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Management of Interpersonal Conflict between Principals and Teachers in Selected Secondary Schools in Bermuda

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Abstract

This quantitative study was designed to identify and manage factors contributing to interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers in Secondary Schools in Bermuda. The study also explores the effects of interpersonal conflict on student achievement and on school success, and suggests conflict management strategies and measures that can be adopted to enhance and maintain positive and productive interpersonal relationships between principals and teachers. The quota sample used consisted of 120 secondary school teachers and four principals, 118 of the teachers completed and returned the 30 items questionnaire, which were used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data using SPSS to obtain percentages and frequency values of specific responses. The findings revealed that despite the fact that the physical environment of the schools appeared healthy and competition for limited resources was rare, intergroup and interpersonal relations were major sources of interpersonal conflict. It was also found that management issues, personnel practices, work structure, employee development, cultural differences and ethical concerns were major causes of interpersonal conflicts.

Keywords

Interpersonal conflict, Principals, Teachers, Conflict management, Bermuda

Introduction

Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable consequence of human interaction. Schools are not immune to this and it can have deleterious impacts on the environment and on school success [1,2]. Of all the conflicts that might exist in a school, those between principals and teachers can be the most debilitating. Interpersonal conflict between principals and teachers, can severely damage school climate, erode a good school culture, and eventually affect student achievement. Effective management of interpersonal conflict is important to ensure that the limited time and scarce resources available to schools are not absorbed in resolving destructive interpersonal conflicts.

In most secondary schools in Bermuda, much of the principal's time is spent addressing interpersonal conflicts among principals and staff. Most conflicts in schools are addressed by using traditional grievance procedures, which rather than removing the conditions that caused the conflict, without compromise, leaves one party feeling shafted. This procedure can severely affect the interpersonal relationships in schools in Bermuda.

This paper was designed to investigate factors that contribute to interpersonal conflict between principals and teachers in secondary schools in Bermuda. The study identifies management strategies for resolving interpersonal conflict in schools, illustrates the destructive and productive aspects of interpersonal conflict and explores the impact of ethical factors that influence the choice of conflict resolution programmes. This paper discusses findings that will (a) Help principals to identify and manage interpersonal conflicts within their schools, (b) Provide insights into ways of managing conflicts more constructively, and (c) Provide policy making considerations.

Research Perspectives

Interpersonal conflicts may be classified in the following ways:

Affective conflicts: Occur where negative emotional, social and psychological feelings cause interpersonal clashes between group [3].

Substantive conflicts: Jehn [4] defined this as differences in ideas and opinions among members of a group in relation to similar tasks being performed.

Conflict of interest: This type of conflict originates when there is similar understanding of a situation by each party, however, the route of the solution to the problem is viewed through different lens [4].

Conflict of values: This is caused by a difference in values, perceptions or ideologies on certain issues between two social issues [3].

Goal conflict: This is an inconsistency occurring when two social entities are different in a preferred outcome. Barki and Hartwick [5] lamented that there may be a "one sidedness" in the totality of the outcome.

Realistic versus Non-realistic conflict: This conflict is said to emanate from disagreements, which are goal oriented and is not concerned with group or organization. Hence, an end within itself [3].

Historical Background of Interpersonal Conflict

Awareness of the presence of conflict, its contributory factors, and its implications for administrators can be traced from the human relations movement in the 1940s which was chronicled in response to the classical models of administration [6]. Brunswik [7] created an interpersonal conflict lens, a model framework on interpersonal conflicts, which was developed by Hammond [8]. An interpersonal theory, which was intended to help explain the nature, source, and resolution of cognitive conflict between parties working together to accomplish certain tasks, was developed by Hammond.

Early work by Brehmer [9] showed that huge benefits can be derived from the approach in elucidating the structure of cognitive and task conflicts. Dhami and Olsson [10] allude to reviews by researchers from 1976 to the present, showing that research on cognitive conflict has declined in terms of theoretical precision and methodological rigor while task conflict has increased dramatically.

Conflict Defined

Conflict arises through interdependent human interactions permeated with diversities who aim to achieve their needs and goals, which necessitate changes in at least one person in order for their engagement to contin-ue and develop [5]. Wilmot and Hocker [11] described conflict as a struggle over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs between two or more interdependent individuals. This may include differences in values, desires for esteem, control, and correctness.

Salleh and Adulpakdee [12] stated that the term conflicts originated from the word configure which means to strike together. For Barki and Hartwick [5] conflicts may be dyadic, or involve various parties. Ghaffar [3] sees conflict as an important and evitable human phenomenon emanating wherever diverse interests exist. Chung and Meggingson [13] assert that we now live in an age of conflicts, which is fuelled by an increase in worker assertiveness in demanding their rights in the form of organizational perks, privileges, status, recognition, salary, benefits, autonomy, and decision-making opportunities. De Janasz, Dowd, and Schneider [14] opined that conflict is a fact of life in an organization.

Factors and Causes of Interpersonal Conflicts between Principals and Teachers in Secondary Schools

Many conflicts are created by factors, which include gender, socio-economic status, ethnocultural, and racial tensions. Certain environments serve as sources of conflict. Poor communication, competition, opposing ideas, and perceptions about personal success and failures and incompatible goals breed conflict.

Conflicts can originate from discrepancies and politics in different aspects of the workplace, and are sustained by informal groups through gossip and rumours. Blaine [15] stated that teachers often bring their stresses into the school, leading to further conflicts. The strong drive for work-related achievement in some teachers can breed conflicts with principals who do not emphasize work-related success in their lives.

Barki and Hartwick [16] cited Fisher as stating that individuals and groups possess insuppressible needs for identity, dignity, equity, participation in decisions that affect them. Lack of such fundamental needs in the organization can give rise to interpersonal conflicts in schools.

Hartwick and Barki [5] cited Gray and Stark who suggested several sources of interpersonal conflicts. These are: (a) Limited resources, (b) Interdependent work activities, (c) Differentiation of activities, (d) Communication problems, (e) Differences in perceptions, and (f) The environment of the organization. They suggest that individual differences, unclear authority, difference in attitude, task symmetries, and differences in time horizons are contributing factors to interpersonal conflicts. Deutsch and Coleman [5], identified control over re-

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 91 •

sources, preferences and nuisances, values, beliefs, and the nature of relationships between parties as sources of interpersonal conflicts.

Ramini and Zhimin [17] provided an exhaustive list of causes of conflicts between teachers and principals. Ramini and Zhimin such causes such as imposition of strict deadlines for various activities, differences in perceptions on management of certain issues in the school, dictatorial tendencies on the part of school administrators, poor physical working conditions, lack of administrative support in provision of learning aids as well as psychosocial support and lack of communication to teachers when they are in need, administrators using school resources for personal selfish gains, inability to perform tasks assigned on time, unauthorized absenteeism and tribalism. In addition, the authors suggested that when principals set unrealistic targets for teachers, set goals that are not specific, engaging teachers in "crash programs" where they have to cover wide sections of syllabus in a short time, display laxity in implementation of school policies, display laxity among teachers, make unreasonable demands of teachers and favouritism, interpersonal conflicts develop.

Conflict Management Strategies Used to Address Interpersonal Conflicts in Secondary Schools

The management and resolution of conflict in educational settings requires strategies that promote the amicable handling of disputes cooperatively, constructively and successfully in addition to traditional disciplinary procedures. Ghaffar [3] cited Johnson and Johnson, who stated that when conflicts are resolved constructively, certain characteristic features result in an outcome: (a) All disputants are satisfied, (b) Relationship between disputants is improved, and (c) The disputants' ability to resolve future conflicts constructively is improved. According to Ghaffar, though there exists a plethora of conflict management styles, a collaborative approach gives a higher probability of protecting the relationship.

Tesfay [18] citing Rahim and Bonoma [19] described five styles for managing interpersonal conflicts. Included are: Avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating. Tesfay also cited Archer [20] who suggested three possible strategies that are used to manage interpersonal conflicts in secondary schools.

Win-lose strategy: It involves a situation in which one person wins while the other suffers from the humiliation of losing. This strategy gives very little credence to compromise but situations where bosses may take advantage of personal dominance, rule by majority and even extreme cases of rule by powerful minority may be used as a strategy for managing interpersonal conflicts.

Lose-lose strategy: It is a conflict management style in which a "compromising" technique is used where everyone gains minimally, but loses largely by compromising standards, qualities, and other important values.

The Win-win strategy: Supporters of this strategy believe that everybody can win and nobody has to lose. Components of this strategy include realistic goal-oriented, problem-solving activities which result in decisions by consensus. Tesfay [18] suggests that when people utilize this strategy, they tend to be problem-centred rather than ego-centred and "carry out transparent and honest transactions with each other while focusing on goals and using an integrative strategy so that both parties stand to gain". Based on the information given on this strategy, the win-win strategy appears to be the most effective strategy in addressing conflicts since it mediate for both parties.

Similarly, Rahim [21] proposed five styles of managing conflicts. These are:

Integrating: This according to Rahim and Bonoma [18] involves openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. This strategy involves problem-solving which has the potential to lead to constructive resolution.

Obliging or smoothing: Highlights common interests while bringing to the fore open recognition of actual or perceived conflicts to their lowest points. This is, however, a temporary style of conflict management where a principal tries to buy time as he/she seeks cooperation in the school.

Dominating: The results of this strategy benefit one party, because Behavior to get one's position is forced [21]. Hellriegel and Slocum [22] pointed out that this style is used in cases of high emergency where quick action is needed to make uncommon decisions, where action must be taken in the interest of institutional survival or effectiveness; or in cases where one person seeks to suppress others and quick actions need to be taken for protection of the interest of the institution.

Avoiding: This involves remaining neutral and impartial in a conflict situation. However, this strategy may appear unappealing to teachers who may believe that the administrator is insensitive.

Compromising: This occurs where each party sacrifices something to reach an amicable solution. Krietner and Kinicki [18] consider this style as the give-and-take approach involving moderate concern for each party.

Tesfay [18] considers problem solving as a scientific

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 92 •

approach which establishes the realization that a problem exists; then collects facts pertaining to it, and classifies the information; establishes one or more hypothetic solutions then selects each solution and assesses its feasibility. The final stage is selection of the optimal solution and trying, checking, and making adjustments if necessary.

Kilmann and Thomas (1975, 1977) [23,24] developed a model of confronting conflict called the Thomas-Kilmann Model, which was based on work done by Blake and Mouton [25]. It included the five conflict management styles of avoidance, competition, accommodation, compromise and collaboration.

Okotoni and Okotoni [26] suggested that for conflict management and resolution administration should: (a) Organize seminars, conferences, and symposia for educational administrators on a regular and consistent basis; (b) Include conflict management and human relations courses in the curriculum for teachers in training as a way of preparing them for managing conflicts occurring between principals and teachers in school; (c) Design evaluation standards for promotions and awards to deserving teachers to foster job satisfaction; (d) Establish a disciplinary committee to manage disciplinary issues; (e) Introduce counselling facilities and programs in schools; (f) Expect transparency and accountability from administration and teachers; (g) Provide clear job descriptions; and (h) Establish and maintain clear role definitions.

Bodin and Crawford [27] asserted that negotiation and mediation are the best strategies for eliminating conflicts; especially in an open social system such as a school that is permeated with the diversity of people from different cultural backgrounds and generational eras. It must be noted that during the negotiation process, negotiators must implement strategies to deal with the types of situations that arise.

The mediator must possess certain skills to handle interpersonal conflicts competently. Ghaffar [3] outlined these skills as (a) Ability to stimulate a smooth working relation with the conflicting parties; (b) Fostering an inclusive problem-solving attitude among parties; (c) Constructing an effective group process and group decision making framework, and (d) Ascertaining enormous substantive knowledge pertaining to the problems which the conflicts surround.

A successful conflict management program which achieves its objective, if it reaches win-win or consensus in an agreement; satisfies both parties and removes all elements of the conflict. All conflict management programs should strive to achieve win-win.

Implications of Perceived or Actual Interpersonal Conflicts between Principals and Teachers

for Students' Achievement and School Success

Interpersonal conflict is assumed to be a natural part of organizational life, and the school as an open, social, and complex system is the ideal breeding ground for this phenomenon. Interpersonal conflicts can have serious consequences on school climate and student success. The literature shows that interpersonal conflict between principals and teachers has a direct effect on teachers' and students' attitudes towards their work, and ultimately on students' achievement. The literature shows that conflicts generated from accomplishing common tasks reap positive rewards while relationship conflicts are shown to produce negative rewards [16]. It is suggested that win-win conflicts be cultivated and relationship conflict be discouraged in an educational setting.

Methodology and Research Design

This was a descriptive study designed as a survey, which utilized elements of quantitative research. This quota sample, four principals and 120 teachers, was selected from eight secondary schools in Bermuda, which were randomly selected. Only 118 participants from the eight schools mentioned above completed and returned the 30-item questionnaire, which was constructed by the researcher and achieved a reliability statistic of 0.743. The response categories were High 5-4, Moderate 3-2, and Low 1-0. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which was calculated using the SPSS software. The methodology and instrumentation suit this research, for they can be adapted for various types of contexts, and conflict is a complex and inevitable behavioural phenomenon.

Data Analysis, Presentation, Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysed data, the results in relation to each research question and a discussion of the findings, using the literature reviewed. This results in synthesis of findings with existing research and the experience of the researcher.

Data analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The demographic and specific data are presented below starting with the demographic data.

Demographic data: Descriptive statistics were calculated for all demographic data that were gathered from the questionnaire. Of the 118 questionnaires completed and returned by teacher participants, 62 (52.5%) of the teachers have been teaching for 1-5 years, 32 (27.1%) have been teaching for 6-15 years while 12 (10.2%) have been teaching for 16-20 and 12 (10.2%) had been teaching for 20 years. All four principals had been in the

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 93 •

Table 1: Demographic data of the participants from the four schools.

Category	Respondents	
	Teacher (n = 118)	Principal (n = 4)
Tenure		
1-5 years	62 (52.5%)	-
6-15 years	32 (27.1%)	-
16-20 years	12 (10.2%)	-
Over 21 years	12 (10.2%)	4 (100%)
Total	**118 (100%)**	**4 (100%)**
Age group		
Less than 26	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
26-33	28 (23.73%)	0 (0%)
34-43	44 (37.29%)	0 (0%)
44-50	46 (38.98%)	2 (50%)
Over 50	0 (0%)	2 (50%)
Total	**118 (100%)**	**4 (100%)**
Qualifications		
Diploma/Certificate	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Bachelors	66 (55.9%)	0 (0%)
Masters	48 (40.7%)	4 (100%)
Ph.D	4 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
Total	**118 (100%)**	**4 (100%)**
Position held in school		
Classroom teacher	70 (59.3%)	0 (0%)
Head of department	36 (30.5%)	0 (0%)
Grade supervisor	12 (10.2%)	0 (0%)
Vice principal		
Principal		
Total	**118 (100%)**	**4 (100%)**
Time appointed to position		
1-7 years	78 (66.1%)	3 (75%)
8-13 years	36 (30.5%)	0 (0%)
14-21 years	4 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
Over 21 years	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
Total	**100 (100%)**	**4 (100%)**
Grade level of students		
Grades 7-10	118 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	**118 (100%)**	**0 (0%)**
Age group of students		
12-18 years-old	118 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	**118 (100%)**	**0 (0%)**
Gender		
Male	37 (31.4%)	4 (0%)
Female	81 (68.6)	0 (0%)
Total	**118 (100%)**	**4 (100%)**

teaching profession for over 21 years.

All of the participants were over the age of 26 years. The data reflected a highly educated teaching force with all of the teachers having at least a first degree and all the principals having graduate degrees (see Table 1).

Most of the teachers were class teachers, but there were significant numbers of senior teachers who were Heads of Department and Grade Supervisors (see Table 1). The

range of teaching experience in their current positions ranged from 1-21 years. Of the four principals, three had been appointed to their positions 1-7 years and one, for over 21 years. Over 68% of the teachers were females while all the principals were also females (see Table 1).

Analysis of specific data from questionnaire

Research question #1 asked: "What factors contribute to interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers in secondary schools in Bermuda?" Items 28, 29 and 30 from the Teachers' and Principals' questionnaire collected data to answer this question. Frequency distribution of responses to these questions were displayed in tables. The response categories with weightings were as follows: High (4-5); Moderate (2-3); Low (0-1).

The data shows the different perspectives of teachers and principals. Lack of communication was rated 'High' by over 57% of teachers, one principal rated it 'Moderate' and three rated it 'Low' (see Table 2). Over 67% of teachers rated the imposition of strict deadlines for various activities 'High' whereas two principals rated it 'High', one rated it 'Moderate', and one rated it 'Low' (see Table 2). Over 60% of the teachers rated differences in perceptions on management of certain issues in school 'High'. In contrast one principal rated it 'High', one 'Moderate', and two 'Low' (see Table 2).

Dictatorial tendencies of school administrators was given a 'High' rating by 90 of teacher respondents, while all four principals gave it a 'Low' rating. In response to lack of administrative support in provision of learning aids and psychosocial support when they are in need, 68.64% teacher respondents gave it a 'High' rating. In contrast, none of the principals gave this factor a 'High' rating-one rated it 'Moderate', and three rated it 'Low' (see Table 2).

Participants' responded to the contribution of inter-group and interpersonal relations to interpersonal conflicts in schools. Racism was rated 'High' by 50.85% of teacher respondents, while all four principals rated it 'Low'. Half the teachers rated favouritism while all four principals rated it Low. Responses of teachers to the sub-category, laxity among teachers make interesting reading. Over 58% while just under 12% rated it Low. The principal showed strong agreement with the teachers as two principals rated it 'High', one 'Moderate', and one 'Low' (see Table 3).

In response to Personnel Practices, unauthorized absenteeism was rated 'High' by 50.85% of the teachers. Two principals rated this it 'High, one rated it 'Moderate', and one rated it 'Low'. Teachers were asked to rate laxity in implementation of school policies by principals and over 60% rated it 'High'. In contrast three principals

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to research question 1.

Management issues	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Lack of proper communication to teachers	68 (57.63%)	30 (25.42%)	20 (16.95%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Imposition of strict deadlines for various activities	80 (67.80%)	20 (16.95%)	18 (15.25%)	2 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Differences in perceptions on management of certain issues in the school	71 (60.17%)	35 (29.66%)	12 (10.17%)	2 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Dictatorial tendencies on the part of school administrators	90 (76.27%)	20 (16.95%)	8 (6.78%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
Lack of administrative support in provision of learning aids and psychosocial support when they are in need	81 (68.64%)	17 (14.41%)	20 (16.95%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to intergroup and interpersonal relations.

Intergroup and interpersonal relations	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Racism	60 (50.85%)	40 (33.90%)	18 (15.25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
Favoritism	59 (50%)	31 (26.3%)	28 (23.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
Laxity among teachers	69 (58.47%)	35 (29.66%)	14 (11.87%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)

Table 4: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to personnel practices.

Personnel practices	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Unauthorized absenteeism	60 (50.85%)	36 (30.51%)	22 (18.64%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Laxity in implementation of school policies	72 (61.02%)	38 (32.20%)	8 (6.78%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Unreasonable demands by school administration	80 (67.80%)	30 (25.42%)	8 (6.78%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)

Table 5: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to work structure.

Work structure	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Engaging teachers in "crash programs" to cover wide sections of syllabus in a fraction time	59 (50%)	31 (26.27%)	28 (23.73%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Setting unrealistic targets for teachers	52 (44.07%)	34 (28.81%)	32 (27.12%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Setting goals that are not specific	64 (54.24%)	32 (27.12%)	22 (18.64%)	1 (25%)	2 (25%)	1 (25%)
Inability to perform tasks on time	30 (25.42%)	52 (44.07%)	36 (30.51%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)

rated this factor 'Low' and one 'Moderate'. Unreasonable demands by school administration was rated 'High' by over two thirds of teacher respondents but none of the principal respondents gave it a 'High' rating. One rated it 'Moderate' and three rated it 'Low' (see Table 4).

The data shows that majority of the teacher participants responded to work structure as contributing factors of interpersonal conflicts in schools. The majority of teachers rated this Moderate to High. In contrast, three of the principals, rated it 'Low' and one 'Moderate'. The principals generally disagreed with the teachers that principals set unrealistic goals for teachers as three rated this factor 'Low' and one 'Moderate' while over 70% of teachers rated this Moderate to High (see Table 5).

In relation to setting goals that are not specific, one principal rated it 'High', two 'Moderate', and one 'Low'.

In contrast, teachers' viewed this as a major factor with over 80% rating it as 'Moderate' or 'High'. Of the four principals, two rated teachers' inability to perform tasks on time 'High', one rated it 'Moderate', and one 'Low'. Of the 118 teachers, 30 rated it 'High', 52 'Moderate', and 36 'Low' (see Table 5).

According to the data, the physical environments of the schools have low tendencies in causing conflicts. This factor was rated 'High' by 8.48% of teachers. The principals' response endorsed the teachers'. One rated it 'Moderate' and three rated it 'Low'. The majority of the teacher respondents, 51 (43.22%), rated competition for limited resources 'Low'. On this issue principals concurred as they all rated it 'Low'.

Item #29 of the questionnaire sought responses on the influence of ethical factors in contributing to inter-

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 95 •

personal conflicts in schools. The data shows that majority of the teacher participants (61.54%) rated this factor 'High', 25.42% rated it 'Moderate' and 20.34% rated it 'Low'. On the other hand, two principals rated it 'Low', one rated it 'Moderate', and one rated it 'High'.

Item #30 of the questionnaire asked participants to state the factors that contribute to interpersonal conflict between principal and teachers in their schools. The responses were converted into 7 categories consistent with the predetermined categories formulated in this research. The number of occasions that each factor was indicated.

For intergroup and interpersonal relations, the teachers prioritized cultural differences (63), personality differences (49), language and persona (43), lack of professional commitment (62), power struggles (27), poor interpersonal skills (58), and vindictiveness (59) as factors contributing to conflicts. The four principals indicated only three instances of language and persona, two cases of lack of professional commitment, one indication of power struggles, three concerns of personality differences, and two concerns of vindictiveness as factors contributing to interpersonal conflicts. None of the other factors mentioned by the teachers were indicated by the principals.

In relation to management and leadership issues, the teacher respondents (n = 118) reported 45 instances of authoritative approach to problem solving, 39 lack of purposeful employee development, 24 unfair performance appraisal, 35 poor communication and outdated policies, 28 lack of understanding, 14 lack of involvement and cooperation, 13 inappropriate implementation of rules and regulations, 12 micromanagement, and 12 lack of autonomy as causes of interpersonal conflicts.

In contrast, the principal participants (n = 4) mentioned two cases of lack of understanding, three concerns of lack of involvement and cooperation, and only three instances of inappropriate implementation of rules and regulations as factors contributing to interpersonal conflicts. None of the other factors mentioned by the teachers were indicated by the principals.

Regarding the issue of the physical environment of the schools, the teachers identified only 20 instances. None of the principals indicated that this factor contributes to conflict in schools. Only 15 cases of competition for limited resources were recorded by teachers while none of the principal participants view this factor as a cause of conflict.

The data shows that majority of teachers responded that personnel practices were major factors contributing to interpersonal conflict. Thus, they indicated 74 cases of layoffs perceived, 76 instances of unreasonable demands by administration, 65 cases of unauthorized absentee-

ism, and 46 reports of laxity in implementation of school policies. The principals reported only 3 instances of unauthorized absenteeism.

Teacher participants identified work structure as a cause of interpersonal conflicts. Included were: Setting unrealistic targets for teachers (63), setting goals that are not specific (31), inability to perform tasks on time (27), subjecting teachers to overwhelming workloads (57), and failure to set high expectations for students and holding them responsible for their own actions (63). However, only 2 instances of inability to perform tasks on time were identified by the principals. This is not surprising as it was expected that teachers would be more concerned about these factors than principals.

Ethical factors were indicated by teachers in a number of instances. They were as follows: Failure to support teachers when dealing with aggressive students and parents (53), inappropriate involvement of parents in the teaching-learning process (50), parents undermining teachers' professional autonomy (27), inappropriate allocation of resources (21), discussing students and teachers inappropriately (25), and morale distress due to lack of empowerment to address diverse values (42). Only two of all the aforementioned ethical factors were mentioned by principals, namely, discussing students and teachers inappropriately.

Though the physical environment of the schools appeared healthy and competition for limited resources was rare, intergroup and interpersonal relations, management issues, personnel practices, work structure, cultural differences, employee development, and ethical concerns were found to be major factors contributing to interpersonal conflict.

From the findings to Research Question 1, it can be concluded that the factors that contribute into interpersonal conflicts in secondary school between teachers and principals are management issues, intergroup and interpersonal relations, personnel practices, work structure, and ethical concerns of teachers. It can also be concluded that principals and teachers do not perceive similar contributing factors to conflicts in schools (see Table 6).

The findings are consistent with previous research as they show that micromanagement, lack of autonomy, unfair performance appraisal, lack of purposeful employee development, and inappropriate implementation of rules and regulations contribute to interpersonal conflicts in schools. Gray and Stark [5] suggested the aforementioned factors along with communication problems as common sources of interpersonal conflicts.

Ramini and Zhimin [17] commented on similar management and personnel issues that cause conflicts between

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 96 •

Table 6: Teachers' and principals' perceptions of the factors that cause interpersonal conflicts between them.

The perceived factors contributing to interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers	Respondents	
	Teachers (n = 118)	Principals (n = 4)
Intergroup and interpersonal relations		
Cultural differences	63 (53.39%)	0 (0%)
Personality differences	49 (41.53%)	3 (75%)
Language and persona	43 (36.44%)	2 (50%)
Lack of professional commitment	62 (52.54%)	1 (25%)
Power struggles	27 (22.89%)	0 (0%)
Poor interpersonal skills	58 (49.15%)	2 (25%)
Vindictiveness	59 (50%)	0 (0%)
Management and leadership issues		
Authoritative approach to problem solving	45 (38.14%)	0 (0%)
Lack purposeful employee development	39 (33.05%)	0 (0%)
Unfair performance appraisal	24 (20.34%)	0 (0%)
Poor communication and outdated policies	35 (29.66%)	0 (0%)
Lack of understanding	28 (23.73%)	2 (25%)
Lack of involvement and cooperation	14 (11.86%)	3 (75%)
Inappropriate implementation of rules and regulations	13 (11.02%)	3 (75%)
Micromanagement and lack of autonomy	12 (10.17%)	0 (0%)
Physical environment	20 (16.95%)	0 (0%)
Competition for limited resources	15 (10.71%)	0 (0%)
Personal practices		
Layoffs perceived as unjustified	74 (62.715%)	0 (0%)
Unreasonable demands by administration	76 (64.41%)	0 (0%)
Unauthorized absenteeism	65 (55.08%)	3 (75%)
Laxity in implementation of school policies	46 (38.98%)	0 (0%)
Work structure		
Setting unrealistic targets for teachers	63 (53.39%)	0 (0%)
Setting goals that are not specific	31 (26.27%)	0 (0%)
Inability to perform tasks on time	27 (22.89%)	2 (25%)
Subjecting teachers to overwhelming workloads	57 (47.31%)	0 (0%)
Failure to set high expectations for students and hold them responsible for their own actions	63 (53.39%)	2 (25%)
Ethical factors		
Failure to support teachers when dealing with aggressive students and parents	53 (48.31%)	0 (0%)
Inappropriate involvement of parents in the teaching-learning process	50 (42.37%)	0 (0%)
Parents undermining teachers' professional autonomy	27 (22.89%)	0 (0%)
Inappropriate allocation of resources	21 (17.80%)	0 (0%)
Discussing students and teachers inappropriately	25 (21.19%)	2 (25%)
Morale distress due to lack of empowerment to address diverse values	42 (35.59%)	0 (0%)

teachers and principals. Among these are: Imposition of strict deadlines for various activities, differences in perceptions on management of certain issues in the school, dictatorial tendencies on the part of some school administrators, and lack of administrative support in provision of learning aids as well as psychosocial support.

Hartwick and Barki [16] cite Fisher as stating that, many conflicts are created by ethnocultural and racial tensions. Also, Deutsch and Coleman (as cited in Hartwick and Barki), identified personnel preferences as source of interpersonal conflicts. According to Blaine [15] these factors can originate from discrepancies and politics in the different aspects of the workplace, and are sustained by informal groups through gossip and ru-

mours. Blaine believes that the strong drive for work-related achievement in some teachers can breed conflicts with principals who do not emphasize work-related success in their lives.

Research question #2 asked: "What effects do interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers in secondary schools in Bermuda have on student achievement and school success?" The responses were displayed in tables. The ratings to the response categories were as follows: High (4-5), Moderate (2-3), and Low (0-1).

According to the data, the majority of teacher respondents (94 or 79.7%) rated the effects of interpersonal conflicts on staff morale and feelings as 'High'. Just one principal rated it 'High'.

Teachers generally felt that interpersonal conflict decreases job effectiveness with 59.32% rating it 'High' and 13.56% 'Low'. Two principals rated it 'High', one rated it 'Moderate', and one rated it 'Low' (see Table 7). In terms of the direct effect of interpersonal conflicts on students' attitude towards their work and ultimately their achievement 72.88% of teachers rated it 'High'. Three of the principals also rated it 'High' (see Table 7).

The vast majority of the teacher respondents indicated that interpersonal conflicts create variations in the effectiveness and commitment levels of teachers. Principals were in general agreement with this position (see Table 7). Teachers and principals also agreed that interpersonal conflicts impede school effectiveness and student achievement (see Table 7).

From the findings to Research Question 2, it can be concluded that interpersonal conflicts between principals and staff affect staff morale in schools and can decrease job effectiveness among staff. It has a direct effect on students' attitude towards their work and ultimately

their achievement. It can also create variations of effectiveness and commitment levels of teachers and can impede school effectiveness (see Table 7).

Amason [28] commented that interpersonal conflicts can have serious consequences for school climate and students' success as it has a direct effect on teachers' and students' attitudes towards their work.

Since interpersonal conflict between principals and teachers is inevitable, it means that conflicts involving the accomplishment of tasks should be cultivated while conflicts from unproductive relationships should be discouraged in an educational setting [16].

Research question #3 asked: "What conflict management programs are in place in secondary schools, in Bermuda to manage interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers effectively?" Frequency distribution of responses to these questions were displayed in tables. The ratings to the response categories are as follows: High (4-5), Moderate (2-3), and Low (0-1).

Of the 118 teachers, 90 (76.27%) rated good interper-

Table 7: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to effects of interpersonal conflicts on students' achievement and school success.

Effects of interpersonal conflicts on students' achievement and school success	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Affects staff morale and feelings	94 (79.7%)	24 (20.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)
Decreases job effectiveness among staff	70 (59.32%)	32 (27.12%)	16 (13.56%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Direct effect on students' attitude towards their work and ultimately their achievement	86 (72.88%)	16 (13.56%)	16 (13.56%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Create variations in the effectiveness and commitment levels of teachers	94 (79.7%)	24 (20.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Impedes school effectiveness and students' achievement	86 (72.88%)	32 (27.12%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)

Table 8: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to perceptions of conflict resolution programs.

Perceptions of conflict resolution programs	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Good interpersonal relationship between principal and teachers is important for the success of my school	90 (76.27%)	11 (9.32%)	17 (14.41%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Interpersonal conflict between principals and teachers is inevitable in schools	77 (65.26%)	30 (25.42%)	11 (9.32%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Properly managed interpersonal conflict is useful in creating better school climate	92 (77.97%)	12 (10.17%)	14 (11.86%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
The principal takes measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationship between principals and teachers in my school	30 (25.42%)	11 (9.32%)	92 (77.97%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0 (0%)
Tensions are created due to the ethical constraints on proper actions taken in the course of conflict resolution program	89 (75.43%)	15 (12.71%)	14 (11.86%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
The conflict management strategy(s) that is/are used in my school to manage interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers is/are influenced by ethical issues	73 (61.87%)	31 (26.27%)	14 (11.86%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 98 •

sonal relationship between principal and teachers is important for the success of their school, High; 11 (9.32%) Moderate; and 17 (14.41%) Low. Three of the four principals gave it a 'High' rating, and one rated it 'Moderate'.

Over 65% of the teacher respondents, felt that interpersonal conflict between principals and teachers is inevitable in schools by rating this item 'High'. Two principals rated it 'High', one rated it 'Moderate', and one rated 'Low' (see Table 8). Teachers and principals were in agreement that properly managed interpersonal conflict is useful in creating a better school climate (see Table 8). Over 65% of the teachers felt that principals did not take measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with teachers in their schools. Not surprisingly, the principals did not concur with this view (see Table 8). In a similar vein, responses to the item, tensions are created due to the ethical constraints on proper actions taken in the course of conflict resolution activities in schools, showed sharp division between teachers and principals with 75.43% of teachers rating it 'High' while three principals rated it 'Low' and one 'Moderate' (see Table 8). The data shows that the majority of the teacher respondents believed that the conflict management strategy(s) that are used in their schools are influenced by ethical factors with 61.87% rating it 'High'. In contrast one principal rated it 'High', two rated 'Moderate', and one rated it 'Low' (see Table 8).

Just over 43% of the teacher respondents chose integrating as the conflict management strategy that is effectively used in schools to manage interpersonal conflicts. Sixty-seven or 56.78% chose none of the strategies.

Integrating was chosen by only one principal. Problem solving was chosen by 33.90% of teachers and one principal. The win-win strategy was selected by 16.95% of the teachers and one principal. Seven (5.93%) teacher respondents selected the compromising strategy while one principal selected preventing as the management strategy that is most effectively used in schools to manage interpersonal conflicts (see Table 9).

In terms of best practice, 37.29% of the teacher respondents and one principal selected the integrating strategy. Problem solving was selected by 36.44% of teachers and two principals while 26.27% teacher respondents and one principal selected the win-win strategy (see Table 9).

Just over 40% of the teacher respondents and one principal selected integrating as the most challenging conflict management strategy employed in schools. Problem-solving was selected by 42.37% of teacher respondents and two principals. In addition, one principal respondent selected the win-win strategy as the most challenging conflict management strategy employed in school, while avoiding was selected by 16.95% of teacher respondents. Two principals selected none of the strategies.

Item #21 on the questionnaire rated principals on various qualities involved in interpersonal conflict resolution. The data shows that 16.95% teacher respondents rated the principals 'High' in using good management skills in solving problems, in stark contrast to the principals three of whom rated themselves 'High' (see Table 9).

Respondents were asked to assess principals' involve-

Table 9: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to conflict management programs.

Conflict management programs	The conflict management strategy(s) below that is/are effectively used in my school to manage interpersonal conflicts		What conflict management strategy do you consider best practice?		The most challenging conflict management strategy employed in my school is…	
	Teacher (n = 118)	Principal (n = 4)	Teacher (n = 118)	Principal (n = 4)	Teacher (n = 118)	Principal (n = 4)
Integrating	**51 (43.22%)**	**1 (25%)**	**44 (37.29%)**	**1 (25%)**	**48 (40.68%)**	**1 (25%)**
Problem solving	40 (33.90%)	1 (25%)	43 (36.44%)	2 (50%)	50 (42.37%)	2 (50%)
Win-Win	20 (16.95%)	1 (25%)	31 (26.27%)	1 (25%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25%)
Obliging/smoothing	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**
Win-lose strategy	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (**0%**)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (25%)
Dominating	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**
Forcing	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)
Suppression	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)
Preventing	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (16.95%)	0 (0%)
Avoiding	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**
Withdrawal	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)
Compromising	**7 (5.93%)**	**1 (25%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0%)**
Lose-lose strategy	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)

Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

ISSN: 2578-6482 | • Page 99 •

Table 10: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to rating of principal.

How would you rate your principal on each of the following qualities involved in interpersonal conflict resolution?	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Uses good management skills in solving problems	20 (16.95%)	29 (24.57%)	69 (58.48%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Involves all stakeholders in managing conflict	36 (30.51%)	40 (33.89%)	42 (35.60%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Takes side in a conflict situation	87 (73.73%)	21 (17.80%)	10 (8.47%)	0 (75%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Looks for fair solution in conflict situation	28 (23.73%)	37 (31.36%)	53 (44.92%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Acts as a mediator	29 (24.58%)	26 (22.03%)	62 (52.54%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Uses conflict management skills in finding a solution	31 (26.27%)	26 (22.03%)	61 (51.69%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Strives toward good interpersonal relationships with staff	4 (20.34%)	59 (50%)	35 (29.66%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Is proactive in handling or managing conflict	23 (19.49%)	52 (44.07%)	3 (36.44%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Strives for a win-win situation in conflict management	16 (13.56%)	46 (38.98%)	56 (47.46%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Delegate important tasks on a merit basis	20 (16.95%)	29 (24.57%)	69 (58.48%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)

Table 11: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to interpersonal conflict resolution programs in schools.

Rate each set of the following morale considerations on the choice of interpersonal conflict resolution programs in your schools	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Fairness of outcome versus school standards	31 (26.27%)	29 (24.58%)	58 (49.15%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Confidentiality versus school rules	29 (24.58%)	58 (49.15%)	31 (26.27%)	2 (50%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)
Loyalty to colleagues versus school norms	19 (16.10%)	41 (34.75%)	58 (49.15%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Family agenda versus educational standards	71 (60.17%)	27 (22.88%)	20 (16.95%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)

ment all stakeholders in managing conflicts. Around 30% rated this item 'High', while three of the four principals rated it 'High' and the other 'Moderate'. Respondents also rated the level at which principals took sides in conflict situations. Over 73% of teachers rated this 'High' and another 18% rated it 'Moderate'. Three principals rated it 'Low' and one 'Moderate'. Teachers had a negative view of principals in relation to fair resolution of conflicts with only 23.73% rating it 'High' and 44.92% rating it 'Low'. The divide between them and principals is again emphasized where three principals rated this 'High' and one 'Moderate' (see Table 10). Also teachers did not consider principals to be effective mediators. Less than 25% rated principals' mediating skills 'High' while over 52% rated it 'Low' again a stark contrast with principals, three of whom rated this as 'High' (see Table 10).

The use of formal conflict management skills in finding a solution by principals was rated as 'Low' by almost 52% of teacher participants while three of the principals rated it 'High' and one rated it 'Moderate' (see Table 10).

Participants rated principals in terms of efforts to foster good interpersonal relationships with staff. Just 20% of teachers rated this 'High' and 30% rated it 'Low'. All four principals rated it 'High'. Similarly, only 19% of teachers rated the principals High in being proactive in handling conflicts with 36% rating it 'Low'. Three of the four principals rated it 'High', and one rated it 'Moderate' (see Table 10).

In rating their principals on striving for a win-win situation, 13.56%, rated it 'High' and 47.46% rated it 'Low'. Three principals rated themselves 'High' and one 'Moderate'. Teachers were also critical of principals in terms of delegating important tasks on a merit basis. Over 58% rated this as 'Low'. On the other hand, three principals rated themselves 'High' and one 'Moderate' (see Table 10).

Item #21 on the questionnaire asked the participants to rate the effects of four sets of morale considerations on the choice of interpersonal resolution programs in their schools (see Table 11). In terms of fairness of outcome versus school standards 26.27% of teachers gave a rating of 'High', with the majority (49.15%) rating it 'Low'. Three principals gave a 'High' rating one gave a 'Moderate' rating. In terms of confidentiality versus school rules 24.58% of teachers gave a 'High' rating and 26% gave a 'Low' rating. Two principals gave a 'High' rating and two gave a 'Moderate' rating. Loyalty to colleagues versus school norms was rated 'High' by 16.10% of teacher respondents, and 'Low' by 49.15%. One principal rated it 'Moderate', and 3 'Low' (see Table 11). In relation to effect of family agenda versus educational standards in conflict resolution decisions 60% of teacher participants rated this as influential with a rating of 'High'. Principals disagreed with teachers with three rating it 'Low' and one 'Moderate'.

The findings from Research Question #3 revealed the following:

1. Ethical issues influence strategies that are used in schools to manage interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers.

2. Principals who fail to take appropriate measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationship between principals and teachers are highly driven by school politics but encourage teaching and learning.

3. Integrating, problem solving, and win-win strategies are the conflict management strategies that are effectively used in schools but are the most challenging strategies employed in schools.

4. Principals take sides in conflict situations instead of mediating impartially, lack effective management skills in solving problems, exclude key stake holders in managing conflict, fail to seek fair solution in conflict situation, and are weak in solving classroom problems by accurately evaluating teacher performance.

5. Family agenda versus educational standards was the moral consideration that influenced the choice of interpersonal conflict resolution programs in the schools (see Table 11).

From the findings to Research Question 3, it can be concluded that good interpersonal relationship between principal and teachers is important for the success of schools, and though inevitable in schools, if properly managed, interpersonal conflict can be useful in creating better school climate.

It is also safe to conclude that from teachers' perspective: (a) Principals fall short of taking measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationship with teachers in their school; (b) Integrating, problem solving, and win-win strategies are the conflict management strategies that are effectively used in schools to manage interpersonal conflicts, and that principals fail to use good management skills in solving problems and find a solution, and to involve all stakeholders in managing conflict. In addition, principals were not mindful of the moral considerations that influence their choice of interpersonal conflict resolution programs in schools. The data shows stark contrast between teachers and principals although the sample of principals is small.

Abdul Ghaffar [3] asserts that wherever there is human interaction; the presence of perceived or actual conflict is inevitable. Chung and Meggingson [13] believe that the age we are living in is one of conflicts which is fuelled by an increase in worker assertiveness in demanding their rights in terms of organizational perks, privileges, and rights such as status, recognition, salary, benefits, autonomy, and decision making opportunities.

Wood, Nicholson, and Findley [29] commented that the way parents involve themselves in schools comprises a major set of ethical dilemmas that teachers are increasingly facing, which has become increasingly material in nature. This is compounded by the fact that most students have come to be treated by parents and some principals as the leisure class in society that has become ever more affluent. Greenleaf [30] believes that the extent to which principals possess the skills to resolve the conflicts generated from these factors could be the turning point in the fulfilment of the school's purpose. Tesfay [18] cited Rahim and Bonoma in saying that integrating encompasses transparency, information exchange, and acceptance of differences to reach a win-win resolution.

Research question #4 asked: "What measures can be taken to enhance and maintain positive and productive interpersonal relationship between principals and teachers in secondary schools in Bermuda?" Frequency distributions of responses to this question were displayed in tables. The ratings to the response categories are as follows: High (4-5), Moderate (3-4), and Low (0-1).

The data shows that when the teachers were asked to rate whether their principal solves classroom problems by accurately evaluating teacher performance, only 21.19% gave a 'High' rating while 44.92% rated it 'Low'. Three principals rated themselves 'High', and one 'Moderate'.

In rating their principals on their tendency to take measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationship with teachers in school, 31.35% of the teacher participants rated it 'High', but 38.14% rated it 'Low'. Two of the four principals gave a 'High' rating, two a 'Moderate' rating. When asked if the measures taken by the principals to enhance and maintain positive interpersonal relationship between principals and teachers in school are effective, 24.58% of the teacher respondents gave it a 'High' rating while 49.15% rated it 'Low'. Two of the four principals rated themselves 'High', and two 'Moderate'. On the factor, teachers are empowered to negotiate the diverse values present at their school in an attempt to better understand the critical incidences and ethical dilemmas involved in carrying out their roles, only 9.32% of teacher participants gave a 'High' rating. The majority (55.08%), rated it 'Low'. Three principals gave a 'High' rating and two a 'Moderate' rating (see Table 12).

When asked to rate the principal's attempts to establish unity among role players in running the school 30.51% of teacher respondents posted a 'High' rating while 37.29% rated it 'Low'. Three principals gave a 'High' rating, and one indicated 'Moderate'. Just 33.05% of the teacher participants rated "the principal manages and lead by example" 'High' while 34.75% rated it 'Low'.

Table 12: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to research question 4.

Questions	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
The principal solves classroom problems by accurately evaluating teacher performance	25 (21.19%)	40 (33.90%)	53 (44.92%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
The principal takes measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationship between principals and teachers in my school	37 (31.35%)	36 (30.51%)	45 (38.14%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0 (0%)
The measures taken by the principal to enhance and maintain positive interpersonal relationship between principals and teachers in my school are effective	29 (24.58%)	31 (26.27%)	58 (49.15%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0 (0%)
Teachers are empowered to negotiate the diverse values present at my school in an attempt to better understand the critical incidences and ethical dilemmas involved in carrying out their roles	11 (9.32%)	42 (35.60%)	65 (55.08%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)

Table 13: Frequency and percentage of teachers and principals' responses to research question 4.

How would you rate the principal's attempt to maintain the smooth running of the school in each of the following?	Respondents					
	Teachers (n = 118)			Principals (n = 4)		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Establishes unity among role players	36 (30.51%)	38 (32.20%)	44 (37.29%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Manages and lead by example	39 (33.05%)	38 (32.20%)	41 (34.75%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Driven by school politics	67 (56.78%)	33 (27.97%)	18 (15.25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
Encourages teaching and learning	44 (37.29%)	38 (32.20%)	36 (30.51%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

All four principals rated themselves 'High'. The majority of teacher participants (56.78%) gave a 'High' rating to: "the principal is driven by school politics". All four principals rated themselves 'High'. Forty-four (37.29%) of teacher respondents rated the principal 'High' in encouraging teaching and learning. Thirty-eight (32.20%) gave a 'Moderate' rating and thirty-six (30.51%) rated it 'Low'. All four principals rated themselves 'High' (see Table 13).

The findings revealed that:

1. Teachers do not feel empowered to negotiate the diverse values present at their schools in an attempt to better understand the critical incidences and ethical dilemmas involved in carrying out their roles.

2. Principals are perceived by teachers to be weak in solving classroom problems by accurately evaluating teacher performance, in taking measures to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with teachers, and are highly driven by school politics but encourage teaching and learning.

Teachers were of the view that principals do not solve classroom problems by accurately evaluating teacher performance, nor do they take measures to enhance and maintain positive interpersonal relationship with their teachers in schools, thus, they are not effective. It can also be concluded that teachers are not empowered to negotiate the diverse values present at their schools in order to better understand the critical incidents and ethi-

cal dilemmas involved in carrying out their roles, and the principals fail to manage and lead by example. Teachers also think that principals are driven by school politics, but encourage teaching and learning.

Owens [31] asserts that the ability to identify potential conflicts, and their causes and the possession of the skills for addressing them represent the nucleus of productive work and teacher satisfaction. Owens also cited Walters as saying that leadership is supportive of ethical dilemma, efficient and effective behaviours. Greenleaf [30] believes that the extent to which principals grasp these skills could be the turning point in achieving school success. According to Greenleaf, principals must possess the skills and abilities to influence their subordinates and empower them to deal with interpersonal conflicts since it will always be with us, especially in social settings like schools.

Conclusion

One of the most conspicuous trends noted through this research is the stark contrasts in the views of teacher participants and principals about the causes and management of interpersonal conflicts between them. Teachers had very negative perceptions about principals and their role in causing conflicts. They were also highly critical of principals in their handling of interpersonal conflicts and establishing a positive climate that was conducive to healthy interpersonal relationships in the organization. Principals on the other hand held very di-

vergent views on these issues. They generally did not take much responsibility for the existence of interpersonal conflict between them and their teachers and had a positive view of their efforts to manage conflicts where they occurred. Principals were also positive in assessing their efforts to establish positive relationships in their schools. Table 1 through 13 tell the same story of the divergent views of teachers and principals. While the narrative is disconcerting some aspects of the teachers' perception are particularly troubling. For example, the perception of the presence of racial and cultural bias demand urgent attention as it has implications for the very fabric of Bermudan society.

Teachers' views point to a deep level of distrust of principals as it pertains to conflicts and conflict resolution. The negative views of teachers are in stark contrast to principals. This suggests environments that might reasonably be construed as toxic. Establishing a positive school culture and getting all stakeholders to rally around common goals could prove difficult without the implementation of the weighty coercive powers available to principals. This is likely to lead to even more conflict and negative and unhealthy feelings among teachers especially the rank and file. The problem of interpersonal conflict in Bermudan schools will persist unless common ground is found between teachers and principals.

The following recommendations are good starting points:

1. Implement specific policies and programs to address the ethical dilemmas experienced by teachers in dealing with students and parents from various backgrounds.

2. Principals should seek to address interpersonal conflicts before they fester or develop into serious problems.

3. Develop programs to establish and cultivate strong and empathetic interpersonal relations as necessary preconditions in the reduction of negative emotions generated from interpersonal conflicts.

4. The preparation of school principals and teachers should include programs which focus on the development and enhancement of their ability to identify and manage interpersonal conflicts.

5. Principals must, through leadership practices, enable the facilitation of teachers' efficacy, cognitive development, career development, collegiality, inclusivity, growth and celebrate cultural diversity, re-examine evaluation and reward systems to reflect contemporary changes in secondary schools and ensure that these systems are meeting the needs of the staff and students.

6. Teachers must be engaged as team members for collaborating and sharing ideas.

7. Celebrate racial and cultural diversity among staff by demonstrating respect to teachers and including them in school decision making.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this work have no conflict of interest to report at this time.

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Crossfield and Bourne. Insights Anthropol 2018, 2(1):90-104

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