UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

MECHANISMS FOR PREVENTING, MANAGING AND RESOLVING

INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN SOME SELECTED SENIOR

HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION

SOLOMON TAAYINA ANE

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HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE UPPER WEST REGION

BY

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MARCH, 2019

DECLARATION

STUDENT

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of

it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere:

Candidate's Signature: .... Date: ....

Name: **SOLOMON TAAYINA ANE**

SUPERVISOR'S

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation/thesis was

supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation/thesis

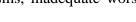laid down by the University for Development Studies.

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ABSTRACT

Interreligious conflicts like other forms of conflicts are pervasive among adherents of various religious faiths in Ghana. However, Ghana is not experiencing devastating conflicts resulting from religion as some countries in Africa and beyond have witnessed. Nonetheless, there are reports of cases of inter-religious clashes in the country's educational institutions, especially the Senior High Schools across the country. The selected schools (Wa Senior High School, Lassia Tuolu Senior High School, Wa Senior High Technical School, Islamic Senior High School and Queen of Peace Senior High School) were chosen because they have both in the past and present experience and are still experiencing interreligious conflicts. Ironically, how religious plurality and its related conflicts are handled in the Senior High Schools remains a grey area. It is against this background that this thesis was carried out with the view to examine how interreligious conflicts are prevented, managed or resolved in five selected Senior High Schools in the Upper West Region. Using a qualitative case study design, data gathered through unstructured interviews involving 27 respondents (face-to-face) and Focus Group Discussion involving 32 groups executives with a total respondents of 230, the study revealed that, the provision of worship place for all religious faiths has been a major conflict preventing mechanism used in the various Schools. The study also revealed that the use of dialogue by religious Patrons has contributed to the successful management and resolution of inter-religious conflicts in the selected Schools. In spite of the reported successes chalked by the application of the various conflict preventive and resolution mechanisms, inadequate worshipping space, lack of conflict managing skills and

misuse of religious dressing or attire have militated against the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms. The study concluded that inadequate education on religious tolerance, compulsory worship and prayer attire remained the major causes of interreligious conflicts in the schools. The study therefore recommends that the Ghana Education Service should include religious diversity management in the teacher trainee curriculum and religious tolerance in the Senior High Schools curriculum to promote the understanding of religious plurality and the need for religious adherents to learn and respect other faiths.

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my late father and my senior brother WO II Ane

Alangpaare Justice.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGCM	Assemblies of God Campus Ministry
AHMSAG	Ahmadiyah Muslim Student Association of Ghana
BapSU	Baptist Students' Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Cooperation
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CASU	Catholic Students Union
CMDC	Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission
COMOG	Coalition of Muslims Organization of Ghana
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GES	Ghana Education Service
GMSA	Ghana Muslim Students Association
GNA	Ghana News Agency
HNT	Human Needs Theory
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
NG	News Ghana
NPC	National Peace Council
PENSA	Pentecost Students and Associates

PRC	Pew Research Centre
RPC	Regional Peace Council
Sec/Tech	Secondary Technical
SHS	Senior High School
SU	Scripture Union
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background

Religion has been variedly defined. For example, Dzorgbo (2013), defines religion as a unified system of beliefs, rites or rituals and practices relative to sacred things. That is to say, things set apart and forbidden- beliefs and practices which unite adherence into one single moral community. Religion is a system of beliefs and values associated with a particular organisational forms (ritual practices, institutions), and with a supra-natural deity embodying and emanating some absolute truths (Mayall and Silvestri, 2015).

Religion, the world over is noted to be both a unifying and divisive tool between the human race. As a unifying tool, people easily identify with each other on the basis of sharing same faith (IDLO Report, 2016). This offers it the ability to promote and maintain peace among people. On the other hand, it creates conflicts through intra- and inter-religious conflicts. Global attempts to promote co-existence among different religious faiths have culminated into a number of international bodies being formed. For instance, the World's Parliament of Religion established in the 17th century among other things was to develop mechanisms to promote peaceful co-existence among different religious adherents and resolve both intra and inter religious conflicts, leading to global peace. Equally, All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches were very instrumental in the peace agreement in then Sudan in 1972 though short-lived (Smock, 2006). During the

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apartheid era, the Vatican Council and other religious organisations were equally pivotal, with the Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu receiving a Nobel Peace award for his peaceful role in ending that regime (Sampson, 1997). Globally, religious based organisations including Catholic Bishops Conference, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Al-Azhar among others continue to play critical role in the promotion of peace and good governance among societies through advocacy. The Worldwide religions include Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. Both Islam and Christianity are monotheism religions and they form part of the Abrahamic religions (Abdul-Hamid,2011). These two religious faiths holy scriptures require them to co-exist peacefully with their neighbours. In buttressing his argument, the author cited from both holy books, for instance, the bible, Galatians (6:2) stresses on the need for Christians to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ. Mark (12:30-31) expanded this statement and simplifies it by saying; 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these. This concept of neighbourhood includes believers and non-believers of the Christian faith. Nobel Qur'an (49:13) similarly indicates that, 'O mankind, Allah has created you from a single pair of male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not to despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)'. This clearly

demonstrates that both Muslims and Christians are obliged to live together harmoniously.

However, this cannot be said to always be adhered to by the followers of both religions. Hence, the occurrence of both intra-and interreligious conflicts This, therefore questions the unifying tool component of religion. Religious intolerance historically has plagued most countries across the globe. Religious violence seems to have gained much prominence following the September 11, 2001 attack on United States of America that was orchestrated by Osama Bin Laden, a professed Muslim and then Al-Qaeda leader. This marred the relationship between the West and that of the Muslim community partly because the West is predominantly Christians and the architect of the attack, a Muslim. Therefore, all Muslims were dragged into the hatred, regardless of if one is a proponent of such atrocity or not, once the individual or community profess the Islamic faith, the ill feeling engulfs them (Herbert, 2009).

India, have equally witnessed some notable interreligious conflicts. Conflicts between Muslims and Hindus being the most recent one, the Christians, Jews, Sikhs, and Parsee have also been involved in violent conflict in the past and now (Graff and Galonnier, 2013). France and Belgium in present times have suffered attacks partly in the name of religion. Oboler (2015), said a terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo, a Satirical Magazine in France led to the death of 12 people, leaving 11 more injured. Charlie Hebdo is a weekly satirical French magazine notable for its controversial content production of mockery cartoons of various religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam among others across the globe. This attack stemmed from the

fact that the magazine contained a cartoon depicting the Holy Prophet Mohammed as a cartoon and his nudity, which is prohibited or forbidden per some interpretations of Islam and therefore viewed as a gross disrespect to the Holy Prophet, the Messenger of Allah. Some fraction of the Muslim community accused the magazine that, it was not the first it had mocked the its leader in its publications in the form of cartoon and nude caricatures. This saw the office of the magazine firebombed by alleged Islamist in 2011 and its website hacked. The information presented cannot project France as being unfriendly to Islam as some Muslim faithfuls suggest albeit, it is not the only religious faith being mocked. This is not to say that Muslims should not feel embittered. Another incidence is the recent terrorist attack on Belgium, which some experts believed was partly attributed to a supposedly suppression of the Islamic faith in the country in favour of the Christianity (Hiltermann, 2016).

Interreligious conflict in the Middle East is fast deteriorating human lives. Thousands of Christians if not a million or more comprising both leaders and members have lost their lives, kidnapped and others fleeing to safety in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) insurgency that has rocked the region coupled with the civil war in Syria. Although other faiths are not spared, the study focuses on Islam and Christianity. According to the British Broadcasting Cooperation News (2015), Christian communities conquered by ISIS compelled Christians to convert to Islam and pay jizya (a religious dues or levy) to them or risk of being killed.

In Africa, the situation is not different. For instance, in Nigeria, the Islamist militant group Boko Haram, with its extended atrocities in Chad, Cameroon and Niger, attacks any religious group or sect that opposes its operations or ideology labelling

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such groups as an enemy. Several churches have been bombed with scores of people killed as a result. In January 2012, 20 bombings and gun battle in the Kano state of Nigeria left behind about 165 dead bodies, which Boko Haram claimed responsibility. Over 80 lives were lost in December, 2011 festivities and 67 Muslims were killed and three mosque damaged in a reprisal attack by the Christians (Mwangi, 2012). Similarly, Egypt according to the magazine has also experienced the hot breeze of religious conflict, where about 24 people lost their lives in a conflict between Muslims and Orthodox Christians protest in October 2011. In Kenya, Mombasa city, Muslims majority against Christian minority claiming 67 lives and about 200 fleeing to safety, Al-Shabaab propagandists have attempted to portray Kenya's foray into Somalia as an attack on Islam (Moore, 2014). The report states further that about 3 million people lost their lives and 4 million displaced in the then Sudan. The Central Republic of African (CAR) is vigorously struggling to breathe the air of peace as a result of what started as a political conflict but have totally and swiftly towed a different dimension, which is a religious conflict, between Christians and Muslims since 2013, with about one million people fleeing the country and some 3,000 killed (United States Department of State Report, 2015). The rebel groups, anti-Balaka and Seleka represent the two major religions Christianity and Islam respectively in CAR the Report added. Intermittent religious tensions among others has left the Muslim Council of Tanzania panicking and calling for a special commission constituting the various religious sects in the country to help prevent any of such catastrophes, properly manage and resolve them if they do emerge, although there is a relatively high degree of religious harmony in the country (Mwangi, 2012).

The above points out that structures being put in place to ensure peaceful co-existence are malfunctioning, hence the intermittent conflicts between authorities and religious adherents. Additionally, conflicts do arise just at the adherents' level excluding authorities. Nonetheless, all stakeholders bare repercussions of these conflicts. The root causes of these conflicts are an attempt by both Christians and Muslims to meet their needs such as identity recognition, security and freedom of worship. This further reflects how interreligious conflicts do occur in the school settings as students also in their quest to meet their religious needs, sometimes do clash with school authorities or among themselves.

1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana is dominated by three main religions; Islam, African traditional believers and Christianity, with the Christian population being the largest among the three with about 71.2%, followed by Islam 17.6% and 5.2% traditionalists (GSS, 2012 and CIA World Factbook, 2015). The kind of conflicts especially interreligious conflicts that are being experienced in the world over, Africa and precisely Sub Sahara Africa, are absent in Ghana if not entirely. Ghanaians stay in the same compounds, attend the same schools, national events, funerals, marriage and naming ceremonies, work, market, celebrate religious festivities and holidays together, in a very harmonious manner regardless of their religious affiliation (Abdul-Hamid, 2011). People are at liberty to take an oath using the symbol of their faith during a swearing into an office or before a competent court of jurisdiction. This is to enhance acceptance of religious and cultural differences. Ghanaians thus co-exist peacefully despite their religious

differences. On the issue of religious freedom, the 1992 Constitution, Article 17 (1) 7 (2), sub-section 1 and 2; state that;

> *"All persons shall be equal before the law. A person shall not be discriminated against on any grounds of gender, religion, race, sex, colour, ethnic origin, creed or social economic status".* Sub-section (3) further explain that: for the purpose of this article, *'discriminate' means to give different treatment to different persons attributed only or mainly to their descriptions by race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, gender, occupation, religion or creed, whereby persons of one descriptions are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another description which are not granted of persons of another description are not made subject or are granted privileges or advantages which are not granted to persons of another description.*

On the bases of these fundamental principles, Ghana is described as a secular nation. The country is a member of the United Nations (UN) and has signed to a number of declarations including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as declared by the UN in 1948 and upholds its content. The contributions of the Christian Council, legal system, Ghana Muslims Council, National House of Chiefs, and National Peace Council (NPC) have been very influential in Ghana's national peace building process. The NPC established in 2011 (Act 818) by Parliament has been the leading body in peace crusade in Ghana facilitating and developing mechanisms to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country. These interventions to a larger extent have promoted peace across the Ghana.

Despite all these reported successes chalked by Ghana in the religious front, there are still pockets of interreligious conflicts in the country, especially in the educational

institutions, which have witnessed occasioned violent confrontations due to religious intolerance. According to GNA (2008), a Muslim student lost his life when being chased by his teacher to attend a church service at Adisadel College in the Central Region of Ghana. Daily Guide (2015), equally reported that; at Sekondi-Takoradi in the Western Region, some female Muslim students were prevented from taking passport photographs as part and requirement of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) registration process because they were wearing Muslim veil (hijab), which was considered as an obstruction to the photographic process by the officials. This nearly resulted in a violent confrontation, which the Muslim fraternity demonstrated against the authorities for preventing those female students to undergo the process and demanded that such students should be allowed to use their hijab for the passport pictures.

Upper West Region, the study location like any other region in the country have all the mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflict among people without the recourse to violence. However, the Region has not been spared of some interreligious conflicts in the past in some of its educational institutions, especially, the second cycle institutions. Some of the schools that have experienced and still experiencing interreligious conflicts include; Lassia Tuoluu Senior High School (LASSEC), in the Wa West district, Queen of Peace Senior High School in the Nadowli/Kaleo district, Wa Senior High School (WASSEC), Wa Islamic Senior High School and Wa Senior/Technical School. For instance, LASSEC a religious established school but under government control, the headmaster's bungalow was allegedly burnt down by some Muslim students because the headmaster at the time pulled down their

temporary structure meant for prayers. As a result, some Muslim students were arrested and later granted police bail and the case discontinued due to inadequate evidence against them. Because of this impasse, the Muslim students in LASSEC have been banned from praying together. Nonetheless, these Muslim students attend a mandatory Sunday church service. In WASSEC, the loud speakers used by the Muslim students to call for prayers was a bone of contention between some school management and some Christian students in the school. In Islamic SHS, the Christian students are not allocated a classroom for their prayers but are rather held in the open under trees, whiles female students who are Christians being compelled by authorities to wear a hijab throughout the day. In WASEC/TEC Muslim and Christian students do clash over space. This is because the allocated place (Assembly hall) for the Christians to worship, is sometime hijacked by the Muslim students for their programme without prior notice to the Christians. The Muslim students are of the view that once the Christians worship there most of the time, they should access to it anytime they need it. QUEENSEC is a religious established school but under the control of Government of Ghana.

These clashes between school management and that of the students and among the students themselves are all efforts in meeting their religious obligations. Therefore, student will resort to any means including conflict be violent or non-violent to ensure that their religious needs are met.

The question that requires a solution is, *'why in spite of the application of various institutional structures to promote coexistence among various religious faiths in the second cycle institutions, the country continues to witness inter-religious conflicts in*

our schools? There should be an explanation to this development using some selected schools in an empirical study. Ironically, little work has been done in this area to assess how religious diversity and its associated issues are handled. This has necessitated this study.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 Main Research Question

What approaches are adopted for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region?

1.3.2 Sub-Research Questions

1. What factors influence interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region?

2. How are interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region prevented?

3. How are interreligious conflicts managed and resolved in second cycle institution in the Upper West Region?

4. How successful are the mechanisms employed for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts?

5. What challenges confront the existing mechanisms in preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Research Objectives

To identify approaches adopted for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region.

1.4.2 Sub-Research Objectives

1. To investigate the factors influencing interreligious conflicts in the second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region.

2. To examine the mechanisms targeting the prevention of interreligious conflict in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region.

3. To assess the mechanisms for the management and resolution of interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region.

4. To ascertain the success of the mechanisms employed for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region.

5. To assess the challenges confronting the existing mechanisms in preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region.

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is useful to all those interested in interreligious conflicts because the findings contain detailed causes of interreligious conflicts, mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of such conflicts

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The study has also added to the existing literature also that can aid in the education of the younger generation on the need to embrace religious diversity to promote peaceful co-existence in schools and beyond. Furthermore, with the insurgence of religious militant groups brainwashing and encouraging the youth especially, to rise and violently fight other religions other than theirs, such mind-set would be rejected and resisted due to the knowledge the study has added. Additionally, the youth would be transformed by the findings through the development of positive image about the other faiths.

The findings are of immense relevance to Heads of institutions and all stakeholders as they are further equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding to be more conscious, sensitive and responsive to religious plurality and the effective and appropriate mechanisms of preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study covers five selected Senior High Schools in the Upper West Region of Ghana namely; Wa Senior High School, Wa Islamic Senior High School and Wa Senior High/Technical School in the Wa Municipality, Lassia Senior High School in the Wa West District and Queen of Peace Senior High School in the Nadowli-Kaleo district. Even though there are three main religious faiths (Islam, Christianity and Africa traditional religion) in the schools, the thesis focused on conflicts between Christians and Muslims. This is because empirical evidence as in Bolaji (2016) and

personal observation indicated that these two religions have often come up against each other. In terms of duration, the study covered the period from 2012-2015.

1.7 Profile of the Upper West Region

The Upper West Region is one of the 10 Regional administrative Regions in Ghana with Wa as its capital and headquarters. The Region was carved out from the then Upper Region in the 1983. Its geographical area covers an approximately 18,478 square kilometres. This constitutes about 12.7 percent of the total land area of Ghana. Upper West Region shares boundaries to the East with the Upper East Region, the Republic of Burkina Faso to the North, to the West, Code d'Ivoire and to the South by the Northern Region (GSS, 2012).

The total population of the region is about 702,110 representing 2.85% of the national population (GSS, 2012). It has an estimated growth rate of about 1.9% and population density of about 32 persons per square kilometre. The population of the Region just like any other region in Ghana is not equally distributed across all the districts. Wa, the Municipal district capital accounts for the largest population with about 224,066 representing about 38.9 % of the region's population with the rest of the districts sharing the remaining population (GSS, 2012).

There are three main religions in the region, Christianity (35.5%), Islam (32.2%) and African traditional (29.3%). There exists a wide variation among the districts in relation to religious affiliations. Christians constitutes the largest religious group in some districts including; Nadowli (58.5%) and Lawra (56.4%) with a very good presence in Jirapa-Lambussie (42.5%) and Wa (24.7%). Islam dominates in Sissala

land with (70.1%) and Wa (44.4%). African traditional religion is preponderant in Jirapa-Lambussie (44.8%), Lawra (43.1%), Wa (27.1%) and Nadowli (25.0%) (GSS, 2012).

The region has an illiteracy rate of about 75.5% high, especially among persons within the age bracket of 15 years and above. This figure is higher than that of the national illiteracy rate, which is of an average of 42.1%. Early education (Western) in Upper West can be attributed to missionary work especially the Roman Catholic Church that provided and continue to provide quality education both at the primary and secondary level in locations, which accepted the missionaries in the early 1930s (Awedoba, 2009). This confirms that education in the region cannot be separated from religion, as it is the trailblazer in education even before government intervention just as in other regions of Ghana.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

A major challenge that confronted the study was the uncooperative attitude of some heads of schools at the initial stages of the study. These school heads were not willing to grant the researcher the opportunity to consider their schools in the study. Such raised issues of confidentiality due to the sensitive nature of religious matter. The researcher overcame this obstacle by identifying some influential teachers, built a trust relationship, which resulted in them appreciating the relevance of the study. These teachers then convinced such head teachers who eventually cooperated fully.

Another challenge the researcher encountered was the difficulty to obtain relevant information from some respondents. Other respondents were equally not ready to

share vital information because of the researcher's first name that gave them a clue of his religion. Realising this, the researcher excluded his first name in subsequent interviews and focus group discussions when introducing himself. More so, in the course of the interview, the respondents who initially were reserved, however, observed the researcher's neutrality and thereby open up and fully cooperated with the researcher. This ensured the fruition of the study.

1.9 Ethical Issues

Permission was sought from the heads of the various institutions that were used for the study. The consent of all respondents were obtained before recordings were done during the in-depth interview session and the focus group discussions. The researcher assured all respondents that information given was confidential and purposely for academic work. Identity of the respondents were kept secret, as the researcher asked them not to introduce themselves before speaking.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains relevant information on theoretical issues, conceptual framework that anchored the study and operationalization of concepts for this study. It also contains history of religious conflicts, sources of religious conflict, evolution of religious traditions in Ghana, relevance of religion to both Christians and Muslims in Ghana, religion and formal education in Ghana and techniques of handling and resolving conflicts

2.1.1 Theoretical Issues

Under this, the study examined the various meaning assigned to conflict and religion, religious conflict by both practitioners and scholars in these areas.

2.1.2 Conflict

The term conflicts have been given different shades of opinions by both scholars within and outside the field of conflict studies. As such has conflict no single definition. However, there are generally agreed and recognised definitions. Coser (1956) defines conflict as a clash between antagonists because of cherished standards and access to insufficient power and developmental needs. Whiles this is true, personal divergent ideas on an issue could also result in a conflict within oneself and so conflict do not only occur between people. Conflict is the negotiating condition whereby one or group needs are reliant on the determination or judgement of another party (Schelling, 1960). Galtung (1969), viewed it from the angle of change within a

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person or the environment. Conflict to him is the result of habitual variation in a versatile condition of an organisation, character, conduct and mind-set of people and affecting the interested party or parties.

Wertheim, et al (1998) posit that conflict ensues when diverse benefits be it absolute or imaginary meet (i.e. interest, power, livelihood, dignity, security) that are impossible to be attained at the same time. Conflict in this regard could be seen as a product of incompatibility in the pursuance of a goal by people. Conflict is the differences in views in the interactions between two or more parties who are connected and with the aim of ruling each other in an acrimonious way (Fisher, 1990). Insecurity is a potential cause of conflict not limited to differences in views and an effort to rule the other. Conrad (1991) defined conflict as a mutual collaboration between people who are of the view that their aims cannot coexist, incongruous or in a fragile state.

Awedoba (2009), sees conflict as a connection between two or more parties that revolve around disparity, disagreement, distinctiveness, antithesis, collision of desires and thereof, it includes animosity and obstruction. The feuding parties could be individuals, organisations, group who may be in touch physically, perceptually or are within the same geographical area. This assertion is all inclusive and the study adopts it.

Ramsbotham et al (2005) view conflict as an expression of the multiplicity of interests, values and beliefs that emerge as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints. Succinctly, Robbins and Judge (2010) defines conflict as a process that start when a party suspects that another party has or

intends to destroy or harm their valuables or cherished standards. Suspicion could be wrong and in this case unjustified conflict.

The preceding discussions is a manifestation of the conceptual difficulty underlying conflict. Regardless of lack of a universally accepted explanation, one thing which features most in the various definitions is that conflict arises among people due to disagreement. Another salient issue that emerged from the discussions is that conflict can serve both as an instrument of development and as a weapon of destruction depending upon how it is managed. This makes Lederach (2003) definition of conflict very useful when he indicated that conflict is normal in human relationships and it is a motor of change. It affects people both negatively and positively

2.1.3 Religion and Religious conflict

A perusal of scholarly work depicts that there is no universal definition of the concept religion. This putative truth is manifested in the diverse definition of the concept. Some scholars including Smith (1962) even rejects the concept, claiming it is vague and views it as a tool for cultural imperialism and jobs creation for the academia or as an ivory tower. In similar vein, Fitzgerald (2000) strongly argues that the term religion has no logical or aesthetic consistence and therefore must be treated as a kind of puzzle and discarded. This revisit the opposition to the Durkheimian perspective of religion.

Smith (1962) states that religion differs from culture, politics and other spheres of human interactions as a new creation of the present West. Smith's perspective on religion ignores the many millions of people outside the academia who belief and

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practice religion. However, some scholars such as Kimball (2002) have rejected the claim as purely linguistic misinterpretation. He further asserts that religion is a core component of the human existence and is ubiquitous. On the vagueness of religion, Masuzawa (2005) says those critics of religion who are of the view that the concept has no space beyond the boundaries of the West and a follow up ludicrous point that, for instance, that religion is non-existent in South Asia depicts clearly a rudimentary incomprehension regarding the various groupings, nomenclature and the kind of vagueness in language. Doniger (1998) agrees with Masuzawa when she said, the history of religion does not indicate that the term can only be confined or associated to a history of the West.

Notwithstanding the conceptual difficulty, some varied but useful definition of the concept has been proffered. Broadly, religion has been defined in two main forms, functional and substantive as summarised by (McBride and Richardson, 2012). Functional definition focuses on what religion does for believers, such as providing a spectacle for viewing and interpreting the world, source of encouragement, comfort or solace in times of life challenges and addressing concerns about the purpose of life and eventuality of death. This is what referred to as Durkhemian view of religion. Substantive definition of religion focuses on the essence of religious ideas, particularly beliefs about God, divinities, morals and eschatological needs. For instance, according to Connelly (1996), religion is seen as an effort to express and organise faiths, emotions, mental imaging and happenings that emanate as a result of contact with holy and the unphysical. To some extent, this position is true but as argued by Tillich (1963) religion transcend the walls of imagination. Adding that

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religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern that qualifies all other concerns as preliminary, and a concern that in itself provides the answer to the question of the meaning of our existence. Chonko et al (1992) define religion as a group of cultural systems, belief systems and universal perspective that introduces emblems which connect mankind to some ultimate power or inert things who are deeply respected or admired and devotedly served by performing religious rites and a prescribed way of behaviour for followers from which the purpose of their life is derived with a common symbol of convergence for worshippers, which comprises of both artificial and natural entities.

Geertz (1992) asserted that religion is cultural system of conduct and custom, concept of humanity, Holy Scripture, shrines or worship places, morals and communal institutions that link human beings to the order of existence in anthropology. This definition proffers a holistic definition to religion in the context of this study. The study therefore, refers to this definition in mentioning religion. Grossman (1975) opines that religion is humankind's orientation regarding holy order that has in it all people or faith in the universe, the connotation at times transcend human comprehension. Yinger (1946) from the functional lens as Durkheim, sees religion as group of faith values and rituals as a medium of which a certain category of humanity battle the supreme predicament of their life. The New World Encyclopedia (2014) says the term religion has its root from Latin: religio meaning to "bind, connect" which connotes a system beliefs and customs concerning the supernatural (and its connection between humanity and the universe), that are mostly organised into prayer, practices, sacred text, and faith based rules.

It is an abstract and ethical structure for drawing meaning and shaping both existential and societal issues (Skidmore, 2007).

McBride and Richardson (2012) contend that religion and conflict have often coincided since the genesis of humanity. As noted by Reychler (1997) since the burgeoning of religion, conflicts have been fought because of various focus of worship-gods and goddesses among others. As observed by McBride and Richardson (2012), religions of the early Americas were characterised by bloody confrontation especially in their quest to faithfully serve their gods by means of human sacrifice that engendered unceasing warfare among Central American groupings.

According to Bolaji (2016), some of the legacies of the colonialism is that of education (Western) and religion (Christianity) bequeathed to Africa and elsewhere. As argued by Mart (2011), this was in an attempt to proselytise the colonised people and also to train human resource to assist them in their administrative duties and other labour jobs. Bolaji (2016) noted that the intruding of Western education and Christianity invasion undermined the already existing educational systems and religions in Africa, and became problematic to manage effectively in the modern state building, precisely religion because it borders on religious feelings that are cherished. For instance, Ojo (2006) posited that Nigeria was entirely ravaged by a non-military violence rooted in religious differences between Christians and Muslims, which claimed more than a million lives in a period of three years from 1967-1970.

Olu-Adeyemi (2006) assert violence with religious tone are still persist and at an alarming rate in Nigeria. Georgetown University Institute Report (2013) indicates religious issues in the then Sudan took a centre stage in 1983 when President Gaafar Nimeiry decreed sharia as a national law. The report further noted that President Omar Al-Bashir's Islamist policies in the same Sudan further exacerbated religious freedom culminating in religious clashes. In similar vein, Cadman (2015) noticed that in the Central Africa Republic (CAR), religious intolerance and violence between Christian and Muslims is alarming. The US Department of State Report (2015) showed that about one million people fled the country and some 3,000 killed in CAR. International Religious Freedom Report (2012) states that mob attacks, arrest, and detention or harassment of both Christians and Muslims minorities in Egypt are not rare amidst the Constitutional Declaration of March 2011 as amended on 22nd December, 2011 that provide religious freedom. The Report further indicates that some constitutional clauses remain obstacles to the exercise of religious freedom.

The foregoing discussions is indicative of the prevalence of religious conflicts across the globe, especially that of Africa. The discussions also point out that in spite of the attempts to promote religious freedom, religious intolerance, imposition of religious values and bad religious policies at the state level, have eroded any hope of meaningful co-existence among the various religious faiths.

Religious conflict in this regard could be explain as disagreement between people or group of people with different or same religious traditions or orientations. For Gyuse (2006), religious conflict is when two or more persons, groups, communities or

nations seek to take possession or dominate a particular object of value at the exclusion of others. Gotan (2004) views religious conflict as the conceived interactions in which two or more religious adherents engage in mutually opposing action and use coercive behaviour to destroy, injure, thwart or otherwise control their opponents. The study points to this definition when religious conflict is talked about because it encompassing meaning.

Disagreement between people of different or same religious tradition or beliefs can be termed as inter- or intra- religious conflict. Therefore, inter-religious conflict is the disagreement between people of different religious traditions in an attempt to frustrate or thwart the efforts. For example, the Christian- Muslims conflict in Central Republic of Africa is a classic example of inter-religious conflict. On the other hand, people of same religious traditions in an attempt to frustrate or thwart each other's efforts is termed as intra-religious conflict. The conflict between Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana and Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana is a typical intra-religious conflict as the two groups are all adherence of the Christian faith. Given the objectives of this thesis, inter-religious conflicts have been given the prominence.

2.2 Sources of Religious Conflict

2.2.1 Poor economic and Political Conditions

Religious differences alone do not necessarily translate into inter-religious confrontations. The available literature talks about the various factors that tend to give rise to inter-religious conflicts. For instance, according to authorities including Awojobi (2015), Terwase (2012), Nwaomah (2011) and Omotosho (2003), poor economic and political conditions serve as drivers of inter-religious conflicts. These authorities argue that in such condition some adherence of a particular faith may feel convinced that they are impoverished because they do not have the influential people at the helm of affairs. This assertion may confirm a Kassena old adage, which says that, 'if one's mother is in the funeral house, definitely such person would not go hungry, because the mother will ensure that her child is fed.' In such economic and political conditions, the disgruntled group may fight to occupy the top positions to enable them control and access the resources to their benefit at the peril of the other religious faithful. It was equally noted that people are favoured both economically and politically based on religious affiliation. This appear to have an iota of truth because in an attempt to have religious balance in Nigeria, if the President is a Muslim, automatically the Vice president is a Christian and vice-versa. Therefore, the scramble over scares resources to better their lots could result in inter-religious conflict. Nevertheless, the root cause is economic other than absolute religious differences. Example the religious crisis between Muslims and Christians in the Central Republic of Africa, which begun as a political conflict quickly assumed a religious dimension to enable them gain religious solidarity.

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2.2.2 Doctrinal Differences and Imposition of doctrine

Doctrinal differences and interpretation have been one major sources of religious conflicts. Awojobi (2015), Terwase (2012) and Maregere (2011) argue that the human mind is such that everyone has a different meaning to things and in some instances dependent on the individual orientation and by so doing one possess inadequate information and understanding of things. This goes to explain how and why Muslims and Christians often misunderstand and misinterpret each other's doctrine and practices. Argument on whose doctrine best explain or reveals the true nature of God or Allah, has occasionally resulted in a conflict between the two religions. For example, as noted by Awojobi (2015:7) "to the Muslims the concept of the Trinity- God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit means Christians are serving three Gods. Whereas, the Christians beliefs about Trinity is one God, that manifested himself in the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit. In other words Christianity is a monotheistic religions (Eph. 2:12; Dt. 6:4). To a Muslims, concepts like slavery is misunderstood and misinterpreted by the Christians. Muslims see themselves as slaves of God but the Christians see themselves as children of God. The Muslims call themselves slaves as a signal of total submission to God or as a sign of servanthood to God"

Besides proselytization activities, Ushe (2015) observed that the imposition of religious ideology on an entire community or country has been a major source inter-religious conflicts, adding that most rural and urban settlements organisations are heterogeneous in nature resulting in multi-religious composition. Therefore, one religious tradition cannot rule even if it has majority of the inhabitants of that

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particular location or establishment. This is because the minority group will definitely resist any attempts by the predominant religion to either persuade or coerce them to abandoned their own faith. The minority could also in an attempt to increase their numbers indulge in converting of other faith adherents compulsorily.

 This compulsory association infringes upon both the fundamental human rights and their religious freedom under the United Nation Human Right Declaration of 1948. As noted by Maregere (2011), sometimes the imposition is necessitated by the quest of religious extremists who claim to either restore or ensure the preservation of sanity and mores of society in order to cure or prevent the Western social life such as; night clubbing, excessive intake of hard liquor, narcotic drugs and prostitution as if the entire West lacks good morals. Meregere (2011) cited extremists' groups including Boko Haram and some States in Northern Nigeria who have impose Sharia Law on all sects of the Islam and any other faith within their jurisdiction and even beyond, as well as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria who also are seeking to implement Sharia Law on all citizens oblivious of their religious beliefs.

In support of Meregere's (2011) assertion, Awojobi (2015) and Terwase (2011) wrote that some religious preachers have been obstinate in their sermon making derogatory and damning comments and calling on their adherents to disregard other faith because the path to salvation is only but one. This creates a situation of ours against theirs. Ours is the best or the true religious and all others are candidates of hell fire making use of either Quranic quotations or biblical verses to drive home their message to their brethren. Either of them can intentionally or unintentionally misinterpret a scripture to convince, anger the other faith or proof theirs is the true

religion. This has in some instances led to between both religions. Nuamah (1998) cited a situation where a newly converted Christian peddled untruth, hate speech against Islam and strategically diluted the content of the Quran in Kejetia- Asafo Roundabout in Kumasi which could have resulted in violent confrontation if care was not taken.

2.2.3 Proselytization Activities

The proselytization activities, that is, attempt to win souls for God through the propagation of religious messages often results provocative words and overtures petting one faith against the other. For instance, as noted by Terwase (2012), Maregere (2011) and Nwaomah (2011) religious groups including the early missionaries employed several strategies including education to get the indigenes converted and this ideology for establishing the schools have in recent time resulted in inter-religious conflict in public schools in Ghana.

2.2.4 Religious Paraphernalia

Awojobi (2015); Terwase (2012) and Maregere (2011) observed that the wearing of religious outfit or paraphernalia such as the rosary, hijab, niqab, burka or any other identifiable object has become a bone of contention and a subject matter in the public domain as to whether it is appropriate for people to wear and female Muslims to only leave their face uncovered in public places like in school or work place. This has occasioned conflict between both religions. A typical example is as Daily Guide (2015) reported that; at Sekondi-Takoradi, in the Western Region, some female Muslim students were prevented from taking passport photographs as part and

requirement of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) registration process because they were wearing a traditional Muslim veil called hijab, which was considered as an obstruction to the photographic process by some of the school authorities. The school management cited the constitutional prescription of how a passport picture for an official exercise should look- without a covering over the head or face. This according to the report nearly resulted in religious confrontations.

Omotosho (2003) observed that recognition of each other positively, has eluded most faiths. Mistrust, insecurity, discrimination clouds their thinking and even sometimes a place of worship becomes problematic whereby a particular religion is not permitted or allowed to put up a mosques or church within some locations.

2.4.1 The Evolution of Religious Traditions in Ghana

Religious demographics of Ghana as seen earlier, indicates the presence of religious pluralism. The major religions are Islam, Christianity, African traditional and other faiths. African traditional religion is self-originated, inherited, or homegrown, post-colonial religion and has no founder (Adamo, 2011 and Bonsu, 2014). Islam and Christianity are both foreign religions in Ghana (Bolaji, 2016; Leonard, 2013; Hashim, 2013; Azumah, 2000).

According to Awedoba (2006) and Bolaji (2016), Islam entered present-day Ghana through its northern borders due to trade, narrative work as well as some office duties from other African tribes, notably Hausa/Fulani, Mande or Wangara in the 14th century. The Da'wah activists work was also phenomenal in the spread of Islam in

the North (Hashim, 2013) which explains its dominance in that side of the country. As there is a general agreement among scholars on the route and how Islam penetrated the Northern part, there is lack of consensus on the period. Some scholars including Abdul-Hamid (2011) and Hashim (2013), Islam dates back to the 15th century through the North. The spread of Islam to the South of Ghana are attributed to some factor including; the fall of both Bono and Begho states (these were predominantly Muslim communities based in the North and responsible for the presence of Islam in that area) and the quest of the colonial masters to recruit more people into the military from the north to the south. Some served as scribes, particularly in the Ashanti Kingdom because of their Arabic literacy skills and knowledge (Bolaji, 2016; Dumbe, 2013; Turkson, 2007 and Azumah, 2000).

According to Adu-Gyanfi (2013) and Sarbah (2010), Christianity was introduced to the country in the 15th century by the first group of Europeans (Portuguese) navigators and others later at the coastal part (southern) and this explains why the south accounts for majority of Christians in Ghana. The White-Fathers officially called Missionaries of Africa took Christianity to the Northern part of Ghana precisely Navrongo in 1906 (Bolaji, 2016; Bob-Millar and Bob-Millar, 2007).

Despite the wide variations that exist between the religions especially Muslims and Christians in Ghana, there exist a good relationship between the two given reasons to the country not having experienced any major religious violence unlike that of Nigeria, Central Africa Republic, the Sudan, Ivory Coast and Kenya (Bagnya, 2016; Myjoyonline, 2014; Abdul-Hamid, 2011; Azumah, 2000).

In spite of Ghana's track record of peaceful coexistence among religious faiths, nonetheless, the religious front has become murky in contemporary times. For example, in 2002, the Muslim fraternity in Ghana led by Coalition of Muslim Organizations (COMOG) registered their displeasure and the inaccuracy in their population through a press conference refuting the 2000 Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) population census report. The report pegged the Muslim population was 15% and 46% for Christians. Buttressing their claim, COMOG pointed to previous reports of government and CIA report that said Muslims constituted 30% whiles Christians were 45% (Bolaji, 2016 and Hashim, 2013). This is contradictory in the sense that the CIA the group referred to has in 2016 assigned 15.7% to Muslim population in Ghana and therefore cannot account for 30% Muslim population as at 2002. Furthermore, GSS in reacting to this, maintained their position and requested the organisation to furnish it with the necessary evidence to prove their claim

(Safo, 2002).

The appear to suggest that state institutions that are deliberately misreporting their population in favour of Christianity, hence the agitation. This confirms that conflict could be perception other than a true reflection.

In the educational institutions according to Ghana News Agency (2008), a Muslim student (Mustapha Abdul Gafaru) lost his life when he jumped down from the fourth floor of the dormitory as he was being chased by his teacher to attend church service at Adisadel College in the Central Region of Ghana. Akweiteh (2015) noted that Muslim Caucus in Parliament petitioned the National Peace Council (NPC) that some 58 educational institutions in the country were coercing Muslims to attend

compulsory Christian services. GNA (2015) reported that; at Sekondi-Takoradi, in the Western Region, some female Muslim students were prevented from taking passport photographs as part and requirement of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) registration process because they were wearing a tradition Muslim veil called hijab, which was considered as an obstruction to the photographic process. Several communiques were issued from various quarters; Catholic Bishop Conference, Christian Council, Ghana Muslim Students Association, Government, National Peace Council and Office of the National Chief Imam. This nearly resulted in violent confrontation and it took the quick intervention of the government and NPC to diffuse the religious tension. This intervention was followed up by a national stakeholder's forum on religious tolerance and freedom in Ghana, organised by the NPC in collaboration with the United Nation Development Program (UNDP). The forum sought for peace to prevail; especially in the in the nation's educational institutions and the entire country as a whole (GNA, 2015). However, GhanaWeb (2016) reported that the consensus on the way forward regarding religious freedom and coexistence has not reached the Office of the national Chief Imam a year after the stakeholders' forum on religious.

The above encounters or experiences certainly do not depict or portray Ghana as a holistic religious freedom country and the researcher think it is against this background that Bolaji (2016) unequivocally noted that the cordiality and harmonious relations in Ghana are a cursory or superficial view and overstated by some scholars.

2.5.1 Relevance of Religion to Muslims and Christians in Ghana

Pobee (1988) noted that Africans in general fundamentally possess both religious nature and knowledge- meaning they interpret their world within the spheres of religion. Similarly, Mbiti (1969) noted that religion is existentially noticeable or manifested in relation to the life of Africans. Both Muslims and Christians in Ghana like anywhere else are greatly concern about their eschatological needs, which both religions seek to address (McBride and Richardson 2012). Pew Research Centre (PRC) Report (2010) puts the percentage at 88% base on the relevance of religion to Ghanaians. According to General Business News (2016), 90% of Ghanaians sees religion as a central component of their live and as such holds it in high esteem. Ghanaians holding religion in high esteem means that they value and appreciate the crucial role of it in their lives and would therefore at all times jealously guard their respective faith. As such, any impediment in practising their faith would be fiercely resisted.

2.6.1 Religion and Western Education in Ghana

Formal education was unknown in then Gold Coast until the arrival of the Europeans but had a system of transferring knowledge and skills to the younger generation in the form of apprenticeship and other methods (Eyiah, 2004). Castle schools are reputed to be the roots of Western education and started by the first Europeans (Portuguese) in 1529 in Cape Coast. These people were either traders or Christian missionaries in the country at the time. The schools were meant to educate their mulatto children. They later admitted children of some prominent chiefs and local

business moguls. The system of education was therefore not open to all children (Graham, 1971).

(Hagan ,2009; Wise ,1957 cited in Awuah-Nyamekye ,2010:9) and Graham (1971) observed that missionaries' education ultimate aim was to enable them easily proselytised the people to become committed Christians and literates who could assist them spread and translate the bible into the local dialect. This expanded to embrace mainstream education later on upon government intervention under the 1887 Education Ordinance. Hence, more of the missionaries' schools in the Cape Coast and across the country out of which most are among the top best academic performing SHS in Ghana (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). Awuah-Nyamekye further asserted that, even when the government took over the control of all missionary schools and made them public, some were still discriminatory in their choice of students basically because of their religious affiliations and denomination. These religious entities have persistently controlled and influence some aspects of their schools. For example, the Catholic Education Unit is in charge of all Catholic established schools in the country and the same is true with the Ahmadiyah missionaries among others. This and reports of religious intolerance in some of the public schools is a clear indication that the schools have not departed from the ideologies or motives for establishing them. For example, the missionary schools have compulsory church service for all students regardless of their faith, this is in the case of the Christian schools while the Islamic schools insist all female students must wear the hijab. Again, because of the religious ideology of such schools, managements are reluctant in ensuring that adequate provisions are made for

different faith groups of students to meet their religious obligations without fringes. Furthermore, another structural issue that has also been a source of conflict in the missionary schools is the culture of reserving the Senior Boys' prefect, the assistant and that of the females too for students who share the schools' faith. These have been the major source interreligious conflicts in such schools.

The fact remains that the missionary schools out-number the government established schools in Ghana. As indicated by Bolaji (2016), a greater percentage (about 90%) of schools which the missionaries owned as compared to a lower percentage (about 10%) of schools that government owned. This tells the enormous contribution towards national development by religion in training the human resource which is key in every nation building. It can be deduced from above discussions that education and religion are inextricably linked in Ghana.

2.7.1 School as an Organisation

Generally, an organisation is construed as a hierarchical order of people with a common purpose and specific norms, target or interest. According to Greenwald (2008), an organisation is a unit of people with detailed plan for executing duties and performing roles or task and the interconnectedness between staff to deliver on its mandate. In the view of (Kreitner, 2001:260 cited in Akpareb, 2012:35) an organisation is an engagement between people with the desire to achieve a goal. Organisation is a living system comprising of communicating segments discharging duties beneficial to all stakeholders as viewed by (Katz & Kahn, 1976).

Organizations are human setups broken down into ranks of sections and individuals (Bercovitch, 1983).

The definitions above point to the fact that the school as an organisation is a unit of interdependent people with an assigned duties intended to achieve a desired goal. Given the structure and pattern of organisations, and the diverse social, cultural and religious backgrounds, views and opinions of people within organisational environment, organisations cannot exist without conflicts or disagreements. Thus, organisational conflict arises when people pursue opposing goals or interest among themselves (Rahim, 2002).

2.8 Techniques of Managing or Handling Conflicts

Conflict as seen earlier is inevitable in any human setting and as such must be dealt with whenever it does arise to effectively mitigate the dysfunctional component of it. One of such ways is the Thomas-Kilmann 5 Model instrument for conflict management namely; accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, competing and compromising, which is widely used even without expert knowledge to give options as to how to manage an interpersonal conflict based on two main dimensions notably; assertive and cooperative.

Although extant literature in conflict management abounds yet, universal agreed definition of conflict management has been a bone of contention among theorists. However, workable definitions propounded or proposed have proven worthy and sustainable in the academia. For instance, Mukherjee (2014) defines conflict management as the process of unearthing and dealing decisively with conflict in an acceptable, just and prudent manner. Adding that it includes one being equipped with

the requisite expertise to diligently handle conflict. Rahim (2002) made a similar assertion that the concept means seeking to mitigate, reduce, limit or contain the undesirous (dysfunctional) results of conflicts in order to harness the best (functional) aspect of conflict purposely to maximize productivity in an organisation or in a conflict situation. According to Thomas (1976), conflict management is a determined engagement to advocate for the positive side of conflict by obstructing the lethal part of the conflict.

The scholarly definitions of conflict management depict that the chief objective of the concept is to minimise the dysfunctional component of conflict in an attempt to maximise the functional outcome to benefit the conflicting parties by dealing with the presenting issues but not the necessarily transforming the social environment. Conflict management in this perspective may be different from conflict resolution. As noted by Schneider (2014), conflict management presupposes that conflict is a phenomenon surrounding human set up because the reasons or causes of conflict may always be there, so measures should be available to control conflict degeneration in order to obtain the optimum benefit from the conflict. This supports the debate that conflict is not always destructive.

Fig 2.1 Thomas-Kilmann   five mode instrument for conflict management

Source: Thomas-Kilmann (1976)

2.8.1 Accommodating

Kilman (1976) maintains that in with the accommodating style, one of the parties involved in the conflict accepts the blame for the error committed and therefore let go of own aims to please the other party for the sake of their engagements in an attempt to achieve the best outcome. This approach best suits the situation whereby the other party has an alternative means of handling the conflict. This style is high in cooperation and low in assertiveness. Though useful, it is difficult to imagine for how long a person can be cooperative and kind enough to let go of aims and life

aspiration for the sake of others. Outcome of such conflict situation may be short live. In the area of inter-religious conflict, which normally centres on values and mores, sacrificing these for the sake of another's interest may be problematic though not impossible. The likelihood of violent to explode in an unmet valued-based conflict is very high.

2.8.2 Avoiding

Avoiding style is both unassertive and uncooperative. Parties in conflict pretend having no issue between them or drag their feet in approaching the issue. This situation is also characterised by both parties not assisting each other. Normally, where a siren atmosphere is created to enable the warring factions to diffuse tension between them believing that automatically the conflict dies off automatically. This may be practicable when the issue is of less important and the chances of both factions to win is slim. Hope is not a strategy, and in conflict situation, conflict should be effectively tackled. Issues pertaining to morals cannot be categorised as trivial and should be avoided with the hope that issues will fall into perspective and so avoiding cannot deal with inter-religious conflict effectively.

2.8.3 Collaborating

Collaboration implies that both parties comes to a consensus to work towards the elimination of the "win-lose" syndrome and collectively knock on the doors of a "win-win" to fully satiate both parties. This also indicates that there is both assertiveness and cooperativeness, working together on their differences to achieve

their various goals. To succeed with this style, there should be more space for diversified opinions flow and high level of trust. This is complex and demand a lot of time and skilled expertise to be successful but worthy of being pursued. More importantly, will the parties always be ready to collaborate.

2.8.4 Competing

As noted by Kilman (1976), parties who adopt this style of conflict perceive the outcome to be win-lose. People who opt for this style use all means within or beyond their reach to achieve their interest by ignoring that of others. Such competing strategy adopted by people is high in assertiveness and low in cooperation with the assumption that their path is the right one and so even coerce the others to buy into their idea.

This strategy implies one party bites more than the other and the outcome of the conflict is skewed in favour of a party but not both parties. Coercing people to abandon or deviate from their religious faith obviously may not be enough to mitigate conflict but rather escalating it. More so, the tendency for the loser in conflict to remobilize and revenge making the conflict more dysfunctional is high.

2.8.5 Compromising

Compromising style of handling conflicts is described as lose-win, win-lose outcome. This is half way between assertiveness and cooperation. This is best when both competition and collaboration strategies have either failed or not attainable and

the factions needs a temporal solution and have equally essential aims to achieve. Based on this the unjust may even be favoured by the outcome than the just party because an opposing party may even have less of important issues and the other party with high stake who would not want to jeopardise its goals can give in to preserve or protect their needs. Cherished values and emotions may be or are deeply involved yet comprising limit the negative aspect of inter-religious conflict could also worsen it.

The diagram and the explanation shows that the five approaches are all useful but each is limited in strength when being utilised in handling conflict. Therefore, the kind of conflict and the desired outcome will determine the style to apply in a given conflict situation.

2.9 Conflict Resolution

Conflict to some extent is desirable for various purposes it serves hence conflict management to maximise the positive outcome of it. However, there is no guarantee that managing conflict will not escalate one day. Therefore, conflict resolution should be the ultimate way of ending conflict.

Conflict resolution has been viewed with different lenses from different scholars all in an attempt to give meaning to the concept and target a common goal-eliminate conflict successfully. For example, Peter and Fiona (1988) views it as providing durable, long-term and self-supporting solutions to conflicts by removing the underlying causes and establishing new, and satisfactory relationships between previously antagonistic parties. Burton (1991) defines it as terminating a conflict by

methods that are analytical and that get to the root cause of the problem. Adding that, it opposes to mere management or settlement, points to an outcome that, in the view of the feuding parties, is a panacea to a problem.

According to Prothrow-Stith (1991), successful conflict resolution demands that the source of the conflict must first be known. The fundamental question therefore is, are conflicts rooted in inherent human aggressiveness or emanating from inappropriate social institutions and norms? As argued by Prothrow-Stith (1991), if inherent aggressiveness is the root cause of conflicts, then humanity will have to manage it as possible as it could by using the application of security measures as deterrent strategies. To her conflict resolution, which simply means to unearthed the source of the problem and terminate it, turns a white elephant to pursue. On the other breadth she posited that if social conditions are the root cause of the conflict, then resolution and preventive measures can be employed to remove or address the sources of conflict, be it institutional, social norms among others could be adjusted to satisfy the unmet needs of the conflicting parties. To this extent, aggression and conflict arises from the incompatibilities of some institutions and social norms with that of human needs not human nature. Unequivocally, Danielsen (2005) asserted that violence is not human nature. Burton (1990) elaborated it further by proposing that man's natural and universal needs are the fundamental first causes of conflict and disputes, from the simple to the complex.

2.10 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

A number of mechanisms employed by people in resolving conflicts have been identified in the literature. Notable among the mechanisms are mediation, negotiation, law court, and secularism.

2.10.1 Mediation

According to Vestergaard, Helvard and Sørensen (2011), mediation is a free will process involving a third party (mediator) to facilitate the activities between feuding parties to reach an acceptable conclusion satisfying themselves. They noted that this method allows active participation by the conflicting parties and therefore in full control of the processes and possess the outcome. Decisions arrived at in this situation is not impose by the third party. This exercise is voluntary and can be terminated at any point in time by any of the disputants. The neutrality of the mediator should always be maintained so as to guarantee the trust and confidence of the conflicting parties. Similarly, Moore (1996) sees mediation as an "intervention in a negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision making power but who assists the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually, acceptable settlement of issues in dispute".

In spite of the usefulness of mediation as a mechanism of resolving conflict, Sam (2006) has pointed out that this mechanism is likely to fail in the situation where the factions involved are being very economical with the truth, produce conflicting reports, or are gripped with fear.

In Ghana, the NPC is the body responsible for mediating religious upheavals. For instance, when there was a contention over the use of hijab by some female students resulting in a peaceful demonstration in Takoradi the NPC played an instrumental role. The umpire body intervened, diffused the tension and made some suggestions as to how this menace can be eliminated in the SHS. A summary of its communique dated 1 April, 2015 instructed GES, to prescribe a new uniform for both first and second cycle institutions, formation of interreligious Chaplaincy Boards to provide neutral grounds for students to practice their faith freely, school authorities should also provide space and time for prayers, alternate prayers. Review of the computerised selection programme system, independent interreligious body to work with the NPC for routine discussion of such issues and above all pay attention to the 1992 constitution (Myjoyonline.com, 2015). This is a laudable solution proffered by the NPC after it engagement with other stakeholders who were present for the forum. However, some of the suggestions seems to suffer some clarity and timelines for the implementation of these directives. For instance, when should the new dress code be in effect, when would the independent inter-religious body be formed, what different role will they play from the inter-religious Chaplaincy Board? Will the religious schools agree for such for mixed body because some of the schools may already have someone in charge?

2.10.2 Negotiation

Fisher (1999) says negotiation comprises all the issues whereby two or more factions are engaged in as interaction process aiming at overcoming the goals of the other conflicting party. He added that the exercise involves making offers and counter offers with the idea of winning or achieving their ultimate need at the detriment of the opposing party as forcing and all manner of tactics are involved as far as a party will carry the day. Agreeably, Miller (2003) defined negotiation as feuding parties in a discussion guided by rules and regulations either by the parties themselves or their representatives targeting a solution. As noted by (Marker, 2003 cited in Danielsen, 2005: 6) negotiation will not succeed in a conflict where human needs are in contention as Pobee (1988) noted some regard religion as serving their ontological needs and as such cannot be negotiated.

2.10.3 Interfaith Dialogue and Secularism

Interfaith dialogue and secularism is relevant to be looked into because of its cross-cutting faith-based approach. According Olagunju (2013) the word dialogue originates from the ancient Greek word "dia-logos" interpreted as "through word". Dialogue can therefore be translated to mean communication between people. Interfaith dialogue could signify fundamentally the communication between adherents of distinct faiths with the aim of promoting peaceful co-existence amidst their religious differences. The New World Encyclopedia (2014) explains inter-faith dialogue as a healthy communication between people of diverse religious background or tradition that emerged notably after the formation of the World's

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Parliament of Religions in 1893. It noted that the concept encompasses being aware of the differences that exist between the World's religion, beliefs, practices, systems among others and respecting without any attempt to proselytise the other or engage in any acts of provocation in order to co-exist peaceful in the world.

In a similar view, Forde (2013) pointed out that interfaith dialogue concerns itself with people of diverse religious orientation converging together for a common purpose, accepting their distinguished features and maintaining them as well, whiles working together towards creating a peaceful and harmonious society. It involves all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom and includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions (Vatican II).

Interfaith dialogue is an ideal conflict resolution mechanism for resolving interreligious conflicts because it advocates no supremacy or whatsoever and maintain that both religions keep their traditions, respect their differences and at liberty to practice their faith without fear of persecution. It also encourages learning about other religions, which has a great potential of removing religious inferiority complex spectacle from people to enable them embrace and properly appreciate different religions as essential other than their own. Nonetheless, does this therefore, mean that both Christians and Muslims should not evangelise as part of their calling per their religious doctrine.

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Broadly, secularism connotes the disappearance of religious practices in the public space. On the other hand, narrowly secularism means rejection of the dominance of the process of governance over religion (Dieye, 2009).

As (Haynes and Ben-Porat ,2010 cited Bolaji 2016) "secularism is an umbrella concept that accommodates many shades of opinion, in general terms it refers to 'a process whereby religion loses its public significance' through assigning a privatized role to it in what is variously known as public/private or state/society or state/church dichotomy or separationist principle".

Academic debates on the status of religion in public life may be categorized under two main normative traditions, namely the 'inclusivists' and the 'exclusivists". Based on the meaning assigned secularism, religion cannot be hidden from the public but should not seem to intimidate different faiths or worldviews of others; all should be given an equal opportunity to live their religious beliefs, access, utilize state institutions without victimisation and discrimination by anyone or the state. The state should remain neutral in religious affairs, its officials as well and not to use state resources to sponsor the activities any religion especially at the expense of other religions. This position is reasonably wise, as that would promote peace and harmony in the country.

However, there are fundamental questions that proponents of secularism have not addressed. Religion is a way of life and separating it from human endeavour could be problematic. The question is, in the school setting, can true secularism be possible where schools as organisations have their own cultural values and more so, where mission schools for instance have been established and their principles couched in

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religious philosophy? It is clear from the literature that this approach to conflict may not be a panacea to interreligious conflicts in the school setting.

2.11. Preventing Interreligious Conflict

Preventing interreligious conflicts broadly implies putting in place some mechanisms to manage the different religions in a particular locality. This can be equated to managing religious diversity. The study therefore views prevention of interreligious conflict as managing religious diversity. The reason being that if religious diversity is effectively managed, then the occurrence of interreligious conflicts will be reduced if not eliminated entirely. Scholars have defined the concept of religious diversity in various ways in their quest to understand and work with the concept. Lindsay (2015) opined that religious diversity is the mixture of religions in a particular locality. Osemeka (2014) went a step further to underscore the differences between divergent religions other than just the presence of many faiths. This differences have to be managed in order to promote peaceful coexistence and for this study, in the schools. The various schools have common ways of managing religious differences. Bouma (2007) and NPC (2015) communique suggested that to effectively manage religious diversity one of the most imperative mechanism is to provide space and time for people to pray and for other spiritual activities. For them, school authorities have a duty to ensure that prayer rooms are readily available to enable both staff and students with diverse religions to practice their faith on the school premises without any restrictions. Bouma have noticed that religions have increased in number and have spread as well creating heterogeneous societies than ever and as such needs to

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be incorporated into the mainstream of religious policies in the schools. However, the NPC, do not see it as mandatory for school authorities to put up furnished structures for various religions but just a mere space for students to undertake their religious engagements. Once, the space is provided, there must be time allocation for students to worship and pray, this must be factored into schools' timetables. This partially can cater for the religious needs of students. However, this approach will seem not feasible or wholly adhere to in a religious established schools with their defined religious dogmas and ethics despite government control.

Another management mechanism is the alternating of prayers in the schools as suggested by NPC (2015) communique. In the view of the NPC, students of all religious traditions especially Islam and Christianity, should be given the opportunity to pray in turns during a school gathering. This practice would go a long way to satiate students' religious needs, as it will give them a sense of security in their faith and recognition as well the NPC believes. This seems possible and convincing but the mode of prayer may offend the other or an avenue to indoctrinate each other as noted by some writers. For instance, Bolaji (2016) asserted that, this gesture to students would open the doors for them to force their religious values on each other intermittently. Others may be of the view that this is not a lasting solution in the present of many religions, however, if done meticulously, every religion would have its turn.

Olawale (2016), Awojobi (2015) and Blumenfeld (2015) shared similar opinion, proposing education as an equipment to administrate multiplicity of religion. These writers believe that education is an effective way of managing religious diversity in

schools and beyond. They said, adherents must value equally any other religion just as their own. The idea of ours is the truth "inclusivism" as against theirs is the wrong "exclusivism" must be dislodged by the help of teachers, family and religious leaders. They encouraged religious leaders to be truthful with the interpretations of their various scripture and mindful of preaching that motivate extremism among their followers. These would enable students recognise and respect other religions as important as their own and accept that the view of God differs among humanity.

This concludes that students should be taught in the home, church, mosque and school to be less critical with the differences among religions and devote more time and energies into the building of a good relation based on the similarities. Olawale (2016), Awojobi (2015) and Blumenfeld (2015) are strongly convinced this method would yield the desired result. It is in no doubt a valuable tool, at the disposal of all stakeholders in handling the multi-religious world. Nonetheless, do these stakeholders have the required skills and are they prepared to deliver this kind of education to the students?

Another sacrosanct mechanism is secularism that serves as both a management and resolution tool. In an interreligious conflict situation, applying this method can restore peace partially and at the same managing religious diversity. Bouma (2007) defined secularism as the independence of religion to operate without any state and the custodians control as well. This means that religion should be allowed to flourish and the state playing an umpire role.

2.12 Theoretical Framework (Burton Human Needs Theory)

A successful conflict resolution demands that the sources of the conflict must first be known (Prothrow-Stith, 1991). The fundamental question however, which over the years has been a bone of contention among theorists is whether conflicts at all social levels arise due to inherent human aggressiveness, derived from the consequences of evolution and survival-of-the-fittest struggles, or emanating from inappropriate social institutions and norms that reasonably would seem to be well within human capacities to alter, to which the people have problems in adjusting? This age-old controversy between nature and nurture have given rise to various theories.

Prothrow-Stith (1991) for instance opines that if inherent aggressiveness is the root cause of conflicts then humanity will have to manage it as possible as it can through deterrent strategies by the security agents. On the other hand, if the social conditions are the cause of the conflict, then resolution and preventive measures can be employed to address the sources. In this regard, institutional or social norms among others could be adjusted to satisfy the unmet needs of the conflicting parties. To this extent, aggression and conflict arises from the incompatibilities of some institutions and social norms pertaining to human needs not human nature. Supporting this statement, Danielsen (2005), asserted that violence is not a genetic component of human beings. In the view of Burton (1990), at every social level, man's natural and universal needs are the fundamental causes of conflict and disputes in both simple and complex societies. To this end, it is clear that conflict do not occur as a result of genetic make-up but rather structural malfunctioning that can be corrected to eliminate or reduce conflict occurrence.

There are several conflict resolution theories all in an attempt to successfully resolve conflict. What then is conflict resolution? Conflict resolution have been defined differently. For instance, Peter and Fiona (1988) view conflict resolution as providing durable, long-term and self-supporting solutions to conflicts by removing the underlying causes and establishing new, and satisfactory relationships between previously antagonistic parties. Buttressing Peter and Fiona (1988) assertion, Burton (1991) defined conflict resolution as terminating a conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to reveal the root cause(s) of a problem. Adding that conflict resolution opposes mere management or settlement, in that resolution points to an outcome that, in the view of the feuding parties, is a panacea to a problem.

The universal human needs are non-negotiable because they are basic (Burton, 1991). This to say that these needs are so crucial to the survival and development of humans such that they cannot be traded-off for any reason (Burton, 1991). Similarly, Danielsen (2005) noted that most of the conflicts the world is experiencing today are rooted in the inability of people to meet some of their needs due to institutional or societal barriers. It is safe then, for one to conclude that what is fundamental must be achieved at all-time, therefore, people are ready to put their lives down to ensure that these needs are met. So, at any point in life when these needs are unmet, the system becomes destabilize. According to Burton (1991), some of these fundamental human values or human needs include; identity, freedom, security, and development which are the focus of this study. Burton added that these needs are non-hierarchical in nature as Maslow hierarchy of needs postulates, rather, these needs must be met at the same time in order to achieve a peaceful environment. Shedding more light on

how to maintain or achieve satisfaction of these needs (Burton 1990), emphasized that legitimacy should always be placed on the needs of all the sections of social formation in an organisation or society, for this automatically moves a conflict from a zero-sum situation to one of win-win.

2.13.1 Strengths of this theory

Burton Human needs theory is chosen among other human needs theories in this thesis because as Danielsen (2005) noted, it is a holistic approach to resolving conflicts in that it focuses on the unmet needs of the feuding parties. More so, as Danielsen (2005) has observed, it pays attention to every level of human conflict intra- and interpersonal, group and international levels. Furthermore, the HMNT place legitimacy on the needs of people be it the minority or majority in the society. Lastly, human needs must be achieved in tandem not in ranks as postulated by Maslow.

Critics of Human Needs theory argued that even among the human needs theorists themselves, there is lack of consensus on one set of human universal needs though they all agree that human needs must not be ranked but rather achieved in tandem (Danielsen, 2005). This therefore, seems to legitimise the position of some scholars who question the definition of a need and how to determine when a need is met. By implication, needs are defined by the conflicting parties, and what is a need to a party may not be defined in the same context by another, hence, the conflict.

From the preceding arguments, this study is of the position that the outlined human needs are largely the parameters within which the general human needs will fall.

It is important that feuding parties especially in violent conflict situation have to be met separately to assess their needs while working to diffuse the tension before bringing them under an umbrella to collectively identify their needs as dialogue is considered critical in the resolution of need-based conflict as Burton (1990). In the school settings, students who have to satiate their human needs must be provided with the conditions that are necessary to enable them realise these needs in order to have a conflict-free environment for smooth academic discourse resulting in a complete human development. The needs of the students in this study were identified as religious freedom, security, identity and recognition.

Fig 2.2 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Construct – March, 2017

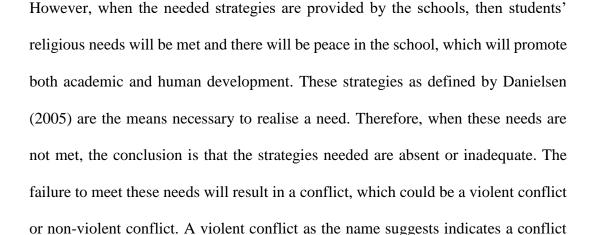The conceptual framework above illustrates that the school administration must provide the students with an enabling atmosphere where both Christians and Muslims can meet their human needs, which are religious freedom, security, identity and recognition. Burton (1990) defines these needs as follows; identity as the strong self-feeling of an individual in connection with the universe externally. He further posited that identity become contentious when an individual's identity is not or perceived not to be appreciated as legitimate or the occasion where a different identity lords over the other rendering it unsecured. Freedom he said is the situation where there are no restrictions imposed by authorities on ones' ability to engage in any lawful activity without fear of being victimise, in this study freedom of worship and association (religious freedom). This suggests that all students should be allowed to undertake exercises that will strengthen their faith without any obstructions from school authorities or even their colleagues. Security, he said implies the state of stability without any threat. This means that all students must be given equal opportunity to live and practice their various religions without fear of being punished; this ensures a sense of security in the faiths of students.

However, when the needed strategies are provided by the schools, then students' religious needs will be met and there will be peace in the school, which will promote both academic and human development. These strategies as defined by Danielsen (2005) are the means necessary to realise a need. Therefore, when these needs are not met, the conclusion is that the strategies needed are absent or inadequate. The failure to meet these needs will result in a conflict, which could be a violent conflict or non-violent conflict. A violent conflict as the name suggests indicates a conflict

that involves destruction of either property or the loss life or both. Non-violent conflict, which is the reverse of violent conflict, if managed or resolved successfully, will bring peace in the schools but if it is unsuccessfully managed or resolved, then, it can escalate into a violent conflict. Also, should the violent conflict either at the onset or degenerated as a result of unresolved non-violent conflict, be managed or resolved successfully, peace will prevail and the violence perpetuates if failed to be managed or resolved.

The conceptual frame gives a clearer and better appreciation of how interreligious conflicts could occur in the selected SHS in the Upper West Region. Its focus is on the sources of the conflicts and how they can be prevented, managed or resolved. This affirms Human Needs Theory (HNT) Burton (1990), which says that unless the human needs are met, there will not be peace in the community or organization and people will result to conflict in an effort to meet their needs.

The concept of both conflict and religion have been variedly defined but with a convergence of seeking to appreciate them and to be able to work with. Religious conflict as seen is not a contemporary issue rather a historical one with different perspectives, either as between- or within religions. The in focus of this study is conflict between Christianity and Islam. The causes of interreligious conflict are numerous with some not necessarily stemming from religion but economic among others. The extant literature revealed that both Christianity and Islam are foreign to the Ghanaian society; however, they are of great value to majority of Ghanaians.

Through these two religions came education to Ghana with the Christian education enjoying prominence. As such, education cannot be separated from religion in Ghana. Interreligious conflicts do occur within the school environment especially in the religious schools in Ghana. Several mechanisms are available for dealing interreligious conflicts including the Thomas-Kilmann five modes of managing conflicts as well as some conflict resolution mechanisms. These mechanisms are underpinned HNT by Burton with the aid of conceptual framework that outlined practically how the HNT functions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Al-hassan (2015), methodology is a chief component of a research. As such, it forms the foundation upon which the study was conducted. This section contains the research methods, design, sampling techniques, source of data, instruments for data collection, analysis and presentation.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell (2014) defines research design as the plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. Philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods intersection constitute it. To this end, a qualitative case study design was used. This design was adopted by this thesis enabled the researcher gain much knowledge from the perspective of the study subjects. A case study according to Yin (2014), allows a researcher to conduct an in depth exploration of a program, event, activity, process, one or more individual.

Qualitative research in general seeks to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). This implies that qualitative research method explains a type of research that cannot be understood by quantification as in quantitative analyses, hence the reason for qualitative research approach because the study sought to interpret opinion,

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emotions, experiences, values and beliefs participants assign to the subject under review which cannot be done using quantitative research approach. This approach supports the social constructive philosophical worldview or tradition which assumes that knowledge should not be limited to quantifiable things but rather should include people's beliefs system and opinions (Babbie & Mouton, 2010).

3.3 Sampling Technique/Procedure

Sampling is the selection of units or some part from the total population to be studied (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). Sampling is in two main folds namely; probability and nonprobability. However, the study used nonprobability sampling technique to sample the respondents as Palys (2008) noted this technique allows the researcher to obtain data from people who are well informed about the subject matter and possess rich experience, adequate knowledge, and skills.

Using non-probability sampling, the study used purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling as noted by Denzin (2000) is one of the most common sampling strategies. It is advantageous because it generated relevant and credible information that added more weight to study results.

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population of this study were student executives of the religious associations, Patrons of Religious Associations and school administrative members of the selected schools. Officials of the District Security Council, religious heads of the study locality, and officials of Ghana Education Service (GES) at the various

districts. These categories of people were targeted because in the judgment of the researcher they were best positioned and could offer relevant information.

The study purposively selected students' executives of the various religious associations in the selected schools. These executives are the mouthpiece of their members, and as such all information is channelled through them. They therefore possess information that is relevant to the research.

Not every teacher is deeply involved in religious activities of the students. Due to this, patrons of the various religious associations in the selected schools were sampled among the teachers because they are actively involved in the religious activities of students, which made them very useful for this study.

Some school management members of the selected schools such as the Head teacher, Assistant head teacher, Head of Academics, Senior House Master or Mistress were sampled because they have much knowledge about the issue under review, as they are responsible for running the daily affairs of the school.

The Municipal Ghana Education Service officials who have a direct supervisory role over the schools were also included in the study as they ensure schools obey the rule and regulations governing school management.

An official from the Regional Peace Council, Muslim-Christian dialogue commission, Regional Christian Council, Office of the Municipal Chief Imam, Regional and District security council were also intentionally selected as their duties to the overall peace and security in schools.

3.4 Data Sources

Two main sources of data exist; primary and secondary. The primary data sources of information are generated through interview and focus group discussion with respondents among other. Hox and Boeije (2005) defines primary source as a document created at the time of the research, about the subject under review. Secondary data are the data that have been collected for a different purpose and reused for different research purpose (Hox and Boeije 2005). Secondary data therefore refers to the existing data consulted and was not initially collected by the researcher from the field. Journals/articles, magazines and news items that contained important information concerning the study were consulted to generate the secondary data. This was done to complement the primary data. Any gab which might have been occasioned by the use of any one single source was thus addressed.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

3.5.1 In-depth Interview

Tunner (2010) defined interview as a conversation that provides in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints on a particular topic. Sarantakos (2001) asserted that in-depth interview allows the participants to fully express their viewpoints, experiences and contribute as much detailed information as they desire. The author further noted that it allows the researcher to ask questions as a means of follow-up for deeper understanding of issues. This technique was used to obtained data from some school management members, patrons of the selected schools and other key informants. This was done with the aid of an interview guide,

field notebook and audio recorder to record the interview for later use. The audio recorder enabled the interviews to go faster without missing a point. The interview sessions were conducted face-face because the people were within the reach of the researcher. More so, issues of religion are sensitive, which most people do not feel comfortable in given relevant information over the phone. In all 27 in-depth interview sessions were conducted with 27 respondents with each averagely lasting for 35 minutes. The 27 respondents were people with relevant knowledge, skills and experiences deemed valuable to the study.

 Creswell, (2014) identified the difficulty with coding the data generated from such interviews as its weakness. To overcome this hurdle as stressed by Creswell, each interview recorded was transcribed after the day's work.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Krueger (1988) posited focus group discussion as an intentional grouping of people on a particular issue or topic based on their experience and knowledge to generate primary data. Under this, religious associations' executives in the selected schools were identified, and put into groups of 6-8 as recommended by Krueger depending on the number of students who compose the executive group in the selected schools. In all 32 executive groups were used for the FGD drawn from both the Christians and Muslims. This enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth information that deepened the researcher's understanding of the topic under consideration with the aid of a checklist and an audio recorder.

The researcher gave the opportunity to the students to choose environment that suits them. Every member was encouraged to contribute by ensuring that no single student dominated the discussion to the disadvantage of others and quarrels were also discouraged. The purpose was to strengthen the tool from its weaknesses.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the interpretation and making meaning out of the data generated. It can also be the process of refining the raw data into a meaningful information for the purpose of understanding and utilization of the data gathered for the study. The study employed the categorization method of data analysis. Some people refer to categorizing information as coding the data or indexing the data but not assigning numbers as in that quantitative data analysis (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). This research adopted the procedures of Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) for analysing qualitative data.

The raw data such as field notes were typed, interviews recorded with audio device were transcribed, and data from secondary sources were arranged based on pre-set themes. The raw data was read through several times to get the overall sense of the information gathered. Themes or patterns which are the ideas, concepts, behaviours, interactions, incidents, terminologies or phrases used were identified. These were then organised into coherent categories that summarized them giving description to the people, setting, and brought meaning to the text based on pre-set categories and emergent categories. The relationship between themes and patterns were established

in each question or case. The themes and connections were then used to explain the findings.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the results and discussions of the data gathered on the subject under study and the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents considered in this study were; sex, age, religious affiliation and educational status. Out of the 26 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) held, 130 of the discussants were males representing 57% of the respondents whiles 100 were females representing 43% as shown in Table 4.1. The dominance of male participants in discussions was attributed to the fact that, females were usually not ready to contest for religious leadership positions in the various schools. Maturity is important when it comes to our decision pertaining to our social problems. Data gathered revealed that the ages of the 230 participants for the focus group discussion ranged from 16 to 21 years. This picture suggests that the respondents were matured to give adequate and valid account of the problem that necessitated the study.

Table 4.1: Sex and Religious Characteristics of Respondents

School (2ⁿᵈ year students)	Sex			
	Christians		Muslims	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
WA SHS	16	26	12	16
ISLAMIC SHS	13	15	8	15
QUEENSEC	9	12	6	9
WASEC/TECH	10	14	9	13
LASSEC	11	15	6	9
Total	59	68	41	62

Source: Field Survey, March, 2017

Out of the 230 discussants involved in the focus group discussion, 127 were Christians whereas 103 were Muslims (Table 4.1). The Christians were many because most of the denominations were standing alone as compared with the Muslims who are all grouped under an umbrella. The study is concerned with interreligious conflicts precisely between Christians and Muslims in the selected schools. Other religions were intentionally excluded because virtually all the interreligious conflicts experienced in the school setting countrywide and Upper West Region in particular are between Islam and Christianity.

Table 4.1 above indicates that the views of both sexes were catered for notwithstanding the skewed nature of the respondents in favour of males over

females. This confirms the findings of Sandstrom (2016) who noted that few females occupy top religious' positions in the USA, despite the opportunity for them to occupy such positions. However, the percentage of the female respondents is an indicative that females are not relegated to the background. The data gathered further pointed out that both Islam and Christianity had strong following in the various schools. This finding is in line with the GSS Report (2012) which gave the Upper West Region religious distribution between Christians and Islam as 35.5% and 32.2% respectively.

The field study also revealed that all the students' executives were second year SHS students. According to these executives, the final year SHS (year 3) students had handed over power and were in the process of writing their final exam. At the time of the research in the various schools, all the third year students were found writing their external exams conducted by WAEC. In the process of focus group discussion, it was gathered that about 97 % of them could read about their religious dogma both in print and electronic. The information gathered suggest that the executives were fairly abreast with their religious doctrines and could independently comment on the topics of discussion.

Table 4.2: Religious Characteristics of Respondents

School	School Management		Patrons	
	Christians	Muslims	Christians	Muslims
WA SHS	2	1	3	1
WA ISLAMIC SHS	0	2	1	1
QUEENSEC	2	0	3	1
WASEC/TECH	1	1	3	1
LASSEC	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	6	5	11	5

Field survey, March, 2017

Table 4.2 depicts that there were few Muslim patrons and school management members as compared to Christians. The explanation as gathered from the Muslim patrons and management members was that in all the schools, the Muslim students are of two main divisions namely; Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA) and Ahmadiya Students Association of Ghana (AHMSAG) but with a common patron. The Christians on the other hand are more because in some of the schools the Christian denominations are more than two with a patron each. On the part of the management members, two of the schools were established as Christian institutions and thus had most members as Christians while the Muslim school is one with corresponding high number of management members being Muslims. This phenomenon of more Christian established schools over Muslim schools could be aligned with the findings Bolaji (2016) who posited that, Christians embraced formal education earlier than Muslims in Ghana. Out of the 27 respondents, 11% had master's degrees,

74% had bachelor's degree while 15% had diplomas. Baum et al. (2010) argue that, people with higher education have better understanding and appreciation of issues. This means that responses from respondents who possess higher education were reliable and meaningful information, which enriched the study. The field survey revealed that 12% of these respondents have experience in managing students' religious affairs their respective school ranging from 1-5 years, 52% have experience ranging from 6-10 years and 36 % have 11-20 years' experience. These experiences made them a valuable source of information to the study.

In conflict analysis as noted by Slotin et al (2010), there are actors, users and process. Within the school setting, the main actors were students and school authorities while external actors were religious leaders, parents, Ghana Education Service (GES) and Regional Peace Council (RPC) officials. The interest of the main actors and some of the external actors such as the religious leaders and parents are religious freedom, security and identity recognition.

The data identified a number religious denominations in the various schools. In Wa SHS, the religious denominations were namely; Pentecost Students and Associates (Pensa) combined with Deeper Life Students, Church of Christ Students Union, Catholic Students Association, Baptist Student Union (BapSu) and Assemblies of God Campus Ministry (AGCM). The Muslim students' groups were; Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA) and Ahmadiya Students Association of Ghana (AHMSAG). In WaSec/Tech various sects of religious denominations were; Pentecost Students and Associates (Pensa),

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Church of Christ Students Association, Catholic Students Union, and Assemblies of God Campus Ministry (AGCM), Baptist Student Union, Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA) and Ahmadiya Students Association of Ghana (AHMSAG) with one leadership. At Wa Islamic SHS, all Christians were under an umbrella named the Christian Community with one leadership. Also, all Muslims students were categorised under GMSA. Lassia Tuolu SHS composed of the Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA) and Ahmadiya Students Association of Ghana (AHMSAG), Scripture Union and Catholic Students Union. Similarly, Queen of Peace SHS also had Scripture Union, Catholic Students Union and GMSA.

The information gathered indicated that Scripture Union (SU) in two of the non-religious schools (Wa SHS and WaSec/Tech), is made up of the students of the various religious denominations. Executives from the single denominations in schools constitute the leadership of the Scripture Union. On the other hand, the two Christian schools (Queen of Peace and Lassia Tuolu SHS), had mainly two Christian groups namely; Scripture Union and Catholic Students Union. In these schools the data revealed that, the various Christian groups form the Scripture Union with few Catholic students. Both schools had Legion of Mary as subgroup of the Catholic Students Union.

4.3 Causes of interreligious conflicts in SHS

Differences among diverse religious groups by themselves do not necessarily endanger violent confrontation but a clash of these differences. In other words, conflicts do arise when the differences between people clashes. It was prudent thereof to investigate the various contributory factors to interreligious conflicts.

4.3.1 Inadequate Space and Time

The field data uncovered a number of factors that cause interreligious conflicts in the schools. One of such issues is space and time. As gathered from both respondents during the interview and FGD that, inadequate worshiping facilities has often resulted in competition and verbal clashes among various religious groups over available worshiping avenues. Infrastructure for worship is not readily available in the schools for students use. As such, students resort to classrooms allocated to them by school authorities that are in the case of the Christians but at the event that the numbers are more than the allocated classroom, then such students have to hold their church activities under trees as typified Wa Islamic SHS as gathered from the students' executives and confirmed by the school management.

Responses from the various schools indicated that it makes it difficult for students to meet their religious needs without any hindrances. As students are in competition over venues among various bodies for their religious programmes. Except in Wa SHS, which had a permanent place of worship for only the Muslims (2 mosques). In Wa Senior/Technical School, student executives,

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patrons and school management indicated that the places of worship are located in the same area and as such disturbs each other at different times resulting in a conflict. Students' executives in all the schools revealed that partitioning of their dormitories into prayer grounds caused discomfort to other students who do not share the same faith resulting in verbal confrontations occasionally.

Despite the inadequate structures for worship by students, school authorities have prevented attempts by some people who want to convert the schools into worshiping centres by building mosques or churches. This was disclosed by school administrations in Wa Senior/Technical School, Lassia Tuolu SHS and Queen of Peace SHS. One of the schools' management member remarked during an interview in Queen of Peace SHS on 27th March, 2017, that;

> *"It is good that our students engage in religious activities. But if every religious faith is given the opportunity to construct a church or mosque the school will cease to be a centre of academic studies and as such could be described as a centre of religious activities".*

Unanimously, both school management and patrons in all the schools studied, agreed that religious worship is crucial for the holistic development of the students. Hence space and allotted time for students to undertake their religious obligations. They however, indicted that the prime purpose of the students being in school is to study, which cannot be sacrificed at the expense of religious needs.

Information from school administration (8 respondents), all the patrons and students' executives in all the selected schools indicated that dawn prayers by Muslims occasionally caused misunderstanding especially during their annual compulsory fasting period (Ramadan) and devotions by Christians which disturb the sleep of other students and staff.

Additionally, in Wa SHS where the Muslims have a loud speaker that they use in calling their members to prayers at dawn, used to cause a misunderstanding between some staff resident on campus and Christian students as they complained of being disturbed with the sound it produces. This issue was resolved through a petition from the Christian students through their patrons. Who, in turn, engaged their colleague Muslim patron and together with school management, they successfully stop the use of the loud speakers for calling to prayers. However, before the ban, the Muslim executives at the time were actively involved in the process. The students were asked to quietly wake the fellow Muslim students up for the dawn prayers without disturbing other students. Nonetheless, there occasional verbal confrontations relating to disturbances when the Muslims students are waking each other for dawn prayers. Furthermore, in the case of Lassia Tuolu SHS, the Muslim students do not have a common place for worship because they are banned by school authorities from praying together as a group. This, therefore make students believe they have been discriminated against because the Christians have a place of worship. However, school management explained that, the ban is as a result of the then headmaster's residence that have been burnt by supposedly some Muslim students.

4.3.2 Compulsory church service and Wearing of Hijab

The data revealed that wearing of religious related regalia such as hijab in Wa Islamic and that of church service in Lassia Tuolu and Queen of Peace SHS are made mandatory for all students regardless of their religious orientation. School authorities are of the view that such measures are to ensure discipline in students. Two management members in these schools (Lassia Tuolu and Wa Islamic) in an interview on 23rd & 27th March, 2017, said;

> *"Compulsory church service is a school rule as a Christian school, meant to keep students in check but not punish them especially non-Christians. Wearing of the hijab by all female students is just for the sake of uniformity and not as a religious requirement"*

As gathered from some student executives, patrons and management members in these schools, the compulsory church service and wearing of the hijab had been the major source of conflict between students and school authorities as well as their colleagues especially prefects who would insist other students obey school rules and regulations. The students revealed during the FGD that, authorities compel students to worship against their faith. This is what two students had to say during a FGD respectively;

> *"I become mad when told to go to church. This is not my religion"*. T*he hijab is meant for Muslims but not Christians. Why do they want non-Muslims females to wear it? This is not a good practice and should not be encouraged".*

Whereas this study found out that students were compelled to wear hijab or attend compulsory church service, Awojobi (2015) findings indicated that people were asked not to use anything symbolizing faith in some localities such as holy cross or hijab in their homes or anywhere visible. The common factor in both cases is that people are coerced to practice their faith in a way they are not comfortable. The students further indicated that failure to comply with the school directives attract punishment which they found unacceptable. Probing further to find out if the punishment had ensured compliance to the directives of school administration compulsory church service and the wearing of the hijab, two views were expressed. One group of the students' executives of about 63% indicated that some students comply unwillingly but this has brought some level of discipline in the schools. Another group of student executives about 37% were of the view that punishment and other form of imposition had not changed the conduct of students. One of the students remarked during the FGD on 27th March, 2017;

"*Forcing us to do things against our religious tradition cannot instil discipline in us*".

The information gathered from one of the administrative members confirmed what the students said in an interview on 27th March, 2017;

"*The students are not comfortable and that is clearly manifested in their attitude towards some of the school's rules*".

Coercing students to abandon or disregard their own religious mores at a point in time to enable them assume a different religious discourse appear to be a departure from both the 1948 and 1992 constitution of Ghana and that of the Human Rights Declaration which uphold the right to freedom of association and religion. Affected students in this case felt that their faith is unrecognized, religious freedom curtailed rendering their religion unsecured. As human needs theory Burton (1990) stated, if the identity of people is unrecognized, lacked religious freedom and felt unsecured, conflict erupts as a means to obtain these because they constitute human needs, which are non-negotiable.

Religious schools are built to promote religious faith and therefore have their cultural practices within the schools as opposed to government established secular controlled schools. There has been a public debate with both religions justifying their positions and crying foul at the same time concerning the issue of imposition of religious belief and practices on students in the various SHS across Ghana.

A compulsory church service is not a disciplinary measure neither is wearing a hijab a uniformity factor. The underpinning is that either gesture is purely religious oriented activity because they both carry a religious belief as indicated by a key informant. Church service cannot be said to be for discipline purpose or part of school rules and regulation and a must for all students whether a Christian or not.

The Muslim executives however disagreed with the key informant assertion and indicated that compulsory church service to them is a punishment. They further expressed that Christian preaching have often upset them. This is what one of the executives said during a FGD;

"If compulsory worship is not a disciplinary measure why do they not allow us to worship the religion of our choice? Jesus is God, Son of God among others. This can best be described as a psychological battle of faith at least every Sunday. Constantly, stirring someone's anger or challenging one's religion without the slightest opportunity to respond can be devastating or can influence some students to doubt or change their faith".

Wearing a hijab is a religious requirement and as such contains a belief. The cause of the peaceful demonstration by the Muslims fraternity in Takoradi in February, 2015 was fundamentally because some school officials prevented some female students from wearing a hijab to take passport photographs as partial requirement of the registration process for the BECE exam. Again, the writings on the placards that were used for the same peaceful demonstration by the Muslim Uma further solidifies the argument as one of such placards read; "Hijab my pride" (Ampofo, 2015 cited in Bolaji, 2016:25).

A key informant indicated that wearing a hijab is not for uniformity but a basic Islamic requirement. He supported his assertion by quoting Qur'an (23:31), which instructs women to wear hijab. The key informant further stated that

Hadiths reaffirm that hijab is basic for female Muslims requirement, narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a veil (hijab)". Again, Bilgis Abdul-Qaadir as presented by Lace-Evans (2017) said;

"I had to choose between my faith and the sport I love".

Bilqis made this comment after she was banned from playing basketball with a hijab and she campaigned against such treatment because she felt her religious freedom was under siege. This fight for her right to be permitted to play and develop a professional career in basketball took an international dimension. She was finally given the opportunity to play with her hijab. Obviously, this is not an issue of uniformity as some Muslim patrons in these schools and officials at the Islamic Education Unit sought to justify.

Although, female Christians are equally encouraged to wear a veil to church, it is not compulsory for even church service in some Christian denomination, not to mention in the school.

The information gathered indicated that Muslim students see the compulsory worship as a deliberate attempt to thwart their worship or a calculated attempt for them to give up their religious faith. This appears to suggest that students' religious identity is threatened, religious freedom curtailed and values are not duly recognised, hence, interreligious conflicts. As Nelson Mandela (n.d.) said, refusing to grant people their rights, tantamount to contesting their very being.

The information gathered discovered that affected students in these schools are of the view that their very existence is being challenged.

Compelling students to or not to dress to reflect their religion or attend compulsory church service regardless of their religious faith, appear to be antithetical to the caveats for interfaith dialogue as proposed by some scholars and internationally acclaimed religious bodies such as the Vatican II document; Forde, 2013; Olagunju, 2013 & NEW, 2014).

4.3.3 Power struggle

Information gathered from students' executives and three patrons indicated that in Wa SHS and Wa Senior/Technical School, the struggle for prefectural positions mostly take religious lines among the students and the majority always win if a single candidate is contesting a position against a minority candidate. The only time minority gets a head of a portfolio is when two candidates from the larger group are vying for the same position against a single minority candidate. This is what a student executive said in Wa SHS

> *"We students vote on religious lines because our interest is protected and our agenda advanced if the majority of the prefects are one of our own".*

This point supports the findings of Awojobi (2015); Terwase (2012); Nwaomah (2011) and Omotosho (2003), who point out that economic impoverishment also accounts for interreligious conflicts because people want to better their economic status by taking up positions that will inure to their benefit and that of

their religious compatriots. Three executives from the minority groups in Wa Sec/Tec expressed that they have being unfairly treated by their fellow students who are prefects and do not share the same religious ideology as them. They said there were instances where prefects deliberately delay them from attending a religious activity. Another example is the reduction of punishment for students who share the same faith whiles those who do not share the same faith as the prefect, face the full measure of the offence.

This according to the students has been a source of conflict between Christians and Muslims during their elections and even afterwards.

Polarisation along religious lines is a dangerous ground for the youth because it has the propensity to divide the country exposing it to interreligious conflict. As it is currently happening in the Central Africa Republic, where a political conflict immediately took a religious path resulting in a conflict between Muslims and Christians (Cadman, 2015). Again, fissiparous country will be a great opportunity and an avenue for politicians to exploit the porous situation in attempt to win votes and reward a particular religion over the other

(Awedoba, 2009). If this trend continues, then it is likely that Ghana would be deprived of quality leadership as these students who are the future leaders have started practicing religious politics by electing their leaders based on religion. Simply because they stand to benefit as against the capabilities of these students. An old student of one of the schools who is now a patron confirmed this practice. This is what he said during an interview on 19th March, 2017;

"Voting on religious lines is very true, I regretted it and feel sorry whenever I see a mate of mine who was capable but I refused to vote for that candidate because the person did not share my faith". Sometimes, these leaders are unable to deliver on their mandates including their inability to hold their fellow believers accountable for any wrong, further deepening the woes of the minority religious group and all stakeholders'.*

Electing students to positions on the basis of religious consideration can further undermine the relationship between Christians and Muslims in SHS which also has a negative repercussion for the future development of Ghana. Understanding one another's faith and learning to respect and co-exist in such pluralistic social setting is a key to managing religions tensions among students.

4.3.4 Reserved positions

In Wa Islamic, Lassia Tuolu and Queen of Peace SHS, as gathered from both students and patrons in these schools, top positions such as head prefect portfolios for both males and females are reserved for students who share the religious ideology of the schools. This has always led to interreligious conflict. The information obtained furthered revealed that the affected students viewed such traditional practices in these schools as a crystal discrimination against them. One of the students during FGD in Wa Islamic SHS lamented saying;

"It is unfair to discriminate when it comes to the head positions. All of us are endowed with the qualities that such positions demand. Yet, we

are not considered. However, when it comes to inter-school games or quiz competitions, the authorities are quick to approach us for our input and they are proud of the prizes won by the school through our contributions. This is not a good practice".

The core mandates of schools include the training of students to take up leadership positions in the near future. Nevertheless, the situation is different from what the researcher observed. The assertion made by the students were supported by one Patron in Lassia Tuolu SHS during an interview on 17th March, 2017, who expressed the view that;

"In fact it is the wish of every school to have its past students occupy some of the top most positions be it at the work place, community or in the nation's political system as this improves the image of the school positively. Yet, some students are not given equal opportunity to demonstrate and build their leadership skills".

Three management members (authorities) disagreed with the patron and indicated that the vision and mission of the school is achieved to some extent through these prefects. This is what two management members one from Lassia Tuolu SHS and the other from Wa Islamic SHS on 23rd March, 2017 said;

"Prefects who are non-believers would not ensure that all students are present for church service or all female students wear hijab throughout the day among others. Let me tell you, besides academic

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studies, each school has its own religious philosophy to be pursued

and no school will select a student leader whose religious inclination

differs from that of the school."

The information received from the respondents revealed the difficulty of achieving academic goal on one side by school authorities, and the efforts to achieve the religious aspiration of the schools especially mission schools which in a way diametrically opposes that of some students. As a result, non-believers in such schools sometimes refuse to take instructions from such prefects, resulting in a conflict. When that happens school authorities feel that such students have disrespected their authority.

The issue is a thorny one but not something, which is impossible to achieve. Conflict resolution largely demands trade-offs and cooperation. Both the school authorities together with the student executives can meet and find a way accepted to all to avoid any religious confrontation.

4.3.5 Doctrinal differences

The information gathered from all the respondents from the various school indicated that students sometimes do argue or debate among themselves including some teachers, as to the religious tradition that has the good practices or right instructions from God. Students question each other why the other religion followers do what they do. The study revealed that the argument normally centres on the scripture of both faiths. Each claiming theirs is the true path whiles the others are wrong and are candidates for hell. The information

obtained from the students especially revealed that students think and hold strongly to the position that theirs is the "Truth" and the others are "Untruth". Therefore, ending up in conflict as each group wants to protect and project their respective religion as the best. As debates usually end with a winner because the disputant argued better than the opponent did, the students in an attempt to win do make some pronouncements that result in verbal confrontations between them. Defeated students do not normally accept defeat and that also result in conflict between the students. This finding supports the claim made by a key informant who said religion is the food of the soul and adherents would do anything to protect their religion. This as a factor of interreligious conflict corresponds to the work of Maregere (2011), who said in an attempt by religious adherents to project their religion as the "True" religion as against the "Untrue", believers have often clashed resulting in a conflict between such followers. However, about 65% of both management and patrons do not view this as a big issue.

Again, another factor that accounts for interreligious conflicts the data obtained from students pointed to, was the misinterpretation of the scripture of both religions and disbelief in some portions. Such stance is an indication of inadequate understanding of the holy books and dogma of the two religions, refusal to learn or accept true meaning even when an explanation is offered. However, some students deliberately do misinterpret the Bible or Quran literally to tease or provoke their opponents.

Throughout this study, what was common is the argument that, God is one but not three, Jesus Christ is not God and not the son of God but a messenger of God; also, Jesus Christ was not crucified because he was too powerful to be killed by man from the Muslim students' perspective. The Christians on the other hand said that humans are not slaves to God but His children. Seeking clarification on the common divergence among the students, a key informant explained that God in three persons is believed by Christians to be; God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Holy Trinity), which he said has its roots from the Bible where God repeatedly referred to Himself in a plural form as "us" or "our". He quoted the Bible to support this point from Genesis 1:26, which says; "God said let 'us' "create man in 'our' image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move on along the ground". This he said meant God was referring to Jesus and the Holy Spirit as mentioned in in John1:3, which says; through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. On the crucifixion of Jesus, he said the Bible proves that indeed Jesus was crucified citing Mark 15:25; Luke 23:23 and John19:18 among others. He noted during the interview on 29th March, 2017 that;

> *"God in three persons is more of a mystery and as such, one just have to believe it as it is because it is philosophical. Attempting to understand everything about God actually meant that one wants to understand God entirely, which is impossible".*

The key informant concluded by saying that the Holy Trinity and the death of Jesus form the very foundation of the Christian faith.

In another breadth, a key informant confirmed the plurality of Allah explaining that it is evident whenever Allah is communicating to humanity but disagreed with the holy trinity saying that; that is one of the basic disagreement and major difference between Christianity and Islam. The key informant added that Islam regard Jesus as a messenger of God and every Muslim believes that. However, Islam does not recognize Jesus as God. Neither do Muslims believe that Jesus was crucified because he was too powerful to be killed by humans. On the reason why Muslims view themselves as slaves to Allah, the key informant explained as follows;

> *"Muslims see themselves as slave of Allah as a way of showing total submissiveness and obedience as it is the relationship between a slave and master".*

Debates of this nature sometimes do culminate into a conflict between these two faiths within the student milieu because such differences are embedded in the very foundation of both faiths as posited by both clergies. Thus, should the very foundation of a religion be disputed, it simply means that religion is under attack. This then explains why students will engage in such verbal disagreement and sometimes attitudinal, to prove that their religion has bases, which makes either religion the "true" one, as indicated by the data. As Christians believe the Bible

and its principles so also are the Muslims to the Qur'an. The different dogma means that both Christians and Muslims have to tolerate and respect one another.

4.3.6 Proselytization

The data obtained in all the schools discovered that attempts by students to convert each other sometimes do result in a conflict between Christian students and Muslims students. According to the respondents, the practice of attempting to proselytize each other is more pronounced when the first year students arrive. The newly convert's former faith group attacks the other faith especially its executives, which results in conflict between them and sometimes school administration. The respondents further indicated that some students become converted through the influence of their boyfriends or girlfriends. The researcher was also told some students intentionally change their religion to draw the attention of their parents of their parental neglect. This is the remark made by one student during the FGD giving an account of how one their member converted;

> "*She converted to Christianity because her parents were not attending to her needs but when the parents heard that she had changed her religion, they quickly came to the school with provisions that they would have not and further pledged not to dessert her*".

A converted student disagreed with the students' executives' assertion that some students are converted due to the influence from the boyfriend or girlfriend and remarked;

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"My boyfriend indeed belongs to where I am now (Islam) but it was not because of him that I converted, rather my dream to become a Muslim one day just for the love of Islam"

Another newly converted male student to Islam also made a similar statement. About 69% of the patrons agreed with the student executives on this point. However, they did not perceive the act of conversion as a threat to the peace of the schools no matter how it occurred. One of the patron during an interview on 17th March, 2017 had this to say about this phenomenon;

"Students do engage in evangelization acts among themselves mostly when the form one students arrive but that has never caused a serious conflict".

An important point to note is that, no matter the reason for ones' conversion, there is always a rift between the two religions.

Unlike the works of Awojobi (2015), Terwase (2012), Maregere (2011) and Nwaomah (2011), in which they said that newly converts were killed by their previous religious members, and some preachers were attacked physically and verbally in some instances, the school situation was different. The study found that in all the schools, students who willingly converted to the other faith, sets a tone for the new found faith to be vilified by the abandoned group but there was no a reported case of physical attack or loss of life.

Searching for further information on what it means to convert someone and how it should be conducted appropriately, the researcher consulted two key

informants from the two religious divides. The Christian key informant said that some Christians believe that evangelization means to win souls for God by only convincing other religious believers to leave their faith and join them. This is what he said on;

> *"To convert someone does not necessarily mean the fellow should abandon his/her religion but rather the ungodly aspect of the person's life. Adding that if the fellow should convert to say Christianity but still lives in sin of what importance will that be to the newly convert and Christianity as a whole".*

The Muslim key informant however, disagreed with his Christian counterpart. This is what he said;

> *"One is seen as converted only when the person professes that Allah is the only one Supreme Being and that the Holy Prophet Mohammed is His messenger".*

The information gathered from the two key informants is a manifestation of the conceptual difficulty surrounding the issue of conversion as viewed with different lenses. The issue of conversion cannot be taken for granted as it can cause a conflict between the followers of the two religions.

4.3.7 Restriction on the use of some religious items

The information obtained indicated that it was a common practice across all the schools whereby students often clash over the use of some religious items

principally the Qur'an, Bible and ablution-can. Some Christian students do not understand why their Muslim colleagues prevent them from touching the Qur'an but they allow them to touch and even use the Bible. The Christian students revealed that the Muslim students always threaten them that should they touch the Qur'an, they shall turn mad. This however, does not deter these curious Christian students but rather deem it a challenge to touch it and see what the outcome would be. Such attempts by the Christians have always been met with absolute resistance from the Muslims leading to a conflict between them. Therefore, in an effort to revenge, the Christians too refuse to allow the Muslims to touch their Bible. One of the students remarked during the FGD;

"It is a cheat for me to allow a Muslim student to touch and even use my bible but the fellow will not permit me even to come close his Qur'an".

However, in sharp contrasts to the perception of the Christian students, the Muslim students explained that, non-Muslim could not use the original Qur'an because there are rules to its usage. One of the Muslim students during the FGD said;

"Even, we as Muslims cannot touch the original Qur'an without purifying ourselves through ablution and so we do not deem it proper to allow a non-Muslim to touch it".

Probing further as to who is permitted to touch the original Qur'an, an official from the Islamic Education Unit in an interview explained that, a Muslim must

be cleaned before handling the Qur'an confirming the point of the Muslim students. The official had this to say during the interview on 9th March, 2017;

> *"I, as a Muslim cannot just touch the Qur'an without first performing ablution".*

The information gathered on the handling of the Qur'an could be attributed to lack of understanding. Coping with pluralistic society demands that people learn to understand themselves so as to avoid seeming baseless conflict.

A key informant agreed with both the official and the students elaborating further that the purification here means to perform ablution (cleansing) using water preferable before using the Qur'an. This he explained is because mostly during the day human beings discharge metabolic waste from the system such as urine, faecal matter or engaged in a sinful act, therefore one must cleanse the body before handling the Qur'an.

The ablution-can (buta) and reserved water also cause conflict between the two religions in the schools because the Muslims prevent the Christians for using their ablution-can. The Christian students are not permitted to use the ablution-can because they mishandle or misplace them after usage:

"If we allow you to use it and you will either misplace or mishandle it, then is better we prevent you from having access to it".

The reason behind the idea of Muslim students preventing Christian students from using the reserved water is because that is they use for performing ablution. Should this water get finish, they will not get water to cleanse themselves before praying or have to walk long distance to fetch water for their ablution, which is a must. This as the gathered from the respondents is a common strategy used by the Muslim students in all the study areas to prevent the Christians from using the ablution-can. About 33% of the Christian students on the hand confirmed utilizing the ablution-can and the reserved water for Muslim students. They explained that to avoid walking long distance to fetch water from the public source, they simply turn to the reserved water which is closer to either the classroom or the dormitory or the ablution-cans, which mostly contain water and easy to use. About 14% of the Christian student attested to the fact that there are instances their members do not return the ablution-cans after usage. It was also mentioned by the Christians that there are instances some Muslim students perform their ablution at the public source of water such as the tap, which is not allowed. About 12% of the Muslim students did agree that some of their members are culpable but they try to discourage them. The Muslims students further indicated that they have to go round and pick all the scattered ablution-cans and have to replace them when they get lost, which is costly both in cash and time. Additionally, they pointed out that, fewer ablution-cans means that their members have to spend much time waiting for others to finish performing their ablution before one can also have access.

A Muslim Patron in one of the schools during an interview on 30th March, 2017, noted that some of the Christian students do not want go closer to the ablution-cans or the Muslim reserved water. He said;

> *"Even if a teacher sends a Christian student to fetch him or her water from the tap using the ablution-can or the polytank by the mosque, that student will refuse for fear of being verbally attacked by the Muslim students."*

Another Muslim patron made a similar observation, he said during an interview on 24th March, 2017;

> *"I was in the classroom and asked a student to fetch me water using the ablution-can whom I did not even know was a Christian. To my outmost surprise, all the Muslim students in that class exclaim; she is a Christian, and I asked them and so, then they all said she cannot go there to fetch the water for you".*

The information gathered from the various categories of respondents point to the fact that the sources of inter-religious conflicts in SHS are many and varied. An understanding of these sources is the first creative approach to any meaningful conflict resolution among students with different religious traditions. As argued by Deborah (1991), successful conflict resolution demands that the source of the conflict must first be known. Therefore, for peace to prevail in these schools, collectively all stakeholders have to commit themselves by addressing the identified source of conflicts in the school situation.

4.4 Mechanisms for preventing interreligious conflicts

Conflict prevention demands that certain mechanisms or checks have to be put in place so that a given conflict may not occasioned or when it does, its effects will be minimised in terms of scope and intensity. The field survey discovered a number of mechanisms for preventing interreligious conflict which revolve around; Education, Body of Patron, Rotation of prayers, Ration, National Peace Council, Space and time.

4.4.1 Education

Nelson Mandela (n.d.) once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world". The information obtained in all the schools revealed that in an effort to change the mind-set of students to be religiously tolerant, authorities especially the Patrons educate their students to respect other faiths for peace to exist in the school and Ghana as a whole. This because education as a tool, can be used to change the negative mind-set of students about other faiths and impress upon them to have an informed understanding among themselves. Again, educating the students on the need to embrace other faiths as important as theirs was necessary as most of the students were adolescents and in the formation stage per the socio-demographics available. This as the research found is done to prevent interreligious conflicts in the schools. One of the patrons in Wa SHS had this to say during an interview on 13th March, 2017;

"We talk to them not to fight but to live together peacefully as they all worship one God. We do this to conscientize students so that they can tolerate the faith of others and more so to prevent them from making any provocative pronouncements about other religions. The fundamental issue is that students should be able to co-exist harmoniously and have fruitful interactions without stepping on the toes of others".

The information indicated that the education also trains students on how to balance academic work with their religious obligations in order not to violate school rules and regulations. The study discovered that the education given enabled students to develop some positive attitudes towards diverse religions in the schools, which has resulted in harmonious relations. As posited by Delai Lama (n.d.), "only the development of compassion and understanding for others can bring us the tranquillity and happiness we all seek".

This mechanism supports the works of some earlier researchers such as Olawale (2016), Awojobi (2015) and Blumenfeld (2015). These writers noted that education is an effective mechanism if properly applied, can prevent interreligious conflicts. They further added that education could disabuse the perception of people to accept new ideas and ways of doing things differently but in a better manner. A well-tailored education can help transform the mental image that students have about other religious faiths and also learn how to co-exist peacefully in pluralistic societies with different religious philosophies.

Although, the study found that patrons employed education as a mechanism in preventing interreligious conflicts in the schools, it was equally revealed that, students received little education on the subject matter. One student respondent during the FGD remarked that;

> *"We are only talked to about religious tolerance during our first year orientation and also when there is an issue relating to religious conflict. We need more of preventive education than curative education".*

One of the Patrons in Islamic SHS, agreed with the information given by the students during an interview on 14th March, 2017 and remarked;

> *"Students are normally educated on the need to respect other religions and live peacefully with other students who do not share their faith. This talk is usually when students come in the first year during their orientation and whenever it becomes necessary. I think from time to time we need to educate them as to how to respect themselves not only on religious grounds but in all aspect of lives".*

What the information received from the respondents suggest is that students receive occasional education on the causes of interreligious conflict notably doctrinal differences, proselytization, space and time among others which is inadequate. As these issues are major sources of conflicts within the school

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setting, education on them needs to be intensified. Putting in place such a mechanism will largely prevent most clashes among students. The education of students in this regard should not be limited to the schools alone but home tuition by the family and religious leaders as well. Understanding the need to celebrate religious diversity, would enable students to prevent interreligious conflicts as they will not put any obstacles in the way of each other in their quest to meet their needs.

4.4.2 Space and Time

The NPC (2015) issued a communique to the effect that all students should be given space and time to pray in all schools across the country. The information received from the school management respondents in Wa SHS, Queen of Peace SHS, Wa Islamic SHS and Wa Sec/Tech SHS, indicated that students in these schools are provided with space for their prayers and meetings. Time is also given to all students in all the schools to undertake their religious exercise. They however indicated that Saturdays are normally earmarked for activities outside the school. This practice according to the respondents was a way to promote freedom of worship to all categories of students. In an interview with one management respondent in Wa Sec/Tech SHS, this is what he said;

"We try as much as possible to be fair to all students by designating a place for all students for their prayers. Space and time have been provided for all students long before the recommendation of the NPC".

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The student executives in the mentioned schools confirmed what the school management said but expressed that regardless of this measure, they are equally compelled to worship as Christians and wear the hijab as Muslim female students.

It was however revealed that Muslim students in Lassia Tuolu SHS have no designated place of worship as group but they are permitted to worship individually anywhere in the school. This measure was instituted because in the past some alleged Muslim students burnt down headmaster's residence. However, on special occasions such Eid-ul-fitr and Eid-ul-dha that falls during school days, these students are permitted to pray as a group at a common venue.

The study found this to be a contradiction because in the same school, and other schools such as Queen of Peace SHS and Wa Islamic SHS, students have to attend mandatory church service and female students compulsorily wear the hijab no matter the religious principles of students. If these students in such schools are permitted to practice their religion, the element of compulsion should not have been an issue. The findings also meant that the resolution approach to religious diversity adopted by management of such schools falls short of the definition of identity recognition, which ultimately is the appreciation and full acceptance of one's identity (Burton, 1990). The information further pointed out that, the absence of force proselytization in the schools at least has contributed to the prevention of violent clashes between Christians and Muslims in the various schools.

The study further found that, the schools' management body has been able to meet students' requirement of space and time for worship and prayer partially, which has ensured sanity and the prevalence of relative peace in the schools. As noted by Pobee (1988), the African is naturally religious. As such the denial of students their religious freedom and place of worship is likely to result confrontation between students and any perceived source of the blockade.

4.4.3 Body of Patrons

As a managerial strategy to enable organisations run effectively and efficiently, sometimes authorities delegate some powers to other departments. In this regard, school as organisation is not an exception; hence, some staff members are assigned other duties to enable school management better run affairs. The field data discovered that the major purpose for the institutionalization of Patrons is to assist school authorities in the management of students' associations. The field study revealed that Patrons play a vital role in religious diversity management in the various schools. The data gathered further revealed that these patrons coordinate the religious affairs of students and serve as a bridge between administration and students. Patrons also create more awareness among the students to see the need to embrace religious diversity to promote tranquillity. One of the patrons in Wa Sec/Tech remarked during an interview on 21st March, 2017 that;

"*My duty as a patron is to coordinate the activities of my students, sensitize them and serve as a linkage between administration and my students to prevent clashes between other students and that of school rules and regulations*".

The study found that in all the schools, every religious association was under the obligation to have a Patron who must be a teacher in the school and of good standing per the school's management standards. The information obtained revealed that Patrons have direct contact with students of the various religious associations and as such can influence the students greatly be it, positively or negatively. The character of a potential Patron is therefore taking into consideration to ensure that these Patrons do not wrongly influence students.

School authorities across the selected schools indicated that this mechanism was yielding the desired outcome, which is ensuring that students' religious activities were conducted within the framework of the schools' rules and regulations. This allows students to meet their needs without obstructing others from obtaining theirs. This, according to the school authorities has resulted in a peaceful atmosphere and interaction among students.

One of the NPC recommendations dated April 1, 2015, intended to address the rising interreligious conflicts in SHS across the country was the suggestion that religious chaplaincy be established in the various schools. The study found out that the religious schools were not ready to establish such bodies because of their

religious mandate for establishing the schools. In addition, it was revealed that establishing religious chaplaincy would create unnecessary congestion and rivalry in the schools. Furthermore, because most of these chaplains will not be permanent teachers and resident on campus, it will still be a challenge to managing effectively religious diversity in the schools. Authorities observed that although, the existence of Patrons have not also eliminated interreligious conflict entirely, they have been very instrumental in its prevention in the schools but was conspicuously missing in the NPC communique.

4.4.4 Regional Peace Council

The Regional Peace Council as parts of its core mandate is to develop mechanisms to prevent all kinds of conflicts, to maintain and promote peace within the region officials indicated. The information gathered from all the schools revealed that the body visits schools to deliver talks to both students and teachers about the need to co-exist peacefully from time to time.

The information further revealed that the Regional Peace Council, intervention is necessary to advise, diagnose and diffuse tension before it explodes. The information gathered from the body indicated that their support has contributed immensely to the peace in the Region, the schools inclusive. Writers such as Awojobi (2015); Terwase (2012); Maregere (2011), have advocated for the establishment of such bodies in interreligious conflict zones to assist in resolving such conflicts among others. However, the concentration and over dependence on such bodies have contributed to overshadowing other bodies such as Muslim-

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Christian dialogue that are equally phenomenal in managing religious diversity remarked by a key informant.

4.4.5 Rotation of prayers

 The NPC in its communique (2015) recommended rotation of prayers during school gatherings as a way of preventing interreligious conflict in the schools across the country. The data gathered indicated that both religions are given the opportunity to pray either before or after during school gatherings. Bolaji (2016), however, did not see such practice as a viable tool for preventing interreligious conflict rather as an avenue for each religion to inconvenience the other when praying. The study however disagrees with such a position because respondents found rotation of prayers a useful mechanism in preventing interreligious conflicts. One of the students during the FGD said;

> *"We say prayers on rotational basis. For instance, a Christian could pray before the commencement of a programme and a Muslim have the last bite or vice-versa. This makes us feel happy because each religion is recognised".*

The Students and their Patrons further noted that rotational prayers rather strengthen religious tolerance in the schools but this mechanism was found in only Wa SHS and Wa Senior/Technical school, which are both purely government established and controlled schools. Deducing from the above statement by the students, it confirms what the study provided as a measure to address some criticisms of human needs theory. The study stated that the needs

of warring parties are not determine by outsiders but those in the conflict. In this regard, the students said as far as rotation of prayers were concerned, it prevented interreligious conflict in the schools.

4.4.6 Ration

The data pointed out that during the month of Ramadan in all the schools, food was reserved for Muslims students who are fasting and cannot attend the regular dining. Their food is set aside so that they can use it to start their fasting at dawn when the kitchen staff would not be around and in the evening when super per the schools' time would be over. One of the school managers during the interview on 1st March, 2017 said;

> *"The patron of the Muslim students brings the number of students who will be fasting and their food is set aside for them so that they have food to start and break their fast"*.

School managements, Body of Patrons and the Muslim students in all the schools confirmed this practice. School managements noted that this mechanism had prevented interreligious conflicts in this regard as the Muslim fraternity feel recognized and respected.

4.4.7 Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission (CMDC)

According to an official at CDMC, the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission is an external body comprising leaders from the two religions of which most of them are members of the Regional Peace Council. As indicated by the key informant the preoccupation of the CMDC is to deal with issues affecting the two religions. As revealed by the official, the CMDC facilitates the prevention and resolution of conflict between Christians and Muslims. Adding that members go to the various schools within the region to talk to students and teachers on how to co-exist harmoniously. The information obtained explained that two students each from the two religious faith are drawn from each of the schools in the region. These students are given training on how to tolerate other religions and upon returning to their various schools, with the support of the officials, peace clubs were formed to propagate peace among their colleagues. During the interview on 4th April, 2017, the official remarked that;

> *"Two students each from the two religions are chosen by their school to attend a workshop, where we train them in handling religious related issues that could be intra- and inter-. We take care of their feeding and accommodation, which normally last for 2 days". This exercise covers only the student due to limited resources. However, plans are underway to include the patrons especially, in the future".*

During the interview with the patrons, they all confirmed the assertion made by a member of the CMDC that indeed they occasionally receive some form of instruction from the Commission. This is what a patron from Wa Islamic SHS said on 16th March, 2017;

"The efforts to promote peace is a shared responsibility. The CMDC's role has also been helpful. Only they need to intensify such workshops".

However, as at the time of this study, there was no such peace clubs in any of the schools but CMDC official explained that all the members have completed school and plans were far advance to restart them.

4.5 Mechanisms for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts

A particular strategy for managing and resolving conflicts in schools' setting (organizations) in general is silent in literature. However, what was clear is that mechanisms for dealing decisively with conflict when it does occur and these are categorised under two streams namely; internal and external. Data from the field revealed that the internal mechanisms refer to mechanisms that are within an organization and external are those outside the organization. The study sought to examine the mechanisms for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in the selected schools. The study identified two main forms of mechanisms for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts. These mechanisms were both internal and external, reflecting what was reviewed. The mechanisms were at different levels and present in all the schools the study was conducted. The internal mechanisms were found to be at different levels namely; students' level, Patrons' level, and school administration level.

Internal Mechanisms

4.5.1 Students' Executives

At the students' level, the survey indicated that the preventive, management and resolution mechanisms revolved around the leadership of the various religious denominations and is present in all the schools. Every single Christian denomination had an executive board depending on the membership and where membership of two or more denominations was insignificant, then such denominations were merged under one leadership. For instance, in Wa SHS, Church of Christ students are merged with that of Deeper Life students to form one denomination with one leadership due to fewer numbers. The executive board of the religious groups comprise seven members whether combined or alone. However, in Wa Islamic SHS, all the Christians were grouped together as Christian community with a common leadership but in this case, the number of executives exceeded seven to enable effective running of their affairs. The Muslims on the other hand were grouped under an umbrella called Ghana Muslims Students Association (GMSA) and based on their population, had an executive membership ranging between 20 and30. However, at Wa SHS and Lassia Tuolu, there were two main bodies; Ahmadiyah Students Association of Ghana (AMSAG) and Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA).

The mandate of the students' executives as gathered from all the schools is to organize religious activities for the various denominations in a manner that prevents a clash with other denominations, other religions and school rules and regulations. As gathered from the survey, these bodies also receive complaints

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from their members and attempt addressing them depending on the degree of the complaint. It emerged from the focus group discussion that any complaint which falls within the capacity of the executives, are addressed by talking to the student or students involved, and if that fails, they further engage the offender's religious denomination leadership. If the issue remains unresolved, then the executives of the complainant formally inform their patron. During the FGD on 10th March, 2017, one of the discussants in Queen of Peace SHS had this to say about the role of the students' executives;

> *"Our members first report to us and if we are unable to resolve it by engaging the student concern, we meet his/her leaders. If still we failed, then, we inform our patron"*

The research learnt that this practice is strictly between the students but if it is a complaint against a staff member, it is directly reported to the respective patrons as this falls outside their jurisdiction. Nonetheless, as gathered from the executive bodies, there had been instances where some students had lodged their complaints with the patrons without reporting them to the executives. This may seem to suggest that some students do not have confidence in this body to resolve their issues, hence a by-pass to the Patrons. This is what four students had to say during the FGD session on 10th March, 2017;

> *"Sometimes some students ignore us [executives] and directly report to our Patrons because they feel they can best handle their case. At times the issue is resolved by the Patrons and in another breadth such students are redirected to us upon realizing that the issue did not come to our*

notice though we [executives] can resolve the issue amicably" and unanimously all present agreed.

It must however, be noted that all the internal mechanisms do make use of some of the five mode instrument for conflict management by Thomas-Kilmann (1976) to address interreligious conflict. Most of the students' executive of about 90% in all the schools indicated that even before their member(s) lodge a complaint about any issue relating to their faith, the students involved had tried resolving the conflict at their personal level and when such attempt fails then such case is reported to the executives. The executives confirmed the assertion made by the student executives and indicated that they have advised their executives to encourage students to attempt resolving issues that confront them but this depends on the gravity of the issue of contention. Patrons also alluded to the fact that when in their view the issue is a trivial one, they simply admonish their students to ignore or avoid such situations, or just to endure the situation because their stay on campus is not permanent. As this may sound tangible and have stood the test of time, Awedoba (2009:209), observed that, "it is the minor disputes that develop into full blown conflicts with catastrophic effects". What this means is that all conflicts should be given the necessary attention when they come to the notice of the authorities entrusted with the responsibility to help resolve them among students. Avoiding conflicts or enduring them for the sake of temporary stay, will not be the best approach to satisfying the needs of students.

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4.5.2 Body of Patrons

The next body is that of the Patrons who double as teachers in the schools. The composition of this body is made up of both Christian patrons and Muslim patrons in the schools. The field survey revealed that, Patrons have been charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the spiritual welfare activities of students are in consonance with that of school rules and regulation. Furthermore, they serve as a link between students and administration of the school. The Patrons indicated that they receive reports from the students or the student leadership at the point when students are unable to resolve an issue. This is what one Patron said on 13th March, 2017, during the interview;

> *"We receive complains from our students, even some staff and we resolve it by engaging each other not the student in question". An example here in Wa SHS was when we received reports from both students and some resident staff concerning the loud sound of the mega-phone used by the Muslim students for their prayers. The complaint was that the sound disturbs them. We engaged the Muslim patron and they stopped using it".*

The patrons mostly do not engage the student leadership in resolving or managing an impasse but their colleague patrons unless the need be. Therefore, if there is an issue being reported or observed by a patron that students are indulged in act that undermines the religious freedom of the other faiths, that patron in question does not approach the student or students immediately but rather informs the patron of that student or students. The reason for such

approach is summarized by the remark made by one of the Patrons in an interview on 13th March, 2017, as;

> *"It is because we do not want to be seen as an obstacle in the way of students as far as religion is concern. This is an agreement we all as Patrons have agreed upon because religion is a volatile issue and the least distortion can cause more havoc than one would anticipate should the students misreport it"*

In Wa Senior High/Technical School however, a second body exists, which is also made up of teachers and who could as well be patrons to a particular religious' association. This body has only two members a Christian and a Muslim. This body supersedes the one formed by all patrons in the school and so if an issue is unable to be resolved that case is referred to this two-member body and their decision is final. The Patrons indicated that their powers are limited especially when it comes to high-level decision making. One of them cited an example during an interview on 15th March, 2017 as;

> *"When a strategy for preventing interreligious conflict such as a prayer centre is needed, we as Patrons cannot give the green light for the construction to commence but have to lobby administration to permit such a project to be undertaken".*

This mechanism was found in all the schools selected for the study and aligns with to the proposition of Awojobi (2015), that, there should be an establishment of impartial religious bodies to assist in the management and resolution of interreligious conflicts in the society.

4.5.3 School Administration

The data indicated that, the Headmaster, Assistant Head, Assistant Head administration, Senior Housemaster and the various religious association Patrons in the schools constituted the administrative body as gathered from the all the schools. The school administration is the final and highest decision making entity within the internal structures for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts. As obtained from the respondents, when an interreligious conflict is unable to be resolved utilising the earlier mentioned sub-bodies, then the conflict is referred to this body. A member of this body in Wa Sec/Tech in an interview on 20th March, 2017, said;

> *"If the Patrons are not able to resolve an issue, they bring it to us and together with them, we resolve it. The decision we arrived at is final and is conveyed to the students by their respective Patrons".*

This body has the full responsibility of providing all the necessary means by which students can meet their needs including their religious needs. All the management members in all the schools affirmed that it is very important for students to have their religious needs fully met. In an interview, this is what a management member said;

> *"We do not limit our responsibilities to just equipping students with academic knowledge but equally we ensure that their spiritual life is shaped by providing what we can provide to enable them meet their religious needs as well. We allow them to pray as part of their worship*

> *here in the school and even allow them to go outside the school if the*
>
> *need be to further strengthen their faith".*

Information gathered revealed that the school administration possesses much power and as such exerts much influence on the kind of religion that dominates and the kind of strategies the school provides for the students to meet their religious needs. This was alluded to the fact that this body is the implementer of all the school rules and regulations including national and ministerial policies. This approach to managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in the school system is supposed to be an umpire role. This is to ensure freedom of worship to all students but from the study, it emerged that this role is not often executed fairly especially in the religious schools. The clash of interest is empirical even in the non-religious schools but on a low tone as pointed out by the seven members of the administrative body. A case is when majority always have their needs met because either the school head belongs to a particular religion or the majority of teachers belong to a certain religion as observed by the 16 student executives. In a situation where various religious groups are treated differently, resentments and other forms of ill-feeling will remain with members of the affected religion. The members of the administrative body in all the schools, indicated that as much as possible they try to meet the religious needs of students equally. However, they were quick to say that in circumstances beyond their control they only implement what have been assigned them. This is what a management member said during an interview on 22nd March, 2017 said;

"I do not have the power to permit the Muslim students to be in communism during prayers. This decision is taken by the Board of Governors. I was not even here when the board took such decision. The ban that Muslim student should not be allowed to pray together shall be lifted when the Board of Governors are convinced that the congregational prayer will not result in another religious violence that purportedly occurred in the past".

This was in response to the quest of the study to establish who could and when the ban on the Muslim students will be lifted to allow them pray together in Lassia Tuolu SHS.

External Mechanisms

4.5.4 Board of Governors

The information obtained indicated that Board of Governors comprise the Headmaster, Assistant Head administration and other key people such as an old student, the Municipal or district chief executive where the school is located, Parents Teacher Association chairman or chairperson, Traditional head of the area where the school is situated. In all the selected schools, this body as the researcher was told supports the mandate, vision and mission of the school especially the religious faith that established the schools. An interreligious conflict that had not been managed or resolved at the school administration level is referred to this body for a solution. The members of this body are actively involved in the appointment of the Head of the school and their decisions bind on the entire level of school management. In addition, this body facilitates the

provision of the needed atmosphere to promote the general good of students and as well ensure that the administrative body of the school implements their decisions. However, as a supervisory body to the school administration, this study revealed that there has been instances where disagreement between this body and administration have equally resulted in a conflict between them. An example is the case of Wa Senior/Technical School where the Board of Governors wanted to relocate the designated place of prayer for the Muslim students but administration was not in agreement citing limited space. Nonetheless, information received from five members of the administration indicated that the Board of Governors decides the religious activities that are permitted in the school. For instance, in Lassia Tuolu SHS, both the students executives and the school administrative body indicated that Muslim students are forbidden by the Board of Governors to pray together unless on special occasions such Eid-Ul-Fitr and Eid-Ul-Dha. This ban according to the two members of the administrative body was as result of some Muslim students who allegedly burnt down the house of the headmaster in retaliation to the demolishing of their temporary mosque by the then headmaster. Banning a group from praying together may not be the best solution though proven useful now; it deepens mistrust and animosity between students and that of the implementing bodies.

A key informant disagreed with the banning of Muslims from communal prayer by the school authorities. Quoting from Qur'an 2:43 (Surah Al-Baqara), this is what the key informant said in an interview;

"And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and bow down with those who bow down". Stressing that anything from the Qur'an is an instruction and must be complied with. *"Praying as a community is a duty and a Muslim receives 26-27 rewards from Allah but 1 reward if the fellow prays alone".*

Some student executives expressed that the sanction placed on the Muslims has left a bad imprint in their minds and therefore has a negative impression about Catholics and at worse Christianity. The information obtained suggests how power is manipulated to either promote or obstruct religious freedom. An inclusive approach could be a way out of interreligious conflicts brought about by management or divide and rule tactics. Notwithstanding, this revelation care must however be taken depending on which has a negative repercussion on the needs of the student body as a whole.

4.5.5 The Regional Peace Council

The National Peace Council (NPC) is an interfaith body established in 2011 by an act of Parliament (Act 818). This establishment has been the leading body in peace crusade in Ghana facilitating and developing mechanisms to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country. Its contribution has been very phenomenal in Ghana's national peace building process. This body is present in every Region of Ghana. The Regional Peace Council (RPC) ensures that the mandate of the National Peace Council is effectively implemented at the Regional level. The information gathered from

officials of RPC indicated that the body steps in automatically to resolve interreligious conflicts mostly when all internal mechanisms in the school are unable to break the deadlock. This is done mostly in collaboration with the Board of Governors and other security agencies within the district or region. The body is expected to visit the various schools to educate both teachers and students on the need to be religious tolerant. The review of scholarly works such as those by Awojobi (2015) and Tewarse (2011), propose and support the formation of such inter-faith bodies across the country to effectively handle religious and other issues bordering on peace. However, officials from the RPC that the researcher contacted appeared not to be aware of the proposed measures outlined by the mother body (NPC) to help prevent interreligious conflicts in the schools across Ghana.

4.5.6 Ghana Education Service (GES)

The GES is mandated to supervise the activities of some tertiary schools and both first and second cycle institutions in the country. Issues pertaining to the SHSs' are reported directly to the Municipal or district GES directorate. Officials of the GES as a regulatory body are to ensure that academic activities are ran successfully. The GES is very instrumental in the management and resolution of interreligious conflicts especially when they get out of hand. The intervention role played by the GES in respect to interreligious conflict resolution has received support from the NPC. Hence, mandated them to ensure fair play in the various schools across the country in its communique on how to promote religious freedom in the SHS.

However, as the study revealed, the officials from the GES appear not to be aware of the communique from the NPC dated 1st April, 2015, which mandated them to undertake a critical role to promote religious freedom in the various SHS's. In the course of the interaction, GES officials themselves could not indicate any concrete steps they have put in place to manage religious diversity in the schools they supervise. One of the officials during the interview on 6th April, 2017 said this;

> *"As far as I know, GES has no laid down measures for promoting*
> *religious diversity or mechanisms that should be employed when there*
> *is any outbreak of interreligious conflict".*

They key informants further said, issues pertaining to religious diversity and freedom fall outside their mandate.

4.5.7 The Regional and District Security Councils

These bodies exist in all Districts and Regions in Ghana. Their mandate as indicated in the Constitution of Ghana (1992) is to ensure peace and security of all inhabitants in the country. The Security councils' get actively involved especially when the conflicts become violent in the schools and this is in line with the observation of Awedoba (2009), who said these bodies become active when conflicts erupt. Officials from the Police Command in Wa contacted by the researcher said the Police in conjunction with the RPC and Board of Governors work to diffuse tension and provide the needed security to protect life and property especially in the case of violence. Probing further to find out if the

Police has ever embarked on any operation in response to a violent condition in any of the selected schools, the key informant responded in the negative and said not in recent times.

4.5.8 The Legal System

The legal system or the Law court is the final arbiter in the external mechanisms and its decision is final and binds on all especially when the conflict becomes violent. As revealed by a key informant, unlike the other external mechanisms that step in automatically to ensure that conflict within the schools are managed and resolved, the legal system demands a formal complaint inviting them to resolve the conflict. This mechanism comes with one party declared as a victor and the other a loser. This is what the key informant on 4th April, 2017, said;

> *"The resolution of a conflict is determined by who is right or wrong depending upon the evidence available. The court system sometimes even worsens relations than before after its verdict".*

The consequence of adopting this mechanism per the informant's view supports the work of Rachman (2017) who indicated that the two-year imprisonment imposed on Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama who is a Christian for blasphemy, worsened the Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesian. His offence was blasphemy, which is contrary to the Indonesian Criminal Code, Article 156. It further indicated that the Muslim community became the victors and the Christians the losers. The Christians in Indonesia demonstrated to register their

displeasure citing such imprisonment as religious persecution. The international human rights groups equally condemned such act.

In Lassia Tuolu SHS and Queen of Peace SHS, both schools had a case relating to interreligious conflicts and both cases were settled in the court. From both schools' officials, the incidence took place in the night but on different dates. It was a time that Muslim students in both schools were agitating for a permanently constructed place of worship in these schools. In the case of Lassia Tuolu SHS, the Headmaster's bungalow was burnt down by some Muslim students. According to a key informant, these students threatened the then Headmaster saying he would see bitter results as he had destroyed a temporary structure used by the Muslim students for their worship. The official further stated that when the bungalow got burnt, school administration concluded that it was some of the Muslim students who were behind such hooliganism. The school reported the case to the police and the accused students and their Patron were arrested and arraigned before court but the school lost the case. This is what the key informant said during an interview on 22nd March, 2017;

> *"This case was settled in a competent court of Law but the school lost the case because the evidence provided by the school was not enough to incarcerate the accused students and their Patron. The court said the suspicion that some Muslims committed the act lacks substance in law and for that matter acquitted and discharged the accused persons".*

The key informant added that because of this incident, Muslim students have been banned from praying together as a group but can pray individually. The decision of the court to set the accused free though in law sounded credible, yet the conduct of the school management towards the Muslims is a sign that they disagreed with the court's decision. This finding support the work of Awedoba (2009) who argues that, the court system sometimes leaves some parties unsatisfied and in worse relations than before.

In Queen of Peace SHS, a key informant told the researcher that the Headteacher's office was set on fire but with quick intervention of some students and staff resident in the school, the fire could not spread from its original spot. However, a small portion was burnt as said by the key informant. The officials just as in the case of Lassia Tuolu SHS, school administration immediately suspected the Muslim students but investigations exonerated them. This matter ended up in court but the school lost the case. Nonetheless, some school authorities in both schools still hold the view that it was the Muslim students who carried out such acts.

The information gathered from the various categories of respondents clearly point to the presence of interreligious conflicts. This further points to the need of effective mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts without recourse to violence. In addition, it buttresses the point of some scholars such as (Fisher, 2000; Akpareb, 2012), who argue that conflict is inevitable in human setting and particularly in organisation.

4.6 Extent of success of the mechanisms for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of interreligious conflicts.

In this study success in terms of the mechanisms used in preventing, managing and resolving inter-religious conflicts are measured at three levels namely; i. Successful ii. Partially successful and iii. Failure. The extant literature reveals that both scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution do not have a common ground on the definition of success of interventions before and during conflicts. Nonetheless, there are some recognised definitions propounded, placing emphasises on the mandates, durability of peace among others by scholars such as Pushkina (2006). This study adopted and modified Pushkina (2006) definition of success using the four main criteria proposed; limiting violent conflict in the host state, reducing human suffering, preventing the spread of conflict beyond the object state's borders, and promoting conflict resolution, form the bases for measuring success of mechanisms used in preventing or handling a conflict. These criteria are aligned to the mandate of the interventions in place.

Modifying these four criteria of Pushkina (2006), the researcher reframed these criteria but with same objective, to measure the success of the mechanisms the various schools studied adopt to prevent, manage and resolve interreligious conflicts in the schools. The criteria below determine the success of the mechanisms. A school's mechanisms are successful when more than half of the indicators are met, partially successful when half are met and failure when less than half is achieved because these are the core mandates of the mechanisms

dealing with interreligious conflicts in the schools. Limiting violent conflict in the host state and reducing human suffering were collapsed into one indicator, which is indicator 1. The reason being that the study concluded that the two indicators aim at reducing the impact of the conflict.

These indicators are;

1.   Interreligious conflicts do not result in violent conflict

2.   Interreligious conflicts do not go beyond the walls of the school

3.   Preventing, managing and resolving mechanisms meet students' satisfaction

The data gathered revealed that the mechanisms of all the schools studied on the account of their ability to deal with conflicts were found to be successful because none of the schools recorded a violent interreligious conflict in the past five years. As remarked by one of the school authorities in an interview on 15th March, 2017;

"Differences among religious faiths are part of the religious game and for the school, once a conflict does not transcend its boundaries but remains an internal issue, we describe our methods as being successful".

From the data gathered, two out of the three indicators have been met per the mandate of the overall mechanisms signalling that the mechanisms adopted in the schools regarding conflicts have been successful. All the student respondents agreed that their schools have not witnessed any violent encounter arising from

religious differences. However, about 31% of them were not enthused giving reasons such as lack of level playing grounds for all religious groups to practice their faith, not recognised among others. The views of the 31% students' respondents may suggest that they appreciate the fact that their schools have not witnessed any interreligious violence. However, the expressions given by them attested to the fact that they have other misgivings about some of the mechanisms adopted by the school authorities in preventing, managing and resolving differences that exist between the various religious faiths.

Contrary to the misgivings of the students about the mechanisms used in the school setting, the responses from both the school and the students as to the non-violent encounter in the various schools may suggest that at least two out of the three indicators have been met.

4.7 Challenges facing the mechanisms for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Interreligious Conflicts

4.7.1 Inadequate Skills

As part of the study, it became necessary to find out the pertinent issues that confront the effective handling of inter-religious conflicts in the various selected SHS. The data indicated that from the students' level to administration body, the actors involved in preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts do not have adequate expertise to handle cases effectively. One of the Patrons during interview on 2nd March, 2017 had this to say;

> *"Almost all of us have no training in handling conflicts in general. It is just by virtue of our interest in religious activities of the students that has made us Patrons and there are instances we are unable to handle some cases very well".*

The Respondents disclosed their inadequate skills creates an avenue for recurrence of interreligious conflicts in the various schools. The study found that some of these patrons turn to support their students even when such students are at fault. They are unable to remain neutral during decision-making affecting their students. This attitude some respondents of about 23% are of the view that it hampers efforts in handling religious diversity related issues.

4.7.2 Inadequate structures

The study discovered that apart from Wa SHS that has two fully constructed and furnished mosques, the rest of the schools do not have a church or mosque. School authorities indicated that this had made it difficult for them to effectively manage religious diversity in the schools. Christian students depending on their numbers are allocated a space, classroom, dining hall, an assembly for their worship and prayers or hold their activities under trees as seen already. Muslims students in the rest of the schools do not have a mosque and this poses a great challenge to them they revealed. This finding is in line with that Bouma (2007), who noticed that the religious diversity nature in schools are on the increase and authorities are struggling to provide prayer rooms and even established canteens to cater for all religions.

A member of one of the schools' management had this to in an interview on 3rd March, 2017;

"Our Muslim students have to pray in the open space whether rain or shine. That is why we strategically located the prayer ground under the tree, so that at least it will serve as a shade. This is very challenging to us as management especially in the evening, anything can happen".

Another management member on the 27th March, 2017 shared a similar sentiment in an interview and remarked;

"We use the assembly hall for our church service but that cannot even contain all the students and some of them have to stand either inside or outside, which is not the best".

The Muslim students revealed how they have to contend with animals and even non-Muslims walking with their sandals across their prayer ground, which is considered disrespectful and unhygienic. They added that animals in schools also walk through and sometimes defecating there causing a mess. Such mess the affected students indicated must be cleaned before using it meanwhile they have classes and other important activities to attend. The information obtained indicated that the time for prayers for a section of the Muslims is quite appalling as they have to endure the harsh weather conditions.

The Christians on the other hand also lamented about the inadequate space for them compelling some of them to worship under trees also at the mercy of the weather. The students indicated that the absence of lightening system means they cannot meet in the evenings because the place is dark and have to battle with reptiles. Wa Islamic SHS in particular, Christian students worship under trees because the school lack a space that can contain them. The rest of the schools, however, have space that they worship though not a church building. Those who are fortunate to have a worshipping place for instance in the assembly hall also sometimes lock horns with their Muslim brethren over the venue when the Muslims have a programme on Sunday, notably in Wa SHS. A Muslim student during the FGD remarked;

"The Christians always use the venue every now and then, so why should they not be willing to let us use it occasionally".

Christians explained that the notices in most cases from their Muslim counterparts reach them very late making it difficult for them to relocate. As one of the Christian students remarked during the FGD that;

"Our problem with the Muslim students is that, they do not pre-inform us. They would normally wait until Sunday morning before notifying us that they have a programme, so we should relocate".

At the Wa Senior/Technical School the field study revealed that the prayer locations for both Christians and Muslims are situated close to each other and the dining hall, which they have observed to be a major concern. The information gathered revealed that Muslim students are more than the designated space for their prayers but authorities are unwilling to relocate them for expansion citing non-availability of land on the school. In both Lassia Tuolu and Queen of Peace SHS, the Muslim community are willing to construct a mosque in each school but because these are Christian schools, authorities say they were uncomfortable with such idea.

4.7.3 Prayer attire

Another challenge discovered by the study was that of dress code for prayers. Students are permitted to bring extra clothing aside the school uniforms for worship especially the Muslims students in all the schools. According to the school authorities, some of the Muslims students intermittently disguise themselves in such clothing and escape to town. Respondents also indicated that even some Christian students are equally guilty of this practice, denting the image of Islam and the school. This is similar to the findings of Bouma (2007), who said some students code of dressing was not accepted in some schools in Australia but school authorities are unable to ban them rather formulating policies that would permit students dress to reflect their religion.

However, the data pointed out that these clothing were necessary to enable Muslim students pray as Islam prescribes such dressing code for prayers and so one is not allowed to dress anyhow to pray. A Muslim patron in one of the schools remarked during an interview on 1st March, 2017;

> *"The nature of the school uniform does not make it conducive for prayers especially for the females. So the school allows Muslim students to pray with a "jalabiah" for the males and "abayah" for the females".*

A key informant agreed with the patron and went a step further to quote a verse to strengthen his point from Qur'an 33:59, which says;

> *"O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over-garments; this will*

be proper, that they may be known, and thus they will not be given trouble; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The key informant emphasized that according to the Qur'an, it is compulsory for females to cover their bodies well during prayers. To obey this command from Allah, female Muslim students wear the "abayah" with the hijab whiles the males wear the "jalabiah" because they are equally required to cover their body but more importantly their navel to below the knee.

Despite the attitude of some Muslim students disguising themselves to town with either the "abayah" or "jalabiah", authorities are unable to ban such dresses. Authorities are of the view that banning these clothing can cause the affected students to agitate, which may result in destruction than ensuring discipline and upholding the reputation of the school. One school administration members in an interview on 12th March, 2017 said;

> *"Students sneaking to town in these clothing remains a worry but we cannot ban their use, because they are requirement for their prayers. If we ban them, these students, parents and other stakeholders would think we are against Islam".*

4.7.4 Inadequate Resources

The information obtained from officials of both the Regional Peace Council and that of Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission indicated that they were under-

resourced financially and in terms of human resource. This is what an official said during an interview on 4th April, 2017;

> *"We wish to cover all the schools but resource constraints had slowed down our efforts. Besides, we are understaffed for the enormous tasks that must be performed".*

Two members of the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission also gave similar complaints. The respondents said some of their members' double as members of the Regional Peace Council and as such, they are unable to do much. They further indicated that they finance themselves and all other activities they perform are more or less a voluntary work. Due to the sacrificial nature of the job, people are not motivated to join. One of them had this to say on 10th April, 2017 during an interview;

> *"We do everything from our pockets, no assistance from anywhere. No budget allocation, absolutely nothing, it is all our sweat and not everyone can sacrifice as we are doing".*

According to the stated key informants, the identified challenges restrain them to do as much as the situation demands. However, they indicated that they were not relenting on their efforts rather committed and determined to continue with their work notwithstanding the existing challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The major factors accounting for the occurrence of interreligious conflicts are compulsory church service, the wearing of hijab by all students in the schools regardless of one's religious affiliation and reserved positions. This was found only in the religious schools. Uniquely, in LASSEC space and time was an additional major factor because the Muslim students in that school do not have a common prayer ground. Doctrinal differences, inadequate space and time, proselytization and restrictions on religious items were found to be the causes in all the five schools but are minor. Nonetheless, minor issues can degenerate into violent conflicts if not properly managed.

The struggle for power was the only different cause of interreligious conflict that was not found in the religious schools. Nonetheless, power struggle could be

equated to reserved positions on the bases that both concern the general student leadership, which in each case, majority always won the prestigious positions. The difference however is that for the power struggle all students are allowed to contest regardless of their religious tradition whiles in the case of the reserved position, topmost positions are meant for only students who share the religious ideology of the school.

Power struggle and inadequate space and time were the major causes of interreligious conflict in the public government schools.

Despite the fact that differences among religious orientations on their own do not create violent encounters rather the incompatibility, school authorities in all the schools have put in measures to ensure that these differences do not clash. Four of the schools use the same mechanisms such as ration, worship centre, education and the rest, which are mainly internal, to prevent interreligious conflict. Lassia Tuolu SHS however, do not use one of the commonest mechanism, which is the provisions of a permanent place of worship for the Muslim students.

The thesis further revealed that authorities recognise the need for students to satiate their spiritual needs respond to internal methods that are interfaith in nature as against any other form of managing and resolving interreligious conflicts to address any differences that exist among the various religious faiths. The information gathered also indicated that some of the Thomas-Kilmann modes of handling conflict such as compromise, avoidance among the rest are utilized in the selected schools.

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The external mechanisms in most situations also use Thomas-Kilmann modes of handling conflict and often advance the course of collaboration between both religions "win-win" in exception of the Law court that delivers a "win-lose" verdict which does not resolve the conflict but rather breeds acrimony between both religions as one religion wins at the detriment of the other.

The findings have revealed that the conflicts come about as a result of an attempt by both Christians and Muslims to meet their basic human needs which are not just biological. To prevent such conflicts, school administrations have to provide the needed space for religious diversity to thrive without any hindrances. However, in a conflict situation, the right mechanisms must be provided to ensure that the underlining factors are properly addressed as needs are non-negotiable. The study supports the theory and conceptual framework, which underpin the study.

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5.3 Conclusion

Using an empirical data from 27 in-depth interviews and 230 respondents for FGD, the study concluded, the factors that cause interreligious conflicts in the second cycle institutions in the Upper West Region are namely; compulsory church service and wearing of hijab, power struggle, doctrinal differences, reserved positions, restrictions on religious items, space and time. These needs include identity recognition and freedom and security religious practice which according to Burton's (1990) human needs theory are ontological and have to be met and if frustrated occasion conflict relationship.

In response to the sources of inter-religious conflict, a number of mechanisms had been put in place including the provision of space and time, ration, body of patrons, rotation of prayers, education, Regional Peace Council and Muslim-Christian Dialogue Commission are the mechanisms intended to prevent, manage and resolve interreligious conflicts in the schools studied. These mechanisms as the study revealed had prevented many violent inter-religious conflicts in all the schools for the past five years

Regardless of the reported successes chalked in the various schools, inadequate structures, time, dress code, inadequate knowledge and skills as well as inadequate resources had militated against the effective handling of conflicts in all the schools to promote cordial coexistence of diverse religious faiths in such pluralistic social setting.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the research thus makes the following recommendations: School authorities should ensure that all students are provided with space to practice their faith. Timetables should be readjusted to make way for students to undertake their religious activities to avoid any controversy that arises over unmet religious needs. Religious tolerance education should be intensified in the various schools.

Religious leaders from both the Christian and Muslim community and families should offer cross religious education and training to their followers for effective understanding, co-existence and tolerance of religious plurality.

The Ghana Education Service should factor religious diversity studies into both students and teacher-trainees' curricula, as there is none. This will help improve the knowledge base of both students, patrons and school management to learn, respect and leave in a community of religious plurality

Corporate world and Non-Governmental Organisations should support the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission financially and logistically to enable the Commission cover more schools and also to intensify its training and workshops for both school patrons and students' executives who are at the fore front of the resolution of inter-religious conflicts in various SHSs. The Government should equally increase the resource allocation of the Regional

Peace Council to enable them reach out to more of the schools and train teachers

on effective management of religious diversity with its attended issues.

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Appendix I

University for Development Studies-Wa Campus

Faculty of Integrated Development Studies

Department of Social, Political and Historical Studies

Research Topic: Mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflict in some selected SHS in the Upper West Region.

Interview guide for data collection to aid in thesis write-up as a partial fulfilment of the award of MPhil degree in Social Administration. Information obtained from respondents shall be treated as highly confidential and solely for academic purpose. Identity of respondents would also remain anonymous. Participation remains voluntary.

Thanks for accepting to respond to contribute to this study.

Interview guide for school management and patrons

Demographic Characteristics of respondents

1. Religion:

2. Educational level: I. Diploma II. Degree III. Masters

3. Years of experience as a management member or a patron: I. 1-5   II.6-10 III. 11-15

Investigation of the underline causes of interreligious conflicts

I.   Do your students have the opportunity to attend church services or Mosque?

   a.   If yes, is it mandatory, where, what time and who leads them?

   b.   If no, why?

II.   Are students allowed to attend religious activities outside the school? If yes, why? If no, why?

III.   Have there been any reports of students making provocative pronouncement on other faiths? Example if yes.

IV.   Are students allowed to pray at dawn? If yes, why and have there been reports of disturbances as a result?

V.   Have there been any reports of students engaged in debates over religious doctrines and dogma? If yes, example.

VI.   Do students pray before and after meals? If yes, Christian or Muslim prayers. Explain if yes or no.

VII.   If students are gone to pray or attend church service and it is time for dinning, do the others wait on them?

VIII.   Have there been any case in which students wish to be seated in a particular order or location in the class, dinning or dormitory based on their faith?

IX.   Does religion play an active role in choosing a leader among students? If yes, how and why?

X.   Are students allowed to wear any religious symbols? If yes or no, why and is it compulsory?

XI.   Have there been any reports on students attempting to proselytised each other? If yes what has been the results?

XII.   Have there been an incidence where students fight over religious items and resources?

XIII.   Any other factors that may cause interreligious conflict.

Preventing interreligious conflicts

    I.   Do all religious groups have a designated place of worship? If yes, why and if no, why?

    II.   Are students permitted to bring extra clothes for worship? If yes, why. If no, why?

    III.   Are students given talks about religious tolerance? If yes, how often and by who? If no, why?

    IV.   Who supervises students' religious activities?

    V.   How do the Muslim students manage during their fasting period?

    VI.   During gathering or at assembly grounds do students pray? If yes, why and is it a Christian or Muslim prayer. If no, why?

    VII.   Do organizations come to give talks to students about religious tolerance? If yes, which organizations?

Identifications of mechanisms for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts

    I.   What role do you play?

    II.   Have you ever experienced or received a reported case of interreligious conflict? If yes, how was is it managed or resolved?

    III.   Are there any laid mechanisms for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts? If yes, what are they? Are they internal or external mechanisms?

    IV.   Which ones are internal or external?

    V.   How do these mechanisms work?

Success of the mechanisms

    I.   Are students involved in the handling of interreligious conflict? If yes, how? If no, why?

    II.   How will you describe the participation of the students?

    III.   How timely is the response to interreligious conflicts?

    IV.   Are there instances school administration have invited people outside the school to assist in preventing, managing and resolving a conflict? If yes, why? If no, why?

    V.   Have the school experience a violent conflict emanating from religion in the last five years?

    VI.   How will you describe the neutrality of committee members?

    VII.   How will you describe students' satisfaction with the mechanisms employed?

Obstacles in the prevention, management and resolution of interreligious conflicts

    I.   Are all those involved in the internal mechanisms trained on how to handle conflict? If no, how are they able to deal with conflicts when they occur?

    II.   In promoting religious freedom, how does it affect students' discipline?

    III.   How is the cooperation from students?

    IV.   Do external forces hinders religious diversity management? If yes, how?

    V.   How subjective are committee members?

    VI.   Does media publications affect the prevention, management and resolution of interreligious conflict? If yes, how?

Appendix II

University for Development Studies-Wa Campus

Faculty of Integrated Development Studies

Department of Social, Political and Historical Studies

Research Topic: Mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflict in some selected SHS in the Upper West Region.

Focus Group Discussion guide for data collection to aid in thesis write-up as a partial fulfilment of the award of MPhil degree in Social Administration. Information obtained from respondents shall be treated as highly confidential and solely for academic purpose. Identity of respondents would also remain anonymous and participation remains voluntary.

Thanks for accepting to respond to contribute to this study.

Demographic Characteristics of respondents

1. Sex:

2. Age:

3. Religion:

4. Educational level: i. SHS 2 ii. SHS 3

Focus Group Discussion for students' religious groups' executives

Investigation of the underline reasons for interreligious conflicts

I. Do you have you and all other religious groups have a permanent place of worship? If yes where, if no why?

II. Are you allowed to bring extra clothes for prayers? If yes, why and if no why?

III. Do you sometimes clash over a venue for your prayers or a religious programme? If yes, why?

IV. Do you sometimes engage your colleague students of other faith on their beliefs and practices? If yes, on which aspect of their belief or practices and how did end?

V. Have you received reports or witness your members being engaged in a heated debate with other faith solely on religion? If yes, what was it about and what was the outcome?

VI. Do the religious majority always win the topmost positions in your elections? If yes, why?

VII. Do you prefer having most of your faith members occupy the topmost and other positions in the school? If yes, why?

VIII. Are you permitted to wear religious paraphernalia? If yes, why and if no, why?

IX. Is the wearing of the paraphernalia compulsory? If yes, how do you feel?

X. Is attending church service mandatory? If yes, how do you feel?

XI. Do you preach to other students about your faith with the aim of converting them? If yes, why and if no, why?

XII. Are students of different faith have the opportunity to use any of your religious items? If yes, why and if no, why?

XIII. Do the other faith complain that your mode of worship disturbs them? If yes, example?

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Preventing interreligious conflicts

    I.   Do all religious group have permanent place of worship? If yes, what time and where?

    II.   Are you oriented on how to co-exist with other religions? If yes by who?

    III.   Do institutions outside the school visit you to deliver talks on how to live harmoniously with different religions? If yes, name any.

    IV.   During Ramadan, how do the Muslim students cope?

    V.   Who oversees your activities?

Identifications of mechanisms for managing and resolving interreligious conflicts

    I.   Have you witness a conflict between Christians students and Muslim students in this school? If yes, how was it resolve?

    II.   How do you handle interreligious conflict?

    III.   Are there laid down procedures to seek redress in a case of interreligious conflict?

    IV.   What role do school management play in managing and resolving interreligious conflict?

    V.   What role do your patrons play in managing and resolving interreligious conflict?

    VI.   Do you know of any institutions who come to assist in resolving interreligious conflicts when there is any? If yes, can you name any?

Success of the mechanisms

    I.   Do you participate in the prevention, management and resolution of interreligious conflicts? If

            yes, how and are you able to speak freely? If no, why?

    II.   Do you feel the other panel members are neutral when there is an issue relating to religion?

   III.   Are the measures of catering for all religious issues fair? If yes, how and if no, why?

Obstacles in the prevention, management and resolution of interreligious conflicts

     I.   Are there instances some students sneak to town in the extra clothes meant for prayers?

             How were such students been treated?

    II.   How large and secure is your place worship?

   III.   Are you trained on how to manage or resolve conflict among the students using dialogue?

             If no, what skills do you use?

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Appendix III

University for Development Studies-Wa Campus

Faculty of Integrated Development Studies

Department of Social, Political and Historical Studies

Research Topic: Mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving interreligious conflict in some selected SHS in the Upper West Region.

Interview guide for data collection to aid in thesis write-up as a partial fulfilment of the award of MPhil degree in Social Administration. Information obtained from respondents shall be treated as highly confidential and solely for academic purpose. Identity of respondents would also remain anonymous. Participation remains voluntary.

Thanks for accepting to respond to contribute to this study.

Interview guide for Key Informants

I.   What is the mandate of this organisation or office?

II. What role does this institution or office play in the prevention, managing and resolving interreligious conflicts in the SHS in the District or Region?

III. How often do you visit the SHS within your catchment area?

IV. Are you aware of some of the causes of interreligious conflicts in the SHS?

V.   Who sponsors your trips to these schools?

VI. Are you paid for the service you deliver to the schools?

VII. Do you face challenges in the course of your duty especially to the schools? If yes, enumerate some of these challenges.

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