (Mrs)

Contact numbers 0789584210

Attached please find a letter of permission granted to me by the Department of Education. I wish to thank you in advance. Please sign the consent form if you are willing to participate in the study.

I...(Full name of the participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire.

....

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE ....

APPENDIX F: LETTER TO LEARNER PARTICIPANT

Dear Participant (learner)

Interview on the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management

I am currently studying for a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa. My student number is 43483739. The study is concerned with the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in conflict management. The study is a requirement of the M Ed program. The purpose of research is to collect the data/information in order to determine the function of the SGB in conflict management.

The study involves interviews, observations and school document analysis. Photographs will be taken on permission. As one of the selected participants due to your experience as a member of SGB, I am requesting your assistance in the study, where you will be interviewed about your experiences relating to the study. Interviews should not exceed 40 minutes. The date, time and venue will be decided in consultation with you. You are not compelled/forced to take part,
participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate, you must discuss this participation with your parents/guardian prior to signing the form. Your parents/guardian will also be asked for permission on your behalf. They will again receive a copy of the signed form.

You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to you. There are no anticipated risks or discomfort expected. You may benefit from the contribution of the information as it may assist in determining the function of SGB in terms of conflict management, resulting in your school being empowered with skills and knowledge to manage conflict. As an individual learner you will also benefit from such skills. All the information will be regarded as confidential, and no personal details will be revealed including your identity. All information collected and used during the study will be safeguarded for five years, and then be destroyed. You are at liberty to ask any clarity seeking questions.

Should you have any concern about the project, be free to contact my supervisor, Professor G D Kamper at 012 654 7352.

Yours faithfully

Majola V J (Mrs)

Contact number 0789584210

Attached please find a letter of permission granted to me by the Department of Education.

I wish to thank you in advance. Please sign the consent form if you are willing to participate in the study.

I...(Full name of the participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire.

....

....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

....
SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER

APPENDICE G: QUESTIONS TO SGB CHAIRPERSON

Semi-structured interviews: Questions for School Governing Body chairperson

1. How long have you served in the SGB?
2. In your opinion, what could be the causes of conflict at school?
3. What is your role as a chairperson in managing conflict?
4. What do you think is the role of the principal as the ex-officio member of the SGB in terms of managing conflict?
5. How do you relate with the principal in tackling the conflicts at school?
6. How do you co-operate with the principal in terms of conflict resolutions?
7. What if any, are some of the issues of disagreement between you and the principal?
8. What challenges do you experience in working with the principal?

APPENDICE H: QUESTIONS TO PRINCIPAL

Semi-structured interview schedule: Questions for Principal

1. How long have you been the principal in the school?
2. What would you say is your role, as an ex-officio member of the governing body?
3. In your knowledge, what is the role of the SGB chairperson regarding the management of conflict?
4. In your opinion, what could be the causes of conflict at school?
5. How do you co-operate with the SGB chairperson in managing conflict at school?
6. How do you work and assist the rest of the SGB committee with your expertise in tackling the sensitive issues?
7. What, if any, are some of the issues of disagreement between you and the SGB chairperson?
8. What challenges do you experience in working with the SGB chairperson?

APPENDICE I: QUESTIONS TO LEARNER PARTICIPANT

Semi-structured interview schedule: Questions for the learner

1. How long have you been admitted in this school?
2. As the member of the SGB, what would you say is your role?
3. What do you think could be the causes of the conflict?
4. In your opinion, do you think that conflict management is a concern for all the stakeholders in the school? And if so, how can you contribute towards the best resolutions in terms of managing the conflict?
5. How do you relate with the SGB in terms of representing other learners in the committee?
6. As the learner representative, how do you influence other learners to refrain from destructive conflicts?
7. What, if any, are some of the issues of disagreement between you and the chairperson of the governing body?
8. What challenges do you experience in working with the SGB?

APPENDICE J: QUESTIONS TO FOCUS GROUP

Semi-structured interview schedule: Focus group question for the SGB committee

9. How long has this committee in existence?
10. As SGB members, what would you say is your role?
11. Do you agree with this statement? **Conflict management is the concern of all stakeholders in the school.** Is so, how do you contribute in ensuring that the conflict is well managed?
12. How do you support the educators and the learners in managing the conflict?
13. How do you co-operate with the rest of the staff including the learners?
14. How best can you ensure that the conflicts are well resolved at school?
15. What, if any, are some of the issues of disagreement between you and the principal?
16. What challenges do you face in working with staff?

APPENDICE K: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

Document analysis guide

For the purpose of analysis, the following documents are studied

- The constitution of the School governing body.
- Records of minutes of the School governing body
- Code of conduct of the learners and the teachers

The following are the specific issues of interest:

- Distribution of duties among the staff and also among the SGB members.
- Frequency of governing body meetings
- Frequency and means of interactions between the governing body chairperson and the principal.
- Means of communication between the staff and learners, SGB and the staff and amongst the educators themselves.

APPENDICE L: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Observation guide: For School governing body meetings
1. To what extent is the SGB functional and effective in terms of implementing the decisions?
2. How do members take part in their activities?
3. Frequency of SGB meetings.
4. How the SGB chairperson and a principal relate to each other during the governing body meeting.
5. The handling of challenges and conflicts among the stakeholders
6. Frequency and means of interactions between the governing body chairperson and the principal.
7. Means of communication between the staff and learners, SGB and the staff and amongst the educators themselves.
8. Distribution of duties in the governing body.