
Factors Generating Conflict among Government Preparatory Secondary School Students in Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract: School conflict is a social phenomenon noticeable through the interaction of people; hence, its occurrence is unavoidable. If a conflict is not well managed in schools, it could hinder the teaching and learning process and would have negative impacts on a healthy school environment. The purpose of the study was to examine the factors generating conflicts among the selected preparatory secondary schools in the Amhara Region. A mixed methods research design was employed for the study. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire survey, key informants' interview, and direct observation. The binary logistic regression model was employed to identify determinant factors leading students to join in conflicts. The study underscored that an unhealthy school environment, barriers in communication, the poor academic performance of teachers, authoritarian teaching styles, and a lack of family follow-up were factors instigating students to engage in conflicts. The study recommended that school principals and teachers should motivate students to take part in the decision-making process and deliver continuous training to manage conflicts for a healthy school environment.

Keywords: *conflict, academic performance, school environment, teachers, students*

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Introduction

Conflict as a disturbing issue across the world is an old phenomenon and in fact, as old as humankind, which originated from barriers of communication and clash of interests. According to Ramani and Zhimin (2010) conflict is conceptualized as when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are in contradiction and have not been agreed upon. Many scholars argue that group disagreements, competing for scarce resources, lack of experience in conflict management, differences in perception/goal divergence, and communication barriers between actors are the major causes of conflicts (Johdi and Apitree, 2012; Muhabie, 2015; Okotoni and Okotoni, 2003; Shahmohammadi, 2014; Sunday, Nwogbaga and Onwe, 2014). Conflicts happen everywhere; among social institution and/or organization, within organizations, and within the personality of each individual (Jimmawerk, 2019). Okoth and Yambo (2016) and Sugut and Felix (2014) indicate that conflict is a subject of great concern in homes, schools, workplaces, and social places. Hence, the existence of conflicts is predictable and unavoidable. The inevitability of conflict was also indicated by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) emphasizing that conflict is part of the change and therefore, unavoidable in any organization. The absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction (Jimmawerk, 2019; Edwin, 2014). However, the outcomes of conflicts have psycho-social, economic, physical and moral damages of the social capital of the society (Yambo and Osije, 2016). Likewise, Jørgensen and Ramsing, (2017) indicated that conflict becomes destructive when poorly managed. However, when conflict is well managed, it stimulates creativity, encourages flexibility, increases group cohesiveness, improves quality of decisions made, increases loyalty, and decreases tension (Ayalew, 2000 cited in Jimmawerk, 2019).

Schools are learning environments that need a peaceful and silent atmosphere. A healthy school environment can play a major role in smoothing the teaching and learning process (Jimmawerk, 2019). However, in some if not most cases, schools generate conflicts leading

to inequality, bullying, aggression, and violence (Tchombe, 2006). According to Shahmohammadi (2014), Okoth and Yambo (2016) and Sunday, Nwogbaga and Onwe(2014), the presence of conflicts in schools is inevitable, because of differences in opinions, beliefs and ideas among principals, teachers, and students. Many scholars argue that dissatisfaction of teachers in their profession, unnecessarily authority styles of principals, reluctance to follow the rules and regulations of the school on the side of teachers and students, students' pathetic esteem to their teachers and principals, conflicting interests and unhealthy school environments are the factors generating conflicts in schools (Gebretensay, 2002; Hartwick and Barki, 2002; Sunday et al., 2014). Conflicts in schools usually occur between school heads and teachers, teachers, and teachers, teachers and students, teachers and parents, students and students, and the community at large (Tshuma, Ndlovu and Bhebhe, 2016). Specialization among teachers, for example, can be a cause of conflict in schools. A long-serving teacher in the school who is familiar in teaching in the old way will have a conflict with a young teacher who is trained in advanced techniques of teaching (Shahmohammadi, 2014; Tshuma et al., 2016).

While past research on school conflict is voluminous, clear and holistic definitions and factors generating conflict are still lacking (Wall and Callister, 1995) and many empirical studies fail to provide precisely how to manage conflict in schools (Hartwick and Barki,2002). Little attention was, however, paid to what happened in the school environment, and the kind of relationships that existed between teachers and students, among teachers, students, school heads, and between the school and the community. From the present situation, one can expect that many secondary schools in Ethiopia could become an epicenter of conflict in the future. In the Amhara Region, in particular, the frequency and severity of school conflicts are growing with the growing number of students. In many schools, unit leaders and principals spend much of their time managing conflicts in schools. Hence, identifying the root causes that generate conflicts and violence in schools helps to manage them in an unprecedented manner. The problem selected for this study

is timely for the reason that students' aggressive behavior remains a threat to safe learning environments. However, this study has a limitation in which private schools in the region were not included and future study is informed to address this issue.

The general objective of the study was to examine conflict generating factors among preparatory secondary schools in Amhara Region, Ethiopia. Specific objectives focus on (i) assessing the causes of school conflicts in the study areas, and (ii) identifying the determinant factors that generate conflicts in the study areas.

Hypothesis of the Study

Hypothesis 1: It is hypothesized that if there is poor communication between students, teachers and principals then conflicts are more likely to occur in schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is a strong and significant relationship between unhealthy school environment and sources of conflict.

Hypothesis 3: It is hypothesized that if there is poor academic performance of teachers/students then conflicts are more likely to occur during the teaching learning process.

Background of Ethiopian Education

As explained in the 1994 education policy of Ethiopia, the previous Ethiopian education system lacked quality and relevance (MOE, 2002). The education does not enable students in their day to day activities and for their future career. Moreover, it does not largely contribute to solve the problems of the Ethiopian society (MOE, 2002). The 1994 education policy of Ethiopia, for instance, emphasizes the development of problem-solving capacity and culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach (Dawit, 2007). However, many of the curricular materials in many regions of Ethiopia were prepared to have wide

content coverage rather than to develop the problem-solving capacity of the students (Dawit, 2007). Poor quality of education and the lack of teachers' willingness to motivate their students have contributed the low interest of students' in learning (MOE, 2018). Even though, the policy envisioned the cultivation of democratic culture, tolerance, peaceful resolution of differences through dialogue and a sense of responsibility, it was not properly implemented by the responsible bodies of the government, parents, the community and private organizations (MOE, 20002). The previous governments at different regimes were not able to manage differences in opinions with the public by peaceful means. When it comes to the schools, disputes are either settled by insulting or by kicking which does not motivate students to learn.

The 1994 education policy also introduced civic and ethical education in the curriculum so that students know their rights and duties (MOE, 1994). If this was implemented, it could have contributed to the peaceful settlement of differences in opinions between students. Civic and ethical education introduction to the curriculum, according to the 1994 education policy, contributed little to the socialization of students' behavior (MOE, 2018). The present-day civics and ethical education introduced in the curriculum is blamed to be less effective in influencing positively the cognitive and skill development of students with regard to exercising those democratic values (Muluaem, 2019). Nowadays, students are exercising more of their rights but less of their duties and respecting of the rights of others (Gossa, 2018 cited in Muluaem, 2019). Thus, the Ethiopian Education Development Road Map (2018), after evaluating the 1994 Education Policy, has suggested the participation of parent, community, and private sector in the teaching learning process, discipline, and overall eco-system of the schools.

Students, teachers, principals, administrators of schools, parents and the community do not have the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes to properly manage conflicts that arise in schools. As stated in 1994 Ethiopian education and training policy and its implementation the public

is not aware of education policy, let alone be involved in following up of their children's learning in schools (MOE, 2004).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the literature review, personal experiences of the principal investigators, and the problem under investigation, the following independent variables (factors generating conflicts) were identified as predictors of the dependent variable (students' participation in conflicts). As shown in Figure 1, unnecessary student-teacher relations generate conflicts in schools. Onwe and Nwogbaga (2014) indicate that discriminations and favoritism for some students are major sources of conflict in schools. Lack of communication is the major cause of conflict in schools. Different scholars (Salleh and Adulpakdee, 2012; Sait, 2015; Süleyman and Türkan, 2016) indicate that a common cause of conflict is poor communication, which can lead to misunderstandings between parties. In a broader sense, conflicts result mainly from lack of communication followed by personal, political, ideological and organizational factors (Süleyman and Türkan, 2016). Berhanu (2014) supplements that insufficient exchange of information, noise and the semantic differences that arise from selective perception and differences of background could be the sources of conflicts. Students learn together with different age groups. However, age diversity sometimes could be the source of conflicts. This is due to the fact that the way different age groups communicate, wear, perceives issues vary from individual to individual. This could, in turn, be a source of conflict (Berhanu, 2014). Above all, the economic status of students can create a wide gap among students.

Although students' background diversity enriches the educational experience, it also affects the smooth relationship between students. It is common knowledge that students in high schools are coming from diverse beliefs, traditions, expectations, norms, values, cultures and behaviors that could have a great potential to generate conflicts (Berhanu, 2014). Hence, the place of birth (rural verses urban) can

create background diversity and sometimes could create conflict. Besides, parents' occupation and educational status could play a role in minimizing or maximizing conflicts. Sexual harassment is the source of conflict inside and outside schools. For example, a study made by Berhanu (2014) indicated that sexual harassment is taken as the third major source of conflict in high schools in Addis Ababa. Students' absenteeism in the class, disobedience, and lack of respect of teachers, principals, school guards can create conflicts in schools. In relation to this, Maina (2016) mentions that lack of respect and insulting students during the class are factors generating conflicts between students and teachers.

Unstable conditions in schools can disrupt the teaching and learning processes. Teachers and students are the first disadvantaged in the outcome of conflicts. In relation to this, Süleyman and Türkan, (2016) noted that outcomes of school conflicts on teachers resulted in the low performance; dislike their professions, demonization, breakdown in communication, and fail in morale-motivation negatively affect the classroom environment. More importantly, students' academic performance and teachers' readiness to the subject matter play an important role in reducing conflicts (Reda, 2008). The healthy school environment plays a positive role in the smooth learning process in the school. However, many schools in large cities of the Amhara Region are surrounded by local alcohol houses and places favorable for chewing *khat*. In relation to this, Maina (2016) indicates that drug abuse as a form of student indiscipline enhances conflict in schools.

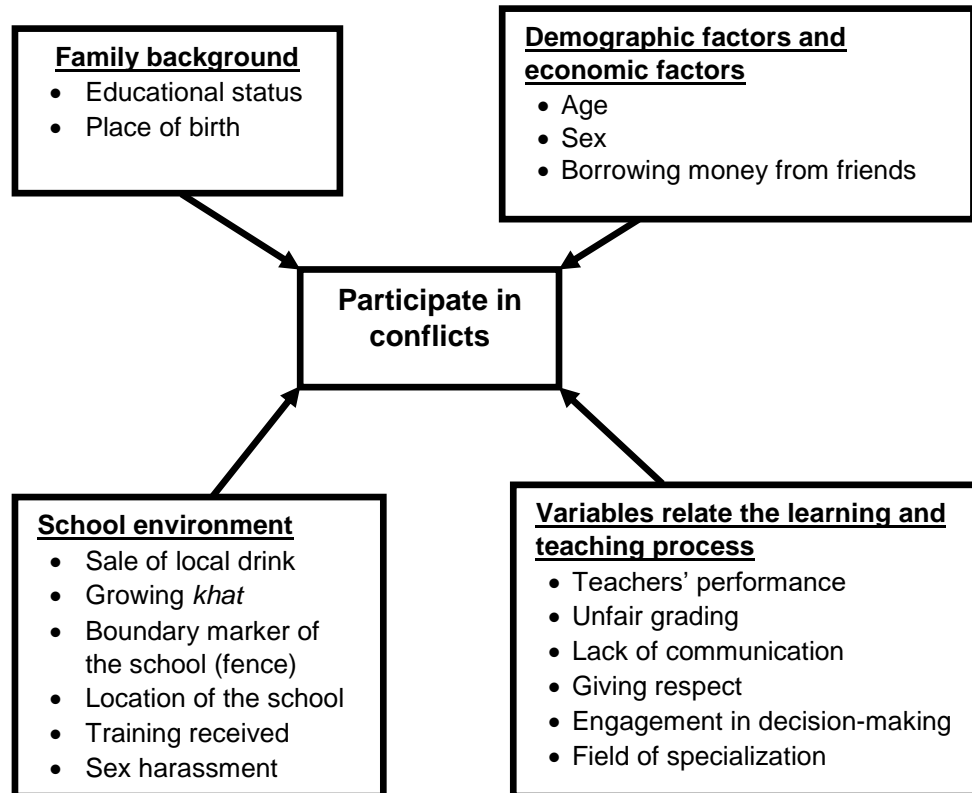


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram Showing the Relationship between Participation in Conflicts and Predictor Variables

Research Methodology

Research Design: Concurrent mixed methods research design was employed for the study. This means that both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed at the same time. Such a design minimizes some of the limitations of using a single method because quantitative or qualitative research methods are not sufficient to address

the multiple factors generating conflicts in schools when they are treated independently.

Sampling Techniques

Multi-stage sampling techniques were employed to get adequate information related to students' conflict in Amhara Region. Firstly, Amhara Region was selected purposively because of its accessibility and long experiences of the principal investigators as a teacher of high school for more than a decade. Secondly, to get better information for the entire region, five large cities were selected. Accordingly, Gondar City in the north, Debremarkos City in the west, Debreberhan City in the south, Dessie City in the east and Bahir Dar City at the center were selected purposively for the study (Figure 2).

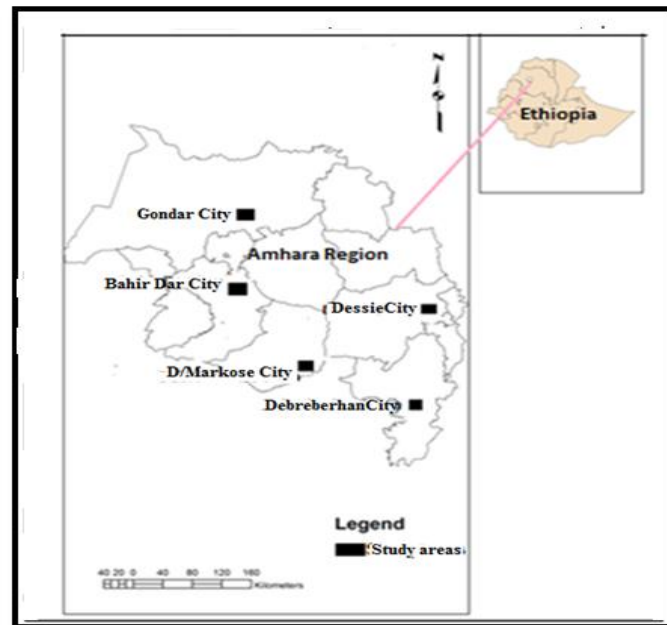


Figure 2: The Spatial Distribution of the Study Areas in Amhara Region

The reasons for the selection of the indicated study areas were; they are the largest cities in Amhara Region. Besides, conflict is usually a serious problem in large cities that needs immediate responses. In relation to this, Yambo and Osije (2016) indicated that the larger the school, the greater the number of differences and the higher the degree of conflicts. This means that diverse personalities could create the potential of school conflict in large cities. Taking homogeneity of high schools into consideration, a total of five preparatory secondary schools were selected using a simple random sampling technique. The subjects for the study were students, school principals, teaching staff, and school guards. Grade 11 students were the subject of the study to fill the questionnaire. However, grade 12 students were excluded in this study because during the time of data collection they were preparing for ESLCE. The criteria for the selection of grade 11 students were the following: (i) to get detailed information about the causes of conflicts as a result of their long stay in schools. (ii) As compared to the other grade students, the selected students are relatively mature to give better information about the root causes of conflicts in schools. And (iii) since many of grade 11 students are in the puberty stage, interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts might be severe that need strict follow-up and management.

The background of the selected students was government secondary preparatory school composed of male and female students. Substantial numbers of students (51%) were coming from rural areas against 49% in urban areas. The majority of students (64%) originated from rural areas were female respondents. On the other hand, from the total students who came from urban areas, 56% were male respondents. Sex compositions considered for the reason that conflict generation inside or outside the class varies among male and female students. In relation to this, Guan-Hao et al. (2019), for example, noted that male students encountered more quarreling with their parents, school principals and teachers as compared to female students.

Grade 11 students in each school were categorized as social sciences and natural science. A total of 4 sections in each preparatory secondary school (two sections from social sciences stream and two sections from natural science) were selected using simple random sampling technique. This made a total of 20 sections in the selected five preparatory secondary schools. In each section, the number of students varies between 50 and 60. The study populations in the selected sections were 1187 students (Table 1). In determining the sample size for this study, Cochran (1963) formula was employed. To be the most conservative in sample size determination, the study took the value of $p = 0.5$ and $q = 0.5$ as shown below:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad \text{where,}$$

n = the required numbers of sample; z = the desired confidence level (1.96); e = maximum allowable error at 95% confidence level = 0.05; $p = 0.5$, $q = 1 - p = 0.5$.

Using this formula, a total of 384 sample sizes were determined for the study. However, fear of missing data/non-response rate, the sample size was determined to be 424 (an increment of 10%). In relation to this, Glenn (1992) recommends that it is wise to oversample 10% - 20% in the case when there is a non-response rate.

Table 1: The Proportion of Sample Students in Each School

Name of schools	Study population (Sampling frame)			Sample students		Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
Fasiledes (Gondar)	93	135	228	33	48	81
Dibeza (Debremarkos)	81	151	232	29	54	83
Hote (Dessie)	126	115	241	45	41	86
Hailemariam Mamo (Debreberhan)	106	126	232	38	45	83
Gyion (Bahir Dar)	134	120	254	48	43	91
Total	540	647	1187	193	231	424

Accordingly, 424 (193 male and 231 female) students were selected for the study using a systematic sampling technique (see Table 1). However, 35 questionnaires (~ 9% of the total sample) were not correctly filled for the final analysis. Finally, a total of 389 (212 female and 177 male) students were employed for data analysis and interpretation.

As shown in Table 2, participants for the qualitative study were teachers, students, school principals, and school guards. A total of 25 key informants were selected purposively for the study.

Table 2: Number of Key Informants in the Study Areas

Name of schools	Key informants				Total
	Students	Teachers	School principals	School guards	
Fasiledes (Gondar)	2	1	1	1	5
Dibeza (Debre Markos)	2	1	1	1	5
Hote (Dessie)	2	1	1	1	5
Hailemariam Mamo (Debreberhan)	2	1	1	1	5
Gyion (Bahir Dar)	2	1	1	1	5
Total	10	5	5	5	25

Student key informants were composed of one female and one male student selected purposively in each preparatory secondary school.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments for this study were survey questionnaire, key informant interview and direct observation.

Survey questionnaire: Closed-ended types of questions were prepared for the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire covered various issues: causes of conflicts, roles of teachers and principals in minimizing conflicts, school environment, students' participation in the decision-making process and teachers' academic performance. The survey was pre-tested with randomly selected 20 students (10 male and 10 female students) who are not parts of the sampled students. This helped to modify instruments prior to the final administration. The principal investigators, five enumerators (one in each high school) and five supervisors (one in each high school) who have bachelor degrees conducted the survey. The enumerators and supervisors were first trained how to present and explain each question to the respondents. Enumerators informed the respondents about the purpose of the study before starting to fill the questionnaire. It took on average one hour to complete one questionnaire.

Key informant interview (KII): Key informant interviews from different participants (Table 2) were the sources of the primary data for this study. Issues raised in the guideline/checklist were the following; cause of conflicts in schools, the situations of the school environment, the relations between students and teaching staff/school administration, relations between the school and the surrounding community and students' parents. With the consent of participants, tape recordings were used to get time to listen and to have eye contact.

Direct observation: The personal observation was employed to get some information about the problems under investigation. Some of the

phenomena observed were the situations of school fences, local drink sale houses, *khat* growing areas nearby the school, the status of classes, and students' and teachers' recreational rooms. The information collected using the observation method helps to strengthen the results obtained from KII and questionnaire survey.

Data Analysis Techniques

The information collected from key informants were documented and narrated thematically to substantiate the structured questionnaire. Upon completion of the quantitative data collection, the data were entered into the statistical package SPSS version 22 and were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and tables. Chi-square test was used to show the associations between nominal predictor variables and students' participation in conflicts.

The binary logistic regression model was employed to identify determinant variables generating conflicts in the selected high schools of the Amhara Region. This model is suitable when the dependent variable is binary in this case, those students who participated in conflict coded as 1 and 0 otherwise. The predictor variables that generate conflict were grouped into demographic, socio-economic, family background, school environment, and students/teachers' academic performance (Figure 1). As shown in Table 3, the positive sign shows more likely to participate in conflict and the negative sign shows less likely to take part in the conflict. The underlying assumption of logistic regression is a non-linear relationship between predictors and a binary outcome. The goodness of-fit-of the model was also checked using Hosmer and Lemeshow Test, Omnibus tests for model coefficients, pseudo R^2 (model summary) and classification table.

Table 3: Expected Sign of the Explanatory Variables

Variable name	Variable description	Expected sign
Sex of students	Dummy 1= Female 0 = male	-
Availability of <i>Khat</i> nearby campus	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Sell of local drink close to schools	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Participation in making decisions	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	-
Giving respect	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	-
Unhealthy school environment	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Birth place of students	Dummy (1 = urban, 0= rural)	+
Field of study	Dummy (1= Social sciences 0= otherwise)	+
Teachers academic performance	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	-
Poor communication	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Fencing the school compound	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	-
Unfair grading	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Training	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	-
Borrowing money from friends	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Sex harassment	Dummy (1 = yes, 0 otherwise)	+
Parents education	Dummy (1= Literate 0= illiterate)	-

Results

Analysis of Factors Generating Conflicts among Students in the Preparatory Secondary Schools of the Amhara Region

Conflicts in schools occur between student-student, student-teacher, and student-principal in a complex wave of interactions. The unhealthy school environment, weak educational management, decisions made without the participation of students, poor communication between students and teachers, and background differences among students were the major factors generating conflicts in schools (Table 4).

Table 4: Causes of Conflict in the Selected High Schools (% Respondents)

Options	Name of schools					Total
	Fasiledes	Dibza	Hote	Hailemaria m Mamo	Giyon	
<i>Unhealthy school environment</i>						
Yes	20.0	16.2	15.7	21.4	26.7	100
No	18.4	22.9	25.7	17.3	15.6	100
$\chi^2(4) = 13.4, p = 0.009$						
<i>Weak leadership of principals</i>						
Yes	23.0	18.9	18.9	14.9	24.3	100
No	14.5	19.9	22.3	25.9	17.5	100
$\chi^2(8) = 15.779, p = 0.046$						
<i>Decisions made without the participation of students</i>						
Yes	22.4	21.7	17.1	18.5	20.3	100
No	10.7	12.6	29.1	22.3	25.2	100
$\chi^2(4) = 15.383, p = 0.004$						
<i>Poor communication between students and teachers</i>						
Yes	15.8	20.4	20.4	22.6	20.8	100
No	26.6	16.9	20.2	12.9	23.4	100
$\chi^2(4) = 9.693, p = 0.041$						
<i>Students awareness about school rules and regulations</i>						
Yes	20.6	19.8	18.1	21.8	19.8	100
No	17	18.4	24.1	15.6	24.8	100
$\chi^2(4) = 5.063, p = 0.281$						
<i>Teachers academic performance</i>						
Yes	21.5	20.2	17.9	18.8	21.5	100
No	16.3	18.1	23.5	20.5	21.7	100

Figure 3 indicated that female students coming from rural areas (~ 60%) were sources of conflict while, male students in urban areas (47% male against 39% of female students) were sources of conflicts. In this regard, school principals pointed out that female students coming from rural areas were living in rented house away from parents. This helped them to participate in sex activities creating conflicts between males.

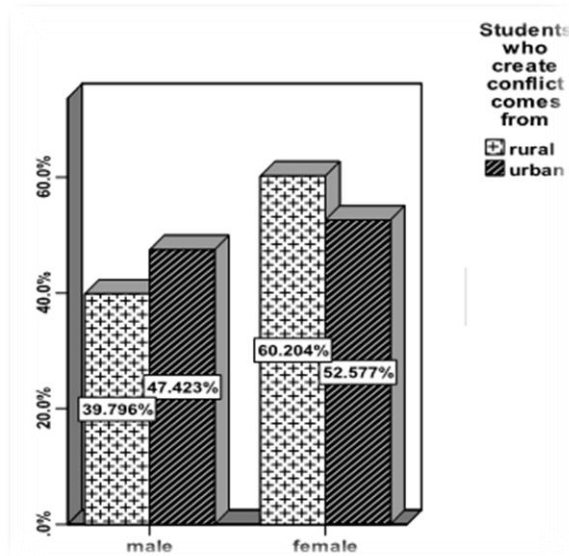


Figure 3: Sex and Residence of Students as Sources of Conflict

As shown in Figure 4, sex harassment (bullying) was a problem in Dibza high school (~ 28%) followed by Hailemariam Mamo (~24%) and it was the lowest (~13%) in Hote preparatory secondary school. The Chi-square test result revealed that there was statistically significant relationship between sex harassment and schools at $P < 0.001$ ($\chi^2 (1) = 22.34, P = 0.000$).

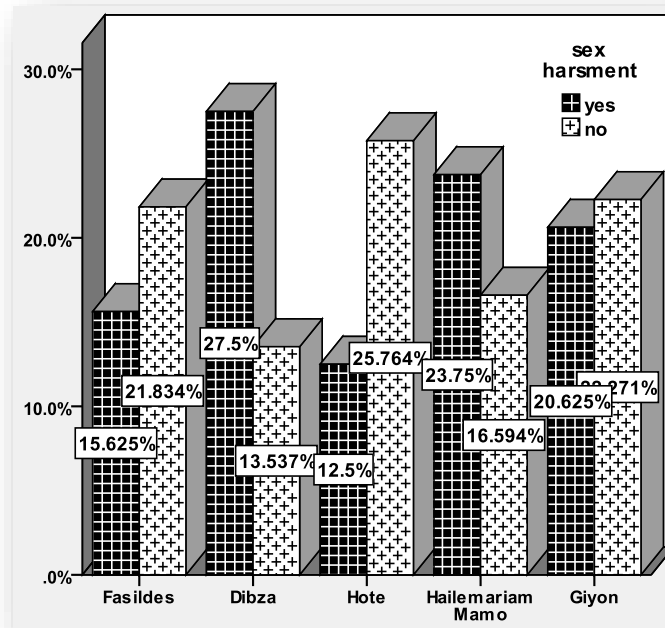


Figure 4: The Relationship between Sex Harassment and Schools

The assessment was made to investigate the relations between the family background of students and sources of conflict in the school. As shown in Figure 5, results are controversial and vary spatially. For example, in Hote (50%) and Hailemariam Mamo (32%) mentioned that students with no mother are causes of conflicts in schools. In Giyon preparatory secondary school, students who are coming from mother and father live together are sources of conflict. However, this was not the case in other high schools. From their chief experiences, teachers and principals indicated that students with no mother and father or without father were the major sources of conflicts in the school.

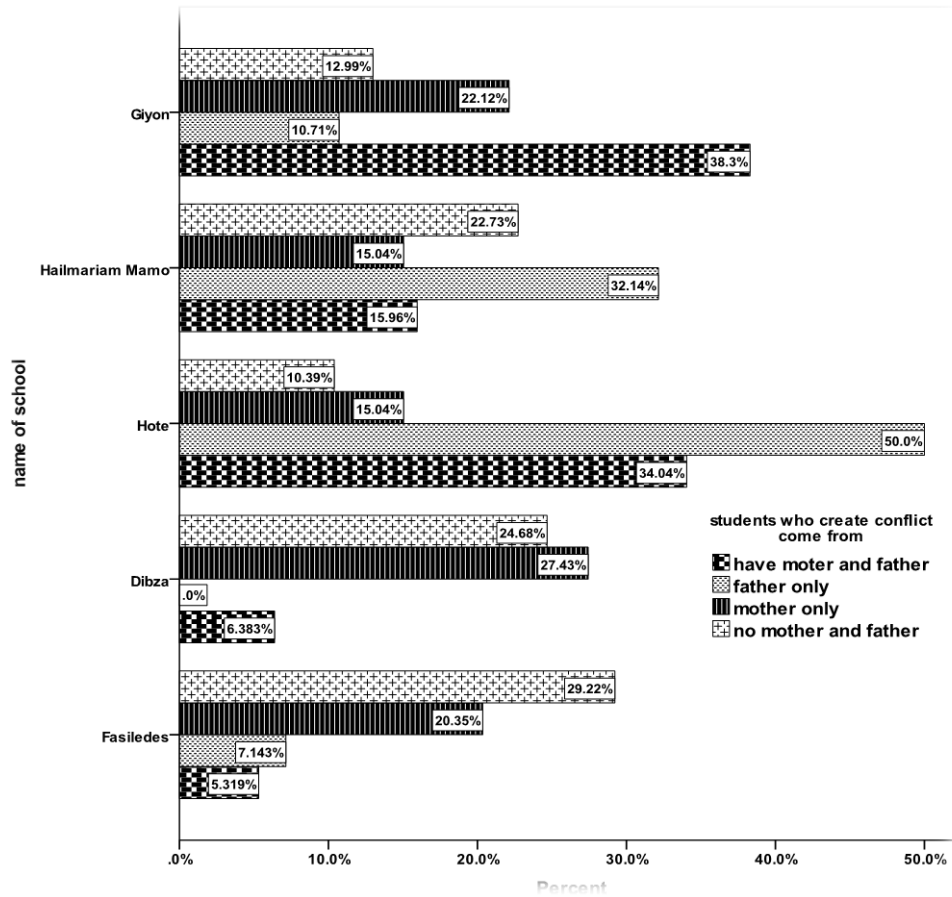


Figure 5: Family Background as a Source of Conflict in Schools

The study investigated that conflicts commonly occurring between student-teacher (~48%) followed by student-student (33.4%) (Figure 6). School principals and teachers assured that nowadays, students do not have the interest to participate actively in the class. Participants indicated their opinions in the following ways. First, the current educational system prevailing in the country gives more power to students than to teachers. Besides, students need to get better marks without working hard in their studies. Second, many students who

completed university educations in different streams are jobless and waste much time seeking jobs. These have negative repercussions on students' performance in their education.

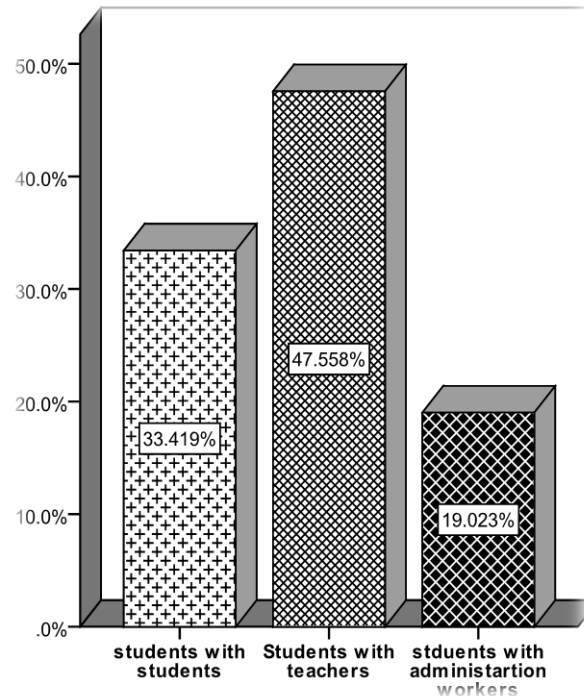


Figure 6: Conflicts between Students, Teachers and Administrative Workers

An interview was made with one male and one female student in Giyon preparatory secondary school to narrate the factors generating conflicts in their school.

Teachers and administrative workers including school principals do not perceive the real problems of students encountered during the class. Some teachers and school guards are autocratic and usually fail to communicate with us. The prime sources of conflict in our class, for example, arise from the poor academic performance and authoritative teaching styles of teachers. Besides, the needs of students with different learning styles are not properly addressed by many teachers in our class. Many students are bored by teacher-centered teaching and learning styles. The informants further pointed out that unable to control classroom discipline, harassing students during the teaching and learning process and taking punishments for trivial activities are sources of conflicts in our school. Many teachers want to create status differences instead of making good relationships with us. This creates an atmosphere of a passive receiver of the lesson. Informants concluded that teachers' art of teaching and knowledge of the subject matter could decrease conflicts in schools (Students' opinions, March 2010).

Likewise, a principal in Fasildes preparatory secondary school shared his experience with respect to the factors generating conflicts.

Conflict arises between students and principals for the reason that students overlook the rules and regulations of the school. On the side of the teachers, unfair grading/favoritism, unnecessary relations with the students, and poor knowledge on the subject matter are the factors generating conflict in this school. In this regard, I wasted much of the time in smoothing such situations in my office. From my experience, coming to school without preparation, undermining the profession and spending some minutes at the beginning or at the end of class created conflicts between the teachers and the students. In my understanding, these situations arise due to low incentives given to teachers that have been implemented in some regions of Ethiopia. For example, house allowances, the place to build

shelter and the low salary payments that do not consider the current marketing situations are some of the reasons leading teachers to undermine their profession. It might be the reason that a considerable number of teachers disappear in this school searching for better employment opportunities. This creates a disruption of the lesson that could be a potential source of conflict in the class (School principal, March 2010).

A school guard in Dibza preparatory secondary school shared his experience related to sources of conflicts in the school he is assigned.

In this high school, I served as a guard for three years. From the many challenges that I encountered the most common ones include students late coming, leaving the school during afternoon periods or going out of school during school time, theft of books, coming class taking too much alcohol, very odd hairstyles, strange wearing styles, jumping over the fences, harassing female students were the common practices that irritate me to continue my job. Insulting and attacking me and my friends were beyond our control. Nowadays, the discipline of the students becomes worse from time to time. When students are asked to bring their family to discuss discipline matters, they are unenthusiastic to accept the request (School guard, March 2010).

From the discussions, it can be said that school disciplines become relentless from time to time emanated from the torpid educational system and external influences. In many cases, these situations are beyond the control of the school administrators.

School Environment as a Source of Conflict

As observed in the field, many high schools in the study areas are not well fenced to stop students from escaping illegally. This is the major source of conflict between students, unit leaders and school guards as

indicated by school principals. As shown in Table 5, lack of fencing and availability of *khat* and local alcohol (*tela* and *arqie*) proximate to the school compounds were factors aggravating conflict between students, teachers and school principals. In this regard, more than 70% of the respondents assured that there was local alcohol selling near to the school compound. Likewise, about 63% of the respondents informed that there was *khat* shopping close to the school compounds.

In relation to this, one female teacher in Giyon high school mentioned that the location of the school is exposed to local alcohol and *khat* farming. More importantly, the school compound is not fenced and the students can move out of the campus freely to engage in alcohol drinking and *khat* chewing during the normal class. From her observation, male students go with female students to take alcohol and chew *khat*. In this area, sex activities are frequently taking place without using protective measures such as condoms. She concludes that such situations lead conflicts between students (commonly practiced in our school), unwanted pregnancy, and victims to HIV/AIDS (Female teacher, March 2010).

Table 5: School Environment as a Source of Conflict

Options	Options	Frequency	Percent
Do you think that the school compound is well fenced?	Yes	250	64.3
	No	139	35.7
Is there any local alcohol nearby your school compound?	Yes	286	73.5
	No	103	26.5
Is there <i>khat</i> shopping close to your school compound?	Yes	244	62.7
	No	145	37.3
Have you seen conflicts among actors in your school compound?	Yes	339	87.1
	No	50	12.9
Principals weak leadership in the school	Yes	223	57.1
	No	166	42.7

Factors Generating Conflicts during the Teaching and Learning Process

Sources of conflicts in the classroom are many and could upset the teaching and learning process. On the side of the teachers, awful punishment of students, unfair grading systems, giving less respect to students and poor teaching performances are the prime factors generating conflicts in the classroom. These issues are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Causes of Conflicts in the Classroom

(i) Unnecessary punishment of students			(ii) Teachers unwanted relations with students			(iii) Unfair grading/favoritism		
	Count	Percent		Count	Percent		Count	Percent
Yes	312	80.2	yes	201	51.7	Yes	222	57.1
No	77	19.8	no	188	48.3	No	166	42.7
(iv) Teachers' poor knowledge on the subject matter			(v). Less respect between students and teachers			(vi). Poor teaching performance		
	Count	Percent		Count	Percent		Count	Percent
Yes	287	74	Yes	296	76	Yes	226	58
No	101	26	No	93	24	No	163	42

The interview was made with one male teacher in Hote preparatory secondary school to narrate the factors generating conflicts in the class.

The major source of conflict encountered me is, students are coming to school without the necessary materials such as text books and exercise books. The use of earphone is also common during my teaching. I advised some of them not to use earphone in the class but still, they are using. Lack of maintaining a permanent seat, late coming, and chatting with friends are the problems encountered during the lesson. Besides, not submitting assignments and homework with the deadline and low participation during my teaching are some of the factors generating conflicts. This year, I am teaching the

Amharic subject. Students are selective to some specific subjects while learning. For example, subjects such as Amharic, ICT, and Drawings are the most unnoticed subjects by many students. This is due to the fact that these subjects are not included in the 12th - grade university entrance exam. From my experience, I can conclude that absenteeism in the afternoon periods, disobedience, low interest for learning, using the school as a means of spending time, listening to music using ear-phones rather than actively participating in the lesson are some of the factors generating conflicts during my class (Male teacher, March 2010).

Determinants Enforcing Students to Take Part in Conflict

The binominal logistic regression model was employed to establish the relationships between students' participation in conflicts (dependent variable) and a set of predictor variables. Sixteen predictor variables were selected to explain the dependent variable. Out of the total predictor variables, eleven variables were significant at 1% and 5% probability levels (Table 8). Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of 0.27 showed that the model is fitted. The predictive efficiency of the model showed that out of 389 respondents included in the model, 298(76.5%) were correctly predicted.

As can be seen in Table 8, the sex of students and generating conflicts have negative relations. This showed that female students are less likely to participate in conflicts as compared to male students with the odds ratio of 0.459 given that other variables are controlled. The descriptive results also indicated that female students coming from urban areas were less participating as a source of conflict as compared to male students. Being other variables constant, the availability of *khat* closer to the school compound is more likely to enhance students' participation in conflict with the odds ratio of 1.429. The binary logistic regression result showed that students placed in the social sciences field of study are more likely to participate in conflicts as compared to natural science

students with the odds ratio of 2.679 given that other variables are controlled. This is significant at $P < 0.01$. The result is also assured by school principals and teachers.

It was hypothesized that unfair grading is one of the sole sources of conflict between students and teachers and has a positive relationship with generating conflicts. The binominal logistic regression result also confirmed this hypothesis. Being other variables constant, unfair grading given by the teacher is more likely to create conflicts between students and teachers by the odds ratio of 2.153. The school principal in Fasiledes preparatory secondary school witnessed that unfair grading creates conflict between students and teachers and this is the most common problem in the school. The regression result indicated that poor communication is more likely to enhance students' participation in conflicts with the odds ratio of 2.154, being other variables constant. Key informants also assured that in many cases barrier of communication is the source of conflict.

Table 8: Results of Binary Logistic Regression

Predictor variables	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex (1)	-.779	.225	11.982	0.001***	.459
Availability of <i>khat</i> (1)	-.853	.272	9.858	0.002***	.426
Engagement in decisions making (1)	-.591	.237	6.237	0.013**	.554
Giving respect (1)	-.581	.242	5.761	0.016**	.978
Unhealthy school environment (1)	.528	.208	6.018	0.045**	1.973
Place of birth (1)	-.256	.216	1.396	0.237	.774
Field of specialization (1)	.986	.360	7.476	0.006***	2.679
Local drink near school compound (1)	.433	.232	3.496	0.062	1.648
Teachers performance (1)	-.081	.205	.157	0.692	.922
Borrowing money from friends (1)	.767	.345	4.936	0.026**	2.153
Poor communication (1)	.767	.362	4.494	0.034**	2.154
School Fencing (1)	-.796	.371	4.586	0.032**	.816
Training given (1)	-.426	.431	.976	0.323	.653
Unfair grading to students (1)	.767	.345	4.936	0.026**	2.153
Parents education (1)	.333	.242	3.486	0.071	1.748
Sex harassment (1)	.562	.307	9.174	0.001***	3.515
Constant	.862	.327	6.971	0.008	2.369

Note: ** = significant at $P < 0.05$, *** = significant at $P < 0.01$

To run a smooth learning and teaching process, students have to respect their teachers and principals. The regression results showed that giving respect and generating conflicts have negative relationships. Other variables being constant, giving respect to teachers and school principals unlikely initiates conflict with the odds ratio of 0.978. This relationship was statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. As observed in the field, many schools have not constructed fences. As can be seen in Table 8, schools fenced and generating conflicts have negative relation and is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. Schools protected with fences are less likely to create conflicts with the odds ratio of 0.816, being other variables are adjusted. This problem was severe in the Giyon preparatory school of Bahir Dar. The regression result showed that sexual harassment and generating conflicts have positive results. Being

other variables constant, sex harassment is more likely to participate in conflicts with the odds ratio of 3.515. This relationship was statistically significant at $P < 0.01$. It is believed that students have to participate in some decision-making process for the reason that in some conditions, students might know more about the causes of conflict than the staff and/or the administrators of the school. The regression result evidenced that student's participation in decision making are less likely to participate in conflicts with the odds ratio of 0.554 being other variables are adjusted for.

Discussion

It is reported that conflict is an essential, of course, unavoidable human phenomenon. Sources of conflict are many depending on the management of the school. For example, principal and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and student, and, teacher and students' parents were conflicts commonly practiced in the study areas. The study found out that poor communication between students and teachers, sex harassment, problematic school environment, low participation of parents in school discipline, unnecessary relations between students and teachers, unfair/biased grading systems, poor academic performance of teachers/students and incapable of doing assignments/homework's were prevalent sources of conflict in the study areas. In relation to this, Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012) indicate that poor communication between students, teachers and school principals are sources of conflict in Islamic secondary schools in Yala. Similarly, Barmao (2012) indicates that restricted and poor communication channels among actors cause conflicts in primary schools in Kenya. However, communication is a means to exchange ideas and opinions between people. Gebretensay (2002) and Thomas (2001) note that among the common sources of conflict communication problems, poor work environment, outdated rules and directives and incompetence of school principals to deal with conflicts are some to be mentioned. The dissatisfaction of teachers to their professions, unnecessary authoritative styles of principals, and improper and unequal distribution

of teaching loads are causes of conflict between school principals and teachers (Barmao, 2012). Saiti (2015) notes that lack of cohesion among educators due to the regular transfer of school educators, weak performance and organizational deficiencies of school leadership, and ineffective patterns of communication and weak information sharing are factors generating conflicts in Greek Primary School Educators. Göksoy and Argon (2016) supplement those political-ideological and organizational deficiencies that also cause conflict in schools.

The study investigated that harassing female students, excessive punishments and insulting students were factors generating conflict in many high schools of the Amhara Region. Kakulira (2016) indicates that brutality; harsh punishment and use of excessive power by school staff and neglecting of students' welfare, enforcement of strict rules with rigidity, failure to understand students' opinions, mismanagement, and poor conflict management styles were factors generating conflicts in schools. The study also investigated that sex harassment by male students found to be a cause of conflict and negatively affects the teaching and learning process. In this regard, Berhanu (2014) indicated that from the total respondents' majority (92.6%) replied sexual harassment creates conflict in schools. Arega and Mulugeta (2017) also indicated that male students frequently create conflicts due to their involvement in sexual harassment of female students. The study revealed that there was no well-organized short training to minimize conflict between actors in schools. Waithaka, Moore-Austin and Gitimu (2015) using paired sample T-test assure that the differences between conflict training and managing conflicts in schools were statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. Betty (1998) also evidenced that training helps in conflict management skills and can also influence the ability to manage conflicts.

The study revealed that an unhealthy school environment affects the teaching and learning process more than any other factor. For instance, lack of fencing the school compound and the occurrence of *khat* and/or alcohol closer the school compounds were factors aggravating conflict

between students, teachers, and school principals. From the study, it was learned that male students more exposure to *khat* chewing than female students and it has an awful influence on their learning activities. Based on the multiple logistic regression analysis made by Yeshalem (2013) *khat* chewing was more likely to occur among male students than female students. The study pointed out that conflicts were higher for those students coming from urban than rural areas. Saiti (2015) mentions that conflicts often arise in the school and there is a greater likelihood for these conflicts to arise for those students who are coming from urban than rural areas. The study revealed that about 60% of the respondents pointed out that weak leadership is the source of conflict in schools. This result is in agreement with the works of Saiti (2015) and indicates that two of the major causes of conflicts within Greek schools were lack of cohesion among teaching staff and the ineffectiveness of the school leadership.

Conclusion and Implications

Conflict occurs among organizations, within organizations and within the personality of each individual manifested through the process of human interactions. The purpose of the study was to examine factors generating conflicts among the selected preparatory secondary schools in Amhara Region. The study found out that school conflicts frequently occur between students, teachers and principals. From the study it was learned that unhealthy school environment associated with the availability of *khat* and drinking local alcohol proximate to the school compound generates conflict in schools. Besides, weak academic performance of teachers and/or students, less motivation of students to learn, parents pathetic follow up, teachers authority teaching styles, autocratic administrative styles of principals, insulting students, poor communication between students, and lack of skill how to manage conflicts were the key factors generating conflicts in the selected high schools. The binary logistic regression model results showed that lack of fencing the school compound, the barrier of communication, less

engagement in decision making process were the factors generating conflict in the schools.

The study recommended that any conflict training session have to be designed on the basis of students' age, life experiences, and nature of conflicts. Seminars/workshops have to be prepared not only for the students but for the teachers as well in areas of factors generating conflicts and management styles for smooth teaching and learning process. More importantly, it would have been better to encourage students to participate in the preparation and implementation of the rules and regulations of the school.

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