

# Unearthing the ‘Taproot’ of Conflicts between Teachers and School Administrators and its emergent ‘Bitter Fruits’ in Selected Primary Schools of Lusaka, Zambia

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**Abstract:** This study used a metaphor of a tree ‘taproot’ and its emergent ‘fruits’ to explore conflicts between teachers and school administrators in Selected Primary Schools in Chilenje Zone of Lusaka District. Qualitative research approach anchored on a Case study design with a sample size of 30 participants from 5 primary schools was applied. Key Findings revealed that absenteeism, late reporting for work, inadequate communication, lack of resources, favouritism, not observing time within schools, beating of learners and delays in submitting teaching files were sources of conflict in primary schools. Resultant effect of conflict on teaching and learning processes included: poor results from the school, frustrations by both teachers and school administrators, lack of school development and lack of proper learner direction in schools. The study recommended Ministry of General Education to (i) introduce peace and conflict studies in primary schools, (ii) District Education Board Offices to organise seminars to improve good working relationship, (iii) conflict resolution strategies to be taught in schools as a way of addressing grievances, and (iv) engage teachers in decision making processes.

**Key Words:** Administrators, Conflict, Management, Resolution, Teachers, Lusaka, Zambia

## I. INTRODUCTION

This article is an extract from the principal researcher’s Master of Science in Peace Leadership and Conflict Resolution dissertation. The Masters programme was offered by the University of Zambia (UNZA) in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) and had been running since 2014 (Manchishi, Simui, Ndhlovu & Thompson, 2020; Simui, 2018; Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka, Simwinga and Ndhlovu, 2018; Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka & Kakana, 2018).

Conflict has continued to be a factor in human life and as such, it presents itself even in educational institutions both in public and private sectors. To be precise, both secondary and primary schools frequently appear in the face of tension, which in turn manifest in the community. According to Meeks, Heit and Page (2005), conflict is a disagreement between two or more people or between two or more choices. This is because conflicts are events which occur due to problems in teams where individuals at times fail to work

together, but would prefer to stand on their side of view on a particular issue. Similarly, Cannie (2002) referred to conflict as a disagreement or struggle between two or more people in a relationship. The definition of Cannie affirms to the fact that conflict leads things to a standstill and the end result is chaos.

Deutsch (2005) argues that conflict in schools manifests itself in various forms. For Deutsch (2005), various forms of conflict in schools are such that teachers do not seem to get along with school administrators; they tend to reluctantly obey administrators; they do not seem to accept extra work given to them and they also do not seem to follow rules and regulations of school administration. Deutsch continues to state that besides issues of teachers, school administrators tend to also rule using authoritative approach, such as castigating a teacher in presences of learners, imposing extra work without considering an individual’s personal situation, pressurizing teachers to meet deadlines for the task which might have been given at short notice and not practicing what they expect from teachers.

School administrators had a huge task in handling conflict in schools, of which, those not well handled, caused disturbances in the teachers’ lives and consequently slowed down their (teachers’) efforts. Mensar (2007) enlightened that conflicts in schools had a terrible bearing on teaching and learning processes. Hence, there was a need to maintain peace and cooperation without disrupting the educational process.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The quality of education is dependent on the availability, quality and efficiency of teachers and administrators. In the same respect, a very sound and important relationship between teachers and the school administration is ideal, if good performance is to be attained. It was not clear if conflicts existed between teachers and school administrators in schools in Lusaka, particularly Chilenje Zone. If conflicts did exist, it was not clear of types of conflict and how they were mitigated. This study therefore, explored conflicts between teachers and the school administrators in the school environment.

*Purpose of the Study*

To explore the conflicts between Teachers and the School Administrators in the school environment

*Specific Objectives*

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. Explore the main sources of conflict between teachers and the school administrators.
- ii. Explore the effect of internal conflicts between teachers and school administrators on learning and teaching processes.

*Theoretical framework*

In this study, social influence theoretical framework was proposed in the process of exploring sources of conflict between teachers and school administrators. The central theme of social influence theory, as proposed by Kelman (1958) was that an individual's attitudes, beliefs and actions were influenced by other people or groups. Social influence was key in this study because thoughts and actions of an individual are changed by others in the process of socialization.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

*Global Context: Sources of conflicts between Teachers and the School Administrators*

In Bermuda, a study was conducted by Cross field and Bourne (2018) entitled, "Management of interpersonal conflict between Principals and Teachers in Selected Secondary schools in Bermuda". The study used quantitative approach to identify and manage factors contributing to interpersonal conflicts between principals and teachers in selected Secondary Schools in Bermuda. The findings of the study revealed that despite the fact that the physical environment of the schools appeared healthy, there were interpersonal and intergroup sources of conflict. The study identified the following factors which led to conflicts in schools; limited resources, communication problems, differences in perceptions and imposition of strict deadlines for various activities.

A study was conducted in Romanian schools by Catana (2015) entitled, "Conflicts between Teachers: Causes and Effects". Catana's study was based on a field research covering both urban and rural areas. The study used a mixed research methodology and descriptive survey design in place. Data was collected through a questionnaire-based inquiry and focus-groups for teachers and school managers. The main causes for professional conflicts between teachers were identified as: different information and previous experience related to a certain issue; different perception for the same problem; different motivation, interests and personal objectives; and inequitable allocation of task.

Catana (2015) in her study, she indicated that difference perceptions were related to a particular individual. In most

Romanian schools, teachers received different motivations and held different interests or personal objectives on the same issue and different knowledge concerning a subject. This meant that different personal experiences between teachers were sources of conflict and led to disunity and mistrust within schools. Besides, as communication depends on the effectiveness of the school management, the findings of the study showed that lack of proper communication between teachers resulted in misinformation and inefficiency in lesson delivery to learners in most Romanian schools. This meant that when there was a communication breakdown, conflicts arose and learners were equally affected.

*African Context: Sources of conflicts between Teachers & School Administrators*

In Kenya, a study was conducted by Jared and Thinguri (2017) entitled, "A critical analysis of the impact of head teachers' and deputy head teachers' conflict development on team work in public primary schools in Kenya". The study sought to establish the root cause of conflicts among the head teachers and deputy head teachers in public primary schools in Kenya. The researchers used content reviews and desk analysis function design.

Jared and Thinguri (2017), revealed that in service, there were long serving teachers who have gathered accumulative several years of experience and the newly employed teachers with latest and higher qualifications. Findings were that when long serving teachers held offices of head in schools while given a young deputy head teacher, conflicts were there on experience and qualifications. The study indicated that young teachers perceived the elderly head teachers as old fashioned without modern leadership skills. In the similar case, Shahmoharumadi (2014) held that the old head teachers despised the young deputies as inexperienced who could not command respect and have little knowledge in the teaching profession. In the same vein, Kipyego (2013) stated that those teachers only taught to earn a living in their profession and they ever complained, murmured, grumbled and even fought those who made them to have work done. Jared and Thinguri (2017) further indicated in their study that in Kenya, due to lack of jobs, people joined teaching profession simply because they did not have other choices. As a result, conflicts erupted in schools on the basis of unethical behaviour, making head teachers to have very tough time to correct their teachers and in some cases deputies from time to time.

In the similar case, Madziyire et al (2010) argued that in some schools, the management might have had interest to save the money in their bank accounts in order to generate interest while at the same time demanding for excellent performance from the teaching staff in school. Favouritism is a situation of preferring someone or a group of people from a segment of teachers in an educational organisation simply because administration likes them Jared and Thinguri (2017). In some schools, head teachers had their favorite teachers. This made conflict to arise in schools due to privileges some teachers

received from the school administration on the basis of favoritism. In a similar stance, a study conducted in Kenya by Omboko (2010), revealed that head teachers at times favoured certain teachers where the children to such teachers do not even pay school fees. This created conflict within the school, which remained unresolved over a long period of time and resulted into anxiety and stress on those teachers who were sidelined. Omboko in Kipyego (2013), stated that head teachers usually favoured other tutors at the expense of others, which led to discontentment among other teachers in school. Further, Kipyego (2013), stated that by not treating workers equally, leaders encouraged a sense of resentment and disunity that could demotivate workers and damage togetherness and team spirit.

In South Africa, a study was conducted by Plessis and Cain (2017) entitled, "Exploring perceived sources of conflict among educators in three Eastern Cape schools". This study used qualitative interpretive case study to explore the causes of conflict among teachers in three primary schools residing in previously disadvantaged social contexts. The two researchers in their study revealed that tensions have the potential to result in dysfunctional conflict that negatively impact on the teachers, learners and learning within the school. In their study, they found out that perceived conflicts in school include: limited possibilities for promotion, limited resources, need for power, favouritism, lack of respect and tolerance for different opinions, different beliefs and viewpoints as a result of different contexts, lack of communication, management and leadership issues as well as roles and responsibilities: lack of consultation and uncertainty.

In Zimbabwe, a study was carried out by Tshuma, Ndlovu and Bhebhe (2016) entitled, "Causes of conflict among school personnel in Gwanda District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe". The study used descriptive survey design to collect data through survey questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The study established that conflicts in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools occur among teachers in the same department; among teachers in different departments and between teachers and the school head teachers. Further, the study revealed that main causes of conflict in schools were; administrative styles, unethical behaviour, poor dissemination of information, poor work conditions, personality factors, favouritism and sharing of resources.

In Zambia, not much research was conducted on the sources of conflict between Teachers and School Administrators in primary schools in Chilenje Zone of Lusaka District. However, some studies have been conducted but not in an exact way as required in this current study. A study was conducted by Somba (2015). This study revealed that the causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers were quiet many. In the study, causes of conflict were highlighted as; communication breakdown where teachers were always being told on what to do, failure to understand terms and conditions of service, poor management

strategies, unfair class allocations, teachers having higher qualifications than their head teachers and responsibilities not being shared equally. Under ethical misconduct, included constant absenteeism from work, favoritism of some teachers by the head teachers, incompetence of some head teachers, lack of preparedness by some teachers, not submitting teaching files, constant late reporting for work by both teachers and head teachers, negative work culture by teachers, female teachers dressing inappropriately, offering school places to undeserving pupils and use of vulgar language by head teachers. This can also be looked at as a form of civic awareness on the part of the participants that provided such information. This is supported by Habanyati, Simui, Kanyamuna and Muleya(2020) as cited in Chifuwe, Simui and Muleya (2020) who have stated the importance of Civic Education in raising civic awareness among the people in the community. Additionally, similar views have also been expressed by Mupeta, Muleya, Kanyamuna and Simui (2020) and Muleya (2018c) in Chifuwe et al (2020) that point to the contribution of Civic Education awareness raising at various levels in the community.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative approach and adopted a case study. A case study design was appropriate for this study because its overall purpose was likely to achieve understanding of how people made sense of their lives by allowing for the researcher to undertake an intensive and in-depth study. The population consisted of ten (10) primary schools and targeted 25 teachers and 5 school administrators to make 30 participants from five (5) public primary schools in Chilenje Zone of Lusaka District. Homogenous purposive sampling was adopted because it picks up a small sample with similar characteristics. Besides, semi – structured interview guides and focus group discussion were used for data collection for the purpose of triangulation. Triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection techniques in a study (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This necessitated the researcher to explain fully on the topic under study and come up with conclusive findings.

Ethical considerations were vital for researcher because they ensured respect and care for respondents engaged in the study. Participants were informed of where the researcher was studying from and that the study was purely for academic purposes. Further, the researcher assured participant that the information they gave was protected and their names withheld so as to remain anonymous. There was full care for any sensitive information and that there were no incentives provided in order to take part in this study but to faithfully assist the researcher on humanitarian grounds.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

*Sources of conflicts between teachers and school administrators*

This study aimed at exploring conflicts between teachers and school administrators from selected primary schools of Chilenje Zone of Lusaka District. Teachers and school administrators acknowledged the existence of conflict, who mentioned and explained potential sources in schools. In the same manner, Murray and Murray (2004) argued that certain factors in conflict include individual characteristics, which lead to social and contextual influences at the place of work.

#### *Absenteeism*

The findings of the study revealed that head teachers and teachers specified that absenteeism was one of the major challenges and caused conflicts in schools. Head Teacher A indicated that some teachers absented at least once in a week, making school administrators as though they were very difficult individuals to work with. In the statement, it was mentioned,

*Some teachers have a tendency of absenting at least once in a week. When one or two teachers are absent, it becomes a challenge to fill the gap when the other teachers are preoccupied with their classes. Those teachers who have been perpetual absentees, have been warned and others charged for their offense, but in the end, they have labelled my deputy and I as very difficult individuals in school (Interview Guide A, School 1, Participant A).*

In the similar manner, Head Teacher D specified that female teachers were ones who had a lot of excused. For some it was due to influential positions held by their spouses in government. It was stated,

*The majority culprits on absenteeism in this school are women. The worst scenario is when certain female teachers have their spouses in influential government positions, feel they can do whatever they need. Such individuals feel to be on top of all school operations and absent whenever they feel like. This is really a big problem to deal with.” (Interview Guide D, School 4, Participant D).*

Cascio (2003) argues that employee absenteeism is any failure of an employee to report for or remain at work as scheduled, regardless of the reason. Besides, it was held that the tendency of absenting became a challenge to fill the gap when the other teachers are preoccupied with their classes. Common sense tells us that successful learning outcomes can only occur when learners are taught by teachers who apply effort and are present in the classroom and spend adequate teaching time to maximize instruction.

#### *Reporting late for work*

The research study findings revealed that reporting late for work had a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment. According to the head teachers' view, some teachers had a tendency of reporting late for work despite them coming from nearby areas such as teachers' compounds.

According to the Head Teacher B's view, some teachers had a tendency of reporting late for work. It was observed that not only those who stayed far, but even those who were nearby school as well as those within teachers' compounds. In the statement, it was indicated,

*I am aware of certain challenges teachers go through, especially those who stay far. Some of the reasons I have received from those who pass through town is the issue of traffic congestion. But what surprises me the most is for those teachers who stay nearby the school or within teachers' compound to be reporting late for work. So, this is one of the sources of conflict with my teachers (Interview Guide B, School 2, Participant B).*

According to Clotfelter, et al (2009), an employee's ability to attend work is influenced by so many factors such as family commitment, transport problems, accidents and ill-health. In this regard, it was found that some teachers reported late for work due to family commitments before leaving home, transport problems such as breakdowns, traffic congestion and inadequate bus fares. For some, it was due to healthy emergencies before leaving home and accidents along the way.

#### *Professional qualifications*

The study findings indicated that professional qualifications contributed to conflict within the school settings. Head teachers revealed that where some class teachers had acquired new professional qualifications, there were conflicts in the school. The Head teacher explained,

*We have some class teachers who have acquired degrees from universities whilst some senior teachers still hold college diplomas. In this instance, conflicts have arisen because a degree holder feels his or her immediate supervisor is underqualified and control is difficult (Interview C, School 3, Participant C).*

Another teacher at the same school revealed that the Head teacher felt more experienced than any other teacher despite their higher qualifications. This led to conflicts in the school. The teacher said,

*We have a problem regarding professional qualifications in this school. You find the Head teacher feels more experienced than any teacher in the school. On one hand, young teacher with higher qualifications such as university degrees also feel more qualified than Head teacher's experience. This cause conflict in the school.” (Focus Group D, School 4, Participant 3).*

Besides, during the focus group discussion, teachers from School 5 indicated that some teachers refused to teach primary school classes upon acquiring their degree certificates. They fought for limited spaces at junior secondary section, where they could teach Grades eight (8) and nine (9). Like Kipyego

(2013) argues, some teachers fight for superiority complex in order to enjoy influence and power. But despite that, the head teacher denied some teachers and that created conflict.

#### *Lack of adequate communication*

The study findings indicated that lack of communication by some teachers with management had the potential to cause conflict. One Head teacher narrated,

*Adequate communication is paramount at all levels. I had a case with one male teacher who could not report for work for three days. I only learnt of his problem on a Tuesday after scolding him. Apparently, this teacher resides alone. He fainted on Wednesday afternoon due to his health condition as was contained in the medical report from the hospital. It was said that our teacher was only picked and taken to hospital by neighbours on that material day. What convinced me was a medical report, but then he needed to communicate his problem even through the same neighbours who rushed him to hospital. In short, if one does not communicate anything, leads to conflict between the two parties.” (Interview Guide B, School 2, Participant B).*

The study conducted by Crossfield and Bourne (2018), stated that lack of proper communication to teachers, cause conflicts in schools. school administrators never convey important information to teachers in good time, making them panic with the deadline. Whetten and Cameron (2005) contend that an important message may not be received if effective communication channels are not used. This is consistent with Abigail and Cahn’s (2011) view, that lack of proper communication drives an issue into a deep misunderstanding.

#### *Lack of Resources*

The findings revealed that lack of adequate resources had serious implications on a teacher to school administrator relationship. The head teacher said,

*I have noted that my teachers do not believe when I tell them that the school does not have money. As a primary school, we operate under difficult conditions whenever Grades 8 and 9 learners tend to delay or not pay school fees. This money is meant for teaching and learning materials, but teachers suspect the head teachers and the deputy head teacher of misusing funds meant for the purchase of teaching and learning materials.” (Interview Guide C, School 3, Participant C).*

During the discussion, teachers from School D indicated that lack of financial resources in school caused misunderstanding. It was held that sometimes, the head and deputy head teachers misappropriated school funds and made teachers to improvise for teaching and learning materials.

This is in line with Madziyire et al (2010), who argued that in some schools, the management might have interest to save the

money in their bank accounts in order to generate interest while at the same time demanding for excellent performance from the teaching staff in school. The study revealed that school administrators never provided enough resources such as plain papers, pens, markers, flip charts, manila papers and textbooks but they expected good performance from teachers. This caused conflict because teachers did not receive needed materials which meant that the school management was not considerate for the well-being of the school status.

#### *Favouritism*

The study findings revealed that favouritism was a very contentious issue that caused conflict between teachers and school administrators in most schools. It was indicated that head teachers were more open to certain teachers than others, causing conflict in school. This was evident when a teacher stated,

*Our head has favourites. You find that some teachers are preferred over others. This is felt when the views of those favoured are taken with seriousness while other views are trashed (Focus Group A, School 1, Participant 4).*

In a similar instance, a study conducted in Kenya by Omboko (2010), reveals that head teachers at times favour certain teachers where the children of such teachers do not even pay school fees. According to the findings of this current study, school administrators created certain groups of teachers for particular tasks while sidelining others. An example was given where workshops for particular Grade teachers were organised, which involved allowances, but head teachers picked other teachers who were not even close to that Grade. Similarly, it was also revealed that whenever workshops without allowances were organised, those teachers who were sidelined were then sent there. In such a scenario, Kipyego (2013), states that by not treating workers equally, leaders encourage a sense of resentment and disunity that can demotivate workers and damage togetherness and team spirit.

#### *Not observing time within school*

The findings of the study revealed that some teachers liked over spending time in the staffroom after break time was over. It was stated that for some, they kept on chatting and talking about their family challenges and progresses at the expense of learners. The Head teacher stated,

*In some instances, teachers would resort to chatting on WhatsApp and Facebook forgetting their core business when in fact they should be teaching in classes. This and other reasons make me upset and I just push such teachers even though I am labelled as a bad hearted administrator. In the end, conflicts arise (Interview Guide B, School 2, Participant B)*

Such habits had the potential to delay the completion of the school syllabus by the teachers. This was what Kipyego (2013) termed ‘unethical behaviour’. Kipyego asserted that

some teachers went into the teaching profession as a last resort when other alternatives of employment failed to materialize and such individuals never settled in their jobs as teachers. Besides, the study indicated that some teachers were in businesses such as selling clothes and shoes within schools. In some cases, such teachers overspent time after break time was over because of advertising their items. This situation made administrators blame all the teachers for not observe time properly whilst in school it created tension.

#### *Beating of learners*

The study findings indicated that beating of learners caused conflict between teachers and school administrators. The Head teacher said,

*Any teacher who attempts to beat a learner is summoned to my office and cautioned. This does not settle well with some teachers and feel the administrators side with learners and parents. The end result is teacher to Head teacher's conflict. The management protects learners in school in line with the Child Protection Policy. In this regard, teachers are not allowed to give corporal punishment in form of bodily harm (Interview Guide A, School 1, Participant 1)*

One teacher from School E, stated that beating of learners was one of the sources of conflicts in the school. This was due to different health conditions learners lived with where school administrators did not take kindly. It was held that for those teachers who had the habit of beating learners, they had tough time with parents and later school administrators. One teachers contended,

*Beating of learners creates conflict with management in this school. A colleague just gave two strokes on a boy and this did not settle well with his parents and the head teacher. When the parents to the boy came in school, did not spare the school authority and warned for the consequences of that action in an event of the loss of the child. Luckily, the child was not that injured but the teacher was warned and cautioned. In this case, the teacher had it that school administrators sided with the parents but in the actual sense, they did not (Focus Group E, School 5, Participant 3).*

In 2003, Zambia abolished corporal punishment in schools in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This convention prohibits any form of violations against children, including the use of corporal punishment in schools Soneson (2005). According to Clecherty et al (2005) pointed out that common examples of corporal punishment are hitting, slapping or smacking a child. For this reason, head teachers clearly indicated that all the learners were under the custody of the school management and were protected from any harm whilst in the school premises.

#### *Delays in submitting teaching files*

The research study findings revealed that delays in submitting teaching files caused conflict.

And this regard, the Head teacher said,

*Delaying teaching files is a sign of insubordination and that makes me summon those teachers who are in the habit of doing that. There was a day when I scolded one teacher for delaying to submit his file and that became an issue. Thereafter, he stopped being active in his departmental activities. Despite talking to him, he took it so personal and also decided to become a very passive member of staff in meetings. That really affected our relationship but with time he we starting to get along (Interview Guide C, School 3, Participant C).*

This can be related to what Kingala (2000) asserted that some teachers found themselves in teaching, doing the job they did not like but just because of money. Further, head teachers indicated that failure to submit or delaying teaching files was a sign of insubordination and that made school administrators summon teachers who were in the habit of doing that.

#### *Effect of conflicts between teachers and school administrators on teaching and learning*

The study findings found that the presence of internal conflicts between teachers and school administrators had an effect on teaching and learning processes. The prominent effects on teaching and learning processes were; poor results from the schools; frustrations by both teachers and school administrators; lack of school development; suppression of vital information; learners lack proper direction in school.

#### *Poor Academic Results from the schools*

The study finding showed that internal conflict led to poor results by the schools. In the narration, the head teacher said,

*I have observed that teachers who had issues with the head teacher and the deputy head teachers, resorted to shunning teaching in their allocated classrooms. This showed how much internal conflict impacted on our learners and we record poor results in the end (Interview Guide A, School 1, Participant A).*

Teachers from School 3, indicated that poor results in the school were due to conflict which existed between teachers and school administrators. They stated that whenever teachers involved in conflict were not well guided and provoked more, they tended not to teach effectively and that led to poor results. One teacher said,

*Conflict led to poor results in schools. We have teachers who were good, but have since become reluctant after encountering differences with the head teacher on personal issues. This has not settled well with friends to such teachers (Focus Group C, School 3, Participant 5).*

Owens (2001) asserts that conflict can have a devastating impact on the behaviour of people in an organisation. This study therefore, revealed that some teachers resorted to staying away from classroom tasks without caring for the learners. It was observed that teachers who had issues with the head teachers and the deputy head teachers, resorted to shunning teaching in their allocated classrooms. The above statement is further supported by Owen (2001), who holds that in a school situation, physical withdrawal can lead to absenteeism, tardiness and laziness on the part of the teacher. Thus, internal conflict impacted on learners' performance and poor results were recorded in the end.

#### *Frustrated Teachers and School Administrators*

The study revealed that both teachers and head teachers got frustrated due to internal conflicts in schools. In the statement, the head teacher said,

*It is very frustrating to work with people who devalue my input. I have a task of putting things right whenever I see a gap in the school, but some teachers have ended up being in conflict with my ideas. This is so frustrating to say the least. Some teachers ever complain whenever they have been assigned with work and do the opposite just to make my work hard. I call this undermining my effort.” (Interview Guide C, School 3, Participant C).*

At school B, teachers expressed their displeasure with their deputy head teacher's attitude towards some teachers who were probing on vacation leave. It was revealed that only selected teachers were put on the leave list to an extent of repeating names while some teachers were not considered. This resulted to such teachers who seemed left out getting frustrated and relaxed in their duty. Teachers indicated that teachers were frustrated whenever they felt their efforts were not recognized. For example, some teachers were favoured to any extent of being found in almost all workshops which had allowances. Those workshops without any allowances, never attracted the favoured teachers and this frustrated the neglected teachers who also in turn did not teach effectively in classes, making learners to suffer immensely. Tshuma et al (2016) agrees with the said statement and indicated that when conflict occurs, there is a tendency for morale to be lowered. The results are stressful and unhappiness situations adversely affect teamwork at a workplace. In this regard, Sompa (2015) indicated that the effects of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers lead to teachers getting demotivated and poor work relations among staff.

#### *Lack of School development*

The study showed that conflict in the school retarded any form of development and affected individuals who were good in various activities. One head teacher said,

*Teachers in various departments work well with an incentive. When I say the school do not have money to reward your effects, there is conflict. For example,*

*those in Preventive Maintenance System (PMS), they have relaxed just because government no longer gives them any allowances. So, they feel forced when told to revamp PMS and this problem has ended up affecting the teaching and learning processes.” (Interview Guide B, School 2, Participant B).*

Teachers from school A, revealed that conflict in the school retarded any form of development. This was through the discussion where teachers indicated that the affected individuals who were good in various activities just stopped participating fully and resorted to seeing things at a distance. An example was given where one teacher who was very instrumental in sports became very passive after allegation of misappropriation of sports funds. It was said that this individual become frustrated and teaching was affected. Like Barker (2009) contends, aggregation may be displaced towards a person who is not directly involved in the situation.

#### *Suppression of vital information*

The study indicated that conflict in schools led to teachers suppressing vital information meant to contribute positively to the progression of the institutions. One teacher revealed,

*Our school is affected with internal conflict. For example, our colleague who just lost a class register was castigated so hard despite him promising to replace it. This conflict with the head teacher led our colleague to become reluctant in class and learners were equally affected. He even suppressed an important information regarding his uncle's interest to donate teaching and learning materials to the school. We came to learn of it when he confided in one of his friends. That was how the school lost out on teaching and learning materials (Focus Group D, School 4, Participant 5).*

This is similar to a study by Catana (2015), who revealed that some of the effects of conflict include school climate deterioration, where communication between teachers may suffer because of message distortion. According to Catana's (2015) study, effects of conflict lead to unfriendly atmosphere, nervousness and negative emotions, with a negative impact on the teachers' professional performance in schools.

#### *Learners lack proper direction in schools*

The study found that conflict in the schools led to learners losing proper direction as coordination seemed to break down between teachers and school administrators. One head teacher said,

*We have a problem when it comes to proper relationships. You find that a teacher is busy complaining to learners in class about the head teacher or even about the deputy head teacher just because of the difference which happen between the two. This do not give a proper direction to our learners in school and*

*that has affected the teaching and learning processes.”*  
(Interview Guide D, School 4, Participant D).

Teachers from school A revealed that learners were affected due to some of the teachers who were transferred because they never got along with the head teacher in the school. It was said the such conflict led learners to lose proper direction in their subjects as the teachers who taught left. Somba (2015) affirms to the given scenario and argues that effects of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers lead to teacher transfers and frustrations. Further, the study found that it was painful to lose credible teachers and it was painful for learners, thereby causing a negative impact on the teaching and learning processes. To support the given statement, Robbins (2005) indicates that learners get affected when teachers who taught them leave the school due to internal conflicts with head teachers in schools. It was said that such conflict led learners to lose proper direction in their subjects as the teachers who taught them left. In this research study, it can be deduced that all the sources of conflict in schools are as a result of social influence among teachers as well as head teachers, deputy head teachers, section heads and senior teachers, respectively. For this cause, the social influence theoretical framework fitted well in this study because its central theme is that an individual's attitudes, beliefs and actions are influenced by other people or groups. In this case, people or groups are referred to as teachers and school administrators. Further, a number of explored conflicts in this study were due to social influence because thoughts and actions of teachers were changed by school administrators and vice versa in the process of socialization at work. Suffice to indicate that an approach used to an individual may cause a certain behavior intentionally or unintentionally. Depending on how one is approached, conflict emanates if not approached well as elucidated by the social influence theory (Kelman, 1958).

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

It was evident from the study that Primary schools in Chilenje Zone of Lusaka District face conflicts, among which are absenteeism, reporting late for work, professional qualifications, lack of adequate communication, lack of resources, favouritism, not observing time within schools, beating of learners and delays in submitting teaching files. The manifestation of these conflicts between teachers and school administrators have a greater effect on teaching and learning processes. The noted ones in the study are poor results from the school, frustrations by teachers and school administrators, lack of school development, suppression of vital information, and lack of proper learner direction in schools. It is therefore in the interest of this study to provide alternative measures of resolving conflict between teachers and school administrators in order to contribute to the knowledge base peace and conflict studies in Zambia.

### Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations have been proposed to mitigate the challenge of teachers and school administrators conflicts in schools:

- i. The Ministry of General Education should embrace the idea of incorporating peace and conflict studies in primary schools so that learners are taught how to respect human dignity at a tender age.
- ii. The District Education Board Office should organize seminars and workshops aimed at improving good rapport between teachers and school administrators in order to build good working relationship between them.
- iii. School administrators should have necessary knowledge, competence and basic conflict management skills with enough leadership experience.
- iv. School administrators should allow and encouraged teachers to participate in decision making process in order to decide on matters that concern them.

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