

Management of Conflicts in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana

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Abstract: This study sought to explore the management of conflicts in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. Responses from 128 church members, including pastors and elders in 16 Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis were analysed. Questionnaires were applied. Research approach was quantitative, research design was descriptive. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data. The investigator found that the conflict management strategies adopted by Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches operating within the Cape Coast Metropolis were prayer alone, prayer and fasting, compromise, collaboration, arbitration, and avoidance or separation. The investigator concluded that elders, pastors and members of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis used a number of strategies to manage conflicts that occur amongst them. It is recommended that Pentecostal and Charismatic church elders should organise seminars to educate church members and pastors on the management conflicts. These seminars should be initiated by the church headquarters at least every quarter of the year.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution; Christianity; Sub-Saharan Africa

I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Conflict is the struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals (Thakore, 2016). As long as people compete for jobs, security, power, recognition, and resources; conflicts are bound to occur (Alshuwairekh, 2017). This declaration is expatiated by the conflict theory. The theory argues that conflict is built into the particular ways that societies are structured and organized. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation and inequality as sources of conflict (Ikyase & Olisah, 2014).

Conflicts have benefits. For instance, conflict help managers/leaders confront realities and create new solutions to tough problems. When conflict is well-managed, it breathes life and energy into people's relationships and makes people more productive (Deng & Koch, 2017). Conflict is also necessary for true involvement, empowerment and democracy. It allows people to voice their concerns and opinions and create solutions responsive to several points of view. The result is, people become more united and committed. Conflict also creates a channel to form and

express people's needs, opinions and positions. Through conflict, people also feel unique and independent as well as connected to others (Alshuwairekh, 2017).

Like any other human institution, conflicts exist in churches (Madalina, 2016). Conflict management, which is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict, while increasing its positive aspects (Reade & Lee, 2016), has, therefore, become the priority of religious organisations (Saiti, 2015). Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in organisational environment (Thakore, 2016). The aim of conflict management is to enhance the well-being (Longe, 2015) and development of individuals, groups and the society at large (Rahim, 2017). Development, in the opinion of Akintunde and Omobowale (2018), involves increasing the skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and well-being of individuals, groups and the society at large. To ensure continual well-being of people, in the mist of unavoidable conflicts, the need arises to devise conflict management strategies.

Conflict management strategies proposed by scholars are competition (Khan, Langove, Shah & Javid, 2015), collaboration, compromise (Tsen, Shapiro & Ashley, 2017), avoidance, and accommodating (Khan et al., 2015). In addition, Robbins and Judge (2013) have proposed some conflict resolution techniques, namely problem solving, super ordinate goals, expansion of resources, smoothing, and authoritative command, altering the human variable, and altering the structural variable. Conflict management contributes significantly to successful leadership and teamwork, improves product and service quality for customers, builds customer loyalty, reduces costs, and uses financial resources wisely (Tjosvold, Wong & Chen, 2019). Well-managed conflict also develops people's individuality and stimulates innovative thinking. By this, people become more fulfilled and capable.

It is the responsibility of church leaders to adopt comprehensive and collaborative strategies in conflict management so as to ensure the continuity and well-being of the church (Treve, 2013). Both the leaders and members must

resolve to work together amicably by formulating potent strategies and sustaining acceptable policies as effective machinery for managing conflict on continuous basis in the church. A successful workplace conflict management strategy will reduce hostility and aggressiveness at church, particularly in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches so that the church can continuously promote the spiritual well-being of individuals in the society.

Charismatic Christianity, also known as spirit-filled Christianity, is a form of Christianity that emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and modern-day miracles as an everyday part of a believer's life. Practitioners are often called Charismatic Christians or Renewalists. Although there is considerable overlap, Charismatic Christianity is often categorised into three separate groups, namely Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement and Neo-charismatic movement (Bogofanyo & Amakiri, 2016). Pentecostals are those Christians who identify with the beliefs and practices of classical Pentecostal denominations, such as the Assemblies of God or the Church of God (Amanor, 2009). Christianity has long been the dominant religion in the Cape Coast Metropolis, although there is a significant number of Muslims and Traditionalists. With this in mind, this paper seeks to assess the conflict management strategies that are adopted in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

The low intensity conflicts surging within notably stable countries like Ghana appear to send alarming signals of the possible re-surfacing of internal violent conflicts within the country. It is known that 80% of conflict situations occur independently of human will (Kharadz & Gulua, 2018). These conflicts are often hinged on several factors, including poverty, human rights violations, bad governance and corruption, ethnic marginalization and small arms proliferation (Annan, 2014).

At the societal level, Nguyen, Chatters, Taylor and Mouzon (2016) submit that conflicts result in the destruction of lives and property, the internal displacement of people, a region-wide refugee crisis, poverty and disease, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, human and drug trafficking, illegal exploitation of natural resources and banditry. At the individual level, Omisore and Abiodun (2014) find that conflicts lead to psychological responses, such as inattentiveness to other things, estrangement or alienation from others, frustration, behavioural responses, such as aggression towards others, decreased communication, and physiological responses, such as respiratory problems, hypertension, headaches and coronary problems.

The conflicts within the sub-region and the national level trickle down to the local churches (Carscious, 2013). Treve (2013) discloses that conflict creates tension among Global Evangelical and Evangelical Presbyterian church members,

hampering the development of the church, as well as the social and economic well-being of church members. By way of extension, this conflict is expected to exist in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis, due to the relatively high poverty levels in the metropolis (Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly, 2018), because poverty has been found to be one of the major causes of internal conflicts (Annan, 2014). Unmanaged or poorly managed conflict tends to have negative consequences for individuals and society as a whole (Awan & Saeed, 2015). Therefore, the need arises to devise conflict management strategies to ensure a peaceful and harmonised society in our churches.

Research gap

Although many actors, including Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), civil society, international community, states and religious bodies have been making efforts towards ensuring peace and harmony, conflicts continue to persist in Ghana, and their resolution is often protracted (Annan, 2014). Furthermore, literature on conflict management focuses on profit making organisations, such as manufacturing firms (Longe, 2015), healthcare organizations (Amestoy, Backes, Thofehrn, Martinid, Meirelles & Trindadef, 2014); (Moreland & Akpker, 2016; Polat, Sen, Unaldi, Sakarya & Yildirim, 2017) academic institutions (Ciuadiene & Kairiene, 2017; Kharadz & Gulua, 2018), and real estate companies (Alshuwairekh, 2017) with less attention on religious organisations, particularly churches. Besides, although some scholars, such as Alshuwairekh (2017), Kharadz and Gulua (2018), and Radivojevic and Klincov (2015) have paid attention to conflict in developed economies, their research was conducted in a non-Ghanaian context. Samantara and Sharma (2016) maintain that the conflict handling strategies can differ in different organisational situations, confirming the contextual nature of the conflict management.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict theory

The conflict theory assumes that social structures are created through conflict between people with differing interests and resources. Individuals and resources, in turn, are influenced by these structures and by the unequal distribution of power and resources in the society (Knapp, 1994). Sears (2008) articulates some assumptions underlying the conflict theory. According to the author, societies are defined by inequality that produces conflict, rather than order and consensus. This conflict based on inequality can only be overcome through a fundamental transformation of the existing relations in the society, and is productive of new social relations. The disadvantaged have structural interests that run counter to the status quo, which, once they are assumed, will lead to social change. Thus, they are viewed as agents of change rather than objects that one should feel sympathy for.

Moreover, human potential, namely capacity for creativity is suppressed by conditions of exploitation and oppression, which are necessary in any society with an equal division of labour. The main argument of the structural conflict theory is that conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured and organised. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, inequality, among others as sources of conflict (Ikyase & Olishah, 2014).

Conflict management strategies

Ghaziani, Moadi and Sareshkeh (2013) conducted a comparison study on conflict management strategies of physical education office managers based on some demographic characteristics. Their study showed that cooperative strategy was the most preferred conflict management strategy among the managers, followed by compromise, dominance, accommodation, and avoidance strategies. Omisore and Abiodun (2014) put forward that early recognition and paying attention to the conflicting parties and negotiation between parties involved in the conflict should be adopted in resolving conflicts while force or intimidation should never be used to resolve conflicting parties. The Omisore and Abiodun (2014) argue that force and intimidation can only be counter-productive.

Longe (2015) investigated the impact of workplace conflict management on organizational performance in a Nigerian manufacturing firm. Participants comprised 250 employees selected through the use of stratified random sampling technique. Data were generated through the use of validated structured questionnaire. Regression analysis showed that among the conflict management strategies, namely collective bargaining, compromises, and accommodation; collective bargaining displayed the highest significant positive correlation with organisational performance. Focusing on a different set up, Amestoy et al. (2014) assessed conflict management among nurse-leaders in the hospital environment. Adopting a participatory leadership, dialogue emerged as a strategy for coping with conflicts in the hospital environment.

In their study, Bao, Zhu, Hu and Cui (2016) proposed that inter-personal communication skills were effective for the resolution of conflict. Polat et al. (2017) conducted a study to determine whether there were differences between the chief physician's and health care services director's strategies of conflict resolutions in terms of diverse variables. The population of the study were head physicians and health care service directors who manage 56 hospitals and 6 affiliated Public Hospital Associations in Istanbul. The study sample comprised 41 head physicians and 43 health care services directors, giving a total of 84 hospital administrators who accepted to participate in the research. During the data analysis of the study, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, comparison analysis, and correlation analysis were used. The results of the study showed that hospital

managers prefer to use integrating strategies the most and dominating strategies the least among conflict resolution methods.

Conceptual framework

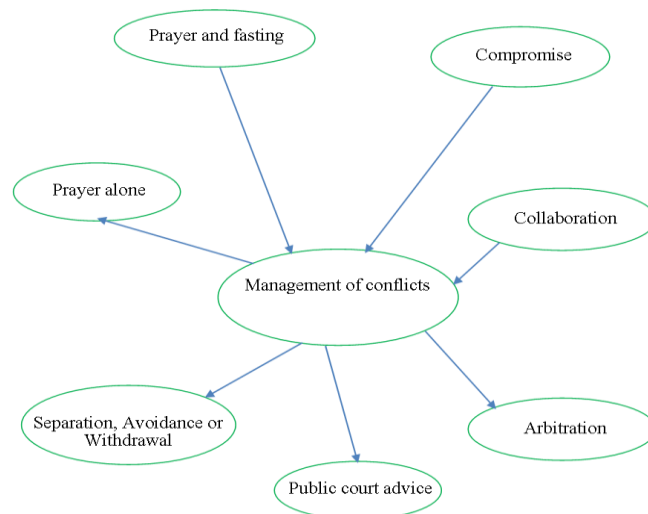


Figure 1: Conceptual framework
Source: Authors' construct based on literature reviewed

Grounded in the structural conflict theory, the conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1, displays the seven (7) potential conflict management strategies that can be employed in resolving conflicts in Pentecostals and Charismatic churches operating within the Cape Coast Metropolis. This paper sought to test if all these potential conflict management strategies do apply to the two churches in Ghana.

III. METHOD

The study employed the quantitative research approach, and research design was descriptive.

All Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches operating within the Cape Coast Metropolis, numbering 32, formed the target population of this study. The multi-stage sampling approach was utilised. First of all, the lottery method of the simple random sampling technique was used to select 16 out of the 32 Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches operating within the Metropolis. Stripes of papers with the names of each of the 32 Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches were put in a basket and reshuffled.

Afterwards, 16 of the stripes of papers were picked at random so as to give each church equal and independent chances of being selected. The composition of the 16 churches were Victory Bible Church, Word Power Ministries, Miracle Family Church International, Infinity Chapel, Church of Pentecost, International Central Gospel Church, Abundant Life Church, Action Chapel, Maranatha Assemblies of God, Destiny Life Chapel International, Grace House Chapel, Light House Chapel, Calvary Charismatic Church, Harvest International, Charismatic Evangelistic Church, Zoe Outreach Embassy, and Great Commission Church.

Church of Pentecost and Maranatha Assemblies of God were the only two Pentecostal Churches considered in the study. After conducting the lottery technique, 10 church members, including pastors and elders were selected from the Metropolis Headquarters of each of the 16 churches at the researcher’s convenience, forming a total sample size of 160. The headquarters was preferred over the branch offices, because, it was likely that, due to their increased number, they would be faced with greater conflicts. Of the 160 questionnaires distributed, responses from 128 church members, including pastors and elders in 16 Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis were analysed.

A questionnaire was utilised as the instrument for data collection and it was semi-structured. It consisted of 15 items which were divided into two sections. ‘Section A’ collected data on the demographic characteristics of respondents, comprising of 8 items. ‘Section B’ looked at the conflict management strategies, comprising of 7 items, which were anchored on the scale: 1=Disagree, 2=Not Sure and 3=Agree. Ethical issues were considered. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data. The demographic characteristics of respondents were analysed using frequencies, and the indicators that measured the conflict management strategies were analysed using percentages.

IV. RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presented and discussed the demographic characteristics of respondents, namely the type of church, position in the church, gender, age range, highest educational level, marital status and pastoral status.

Type of Church

Of the 128 completed questionnaires that were retrieved from respondents, 18 respondents were Pentecostals, while the remaining 110 were affiliated to Charismatic Churches, suggesting that the respondents were dominated by Charismatic church members (Table 1). This result was obvious due to the composition of the sample size.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Type of Church

Item	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Type of Church	110	85.94	18	14.06	128	100.00%
Total	110	85.94	18	14.06	128	100.00%

Position

In terms of respondents’ position in church, a majority of 87 respondents (67.97%) were members of their respective churches, comprising of 75 Charismatics (58.59%) and 12 Pentecostals (9.38%). Moreover, 25 respondents (19.53%) were elders, comprising of 21 Charismatics and 4

Pentecostals. The remaining 16 respondents (12.50%) were resident and associate pastors of the respective churches, comprising of 14 Charismatics and 2 Pentecostals, as displayed in Table 2. The results suggested that respondents’ positions in the church were evenly spread across both Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Position

Position in Church	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Member	75	58.59	12	9.38	87	67.97
Elder	21	16.41	4	3.12	25	19.53
Pastor	14	10.94	2	1.56	16	12.50
Total	110	85.94	18	14.06	128	100.00%

Gender

Furthermore, it was observed in Table 3 that, a majority of 73 respondents (57.03%) were females, comprising of 63 Charismatics (49.22%) and 10 Pentecostals (7.81). The remaining 55 respondents (42.97%) were males, comprising of 47 Charismatics (36.72) and 8 Pentecostals (6.25). These results indicate that the respondents were dominated by females.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	63	49.22	10	7.81	73	57.03
Male	47	36.72	8	6.25	55	42.97
Total	110	85.94	18	14.06	128	100.00

Age Distribution

With respect to the age distribution of respondents, it was observed in Table 4 that 6 of the respondents (4.69%) fell within 18-20 years, comprising 5 Charismatics (3.91%) and 1 Pentecostal (0.78%). Moreover, 33 respondents (25.78%) fell within 21-30 years, comprising 25 Charismatics (19.53%) and 8 Pentecostals (6.25%). Additionally, 45 respondents (35.15%) fell within 31-40 years, comprising 30 Charismatics (23.43%) and 15 Pentecostals (11.72%). Furthermore, 31 respondents (24.22%) fell within 41-50 years, comprising of 27 Charismatics (21.09%) and 4 Pentecostals (3.13%). Finally, the remaining 13 respondents representing (10.16%) were 51 years and above, comprising of 11 Charismatics and 3 Pentecostals. The results suggest that most of the respondents were within the ages of 31 to 40 years.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age in years	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
18-20	5	3.91	1	0.78	6	4.69

21-30	25	19.53	8	6.25	33	25.78
31-40	30	23.43	15	11.72	45	35.15
41-50	27	21.09	4	3.13	31	24.22
51 and above	11	8.60	2	1.56	13	10.16
Total	98	76.56	30	23.44	128	100.00

Educational Qualification

Concerning respondents’ highest educational qualification achieved, it was discovered in Table 5 that 16 respondents (12.50%) have attained basic education, comprising of 14 Charismatics (10.94%) and 2 Pentecostals (1.56%). Furthermore, 47 respondents (36.72%) have attained second cycle education, comprising of 40 Charismatics (31.25) and 7 Pentecostals (5.47). To add, 35 respondents representing (27.34%) have obtained Bachelor’s degree, comprising of 30 Charismatics (23.43) and 5 Pentecostals (3.91). Furthermore, the results showed that 21 respondents (16.41%) have obtained a Master’s degree, involving 18 Charismatics (14.07) and 3 Pentecostals (2.34%). Finally, the remaining 9 respondents (7.03%) have obtained a Doctorate degree, involving 8 Charismatics (6.25%) and 1 Pentecostal (0.78%). These results suggested that most of the respondents have attained second cycle education.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Educational qualification	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Basic Education	14	10.94	2	1.56	16	12.50
Second Cycle	40	31.25	7	5.47	47	36.72
Bachelor’s Degree	30	23.43	5	3.91	35	27.34
Master’s Degree	18	14.07	3	2.34	21	16.41
Doctorate Degree	8	6.25	1	0.78	9	7.03
Total	110	85.94	18	14.06	128	100.00

Marital Status

Considering the marital status of respondents, Table 6 showed that 79 respondents (61.71%) were married, involving 68 Charismatics (53.12%) and 11 Pentecostals (8.59%). Further assessment revealed that 44 respondents (34.38%) were single, comprising of 30 Charismatics (23.44%) and 14 Pentecostals (10.94%). The remaining 5 respondents (3.91%) were either separated or divorced, involving 4 Charismatics (3.13%) and 1 Pentecostal (0.78%). Therefore, Table 6 revealed that majority of the respondents was single.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Married	68	53.12	11	8.59	79	61.71

Single	30	23.44	14	10.94	44	34.38
Separated/Divorced	4	3.13	1	0.78	5	3.91
Widowed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	102	79.69	26	20.31	128	100.00

Pastoral Status

Finally, Table 7 captured Pastors’ status, and it was disclosed that, of the 16 Pastors that participated in the study, 12 were part-time pastors (75.00%), involving 8 Charismatics (50.00%) and 4 Pentecostals (25.00%), while the remaining 4 pastors were working full-time (25.00%), involving 3 Charismatics (18.75%) and 1 Pentecostal (6.25%). These results suggested that a vast majority of the pastors were working on part-time basis.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents by Pastoral Status

Pastoral Status	Denomination				Total	
	Charismatic		Pentecostal		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Part-time	8	50.00	4	25.00	12	75.00
Full-time	3	18.75	1	6.25	4	25.00
Total	11	68.75	5	31.25	16	100.00

Conflict Management Strategies Adopted in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches

The objective of this paper sought to explore the conflict management strategies adopted by leaders of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis. To arrive at this objective, seven indicators/statements were measured on a three-point Likert-type scale from 1=Disagree (D), 2=Not Sure (NS) and 3=Agree (A). These scores were generalised based on the extent to which respondents indicate their agreement, not sure or disagreement to each one of the positive statements provided under “Conflict Management Strategies” on the questionnaire. In doing so, the responses for each of the statements or indicators were presented in percentages, as displayed in Table 8.

Table 8: Conflict Management Strategies

S	Statements or Indicators	Sample (n)	%		
			D	NS	N
1	Prayer alone is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church.	128	15	15	70
2	Prayer and fasting are conflict management strategies adopted in my church.	128	20	10	70
3	Compromise is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church.	128	22	5	73
4	Collaboration or Confrontation is a	128	30	15	55

	conflict management strategy adopted in my church.				
5	Arbitration is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church.	128	28	17	55
6	Separation or Avoiding or Withdrawal is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church.	128	18	7	75
7	Public court advice is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church.	128	64	17	19

As presented in Table 8, the results showed that, generally, prayer alone was a conflict management strategy adopted by Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches, as majority (70%) of respondents expressed their agreement to this statement: “Prayer alone is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church” (n=128, D=15%, NS=15%, A=70%). In a similar fashion, the participants indicated that aside using prayer alone, sometimes the church leaders used prayer and fasting as a conflict management strategy. This was manifest in their agreement to this statement: “Prayer and fasting are conflict management strategies adopted in my church” (n=128, D=20%, NS=10% and A=70%).

Equally, compromise was found as one of the conflict management strategies adopted by the church. This was evident in the reactions of participants, as they expressed their affirmation to this statement: “Compromise is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church” (n=128, D=22%, NS=5%, A=73%). This finding looks similar to the outcome of a study by Longe (2015) that, compromise is one of the conflict management strategies that have positive correlation with organisational performance. By the same token, the findings are parallel to the outcome of a study by Amestoy et al. (2014), wherein dialogue emerged as a strategy for coping with conflicts in the hospital environment.

Similarly, responses from participants insinuated that collaboration or confrontation is a conflict management strategy adopted by the church. This finding is evident in their affirmative response to this statement: “Collaboration or confrontation is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church” (n=128, D=30%, N=15%, A=55%). This revelation equates the statement by Thomas (1992) that, collaboration is one of the conflict management strategies that leaders or managers can use.

Aside collaboration, participants agreed that arbitration was an effective strategy that is used by their churches. This outcome was expressed in their agreement to this statement: “Arbitration is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church” (n=128, D=28%, N=17% and A=55%). This outcome matches up with the avowal by Ikyase and Olisah (2014) that, arbitration is one of the conflict management strategies that is used to manage intra and interstate conflicts in Africa.

Beside arbitration, participants expressed their consent to the fact that separation, avoidance or withdrawal was a conflict management strategy considered by the leaders and members of their church. They showed their consent by indicating their agreement to this statement: “Separation or Avoiding or Withdrawal is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church” (n=128, D=18%, NS=7%, A=70%). This result compares well with the finding of a study by Ghaziani et al. (2013) wherein the authors found that avoidance was a conflict management strategy preferred by physical education office managers.

Respondents showed their disagreement that public court advice was one of the conflict management strategies adopted by their church, as evident in their responses to this statement: “Public court advice is a conflict management strategy adopted in my church” (n=128, D=64%, NS=17%, A=19%).

Summary of Results

Gleaning from the responses from participants, this research found that prayer alone, prayers and fasting, compromise, collaboration or confrontation, arbitration, and avoidance or separation were the conflict management strategies adopted by Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches operating within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

V. CONCLUSION

The researcher, therefore, concluded that leaders, pastors and members of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis used a number of strategies to manage conflicts that occur amongst them.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Deriving from the research findings, it is recommended that Pentecostal and Charismatic church leaders should organise seminars to educate church members and pastors on the management of individual-level conflicts. These seminars should be initiated by the church headquarters at least every quarter of the year. The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches should also have a department in the church that will handle conflict related matters whenever they arise

In addition, churches should have special bible classes to educate members about conflict resolution in relation to forgiveness as taught in the bible, using memory verses, such as Ephesians 4: 31-32; (31) “*Let bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice*”, (32) “*And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you*”.

Another memory verse that can be useful is: 2nd Corinthians 5:17-21; (17) “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*”, (18) “*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation*”, (19) “*that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of*

reconciliation”, (20) “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf be reconciled to God”. Finally, a Christian conflict management expert should be hired to offer technical support to the church in conflict related matters in a bid to help reduce or avert any future conflict.

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