

Inhibitors of Positive Interpersonal Relationships among Teachers

Dr. Issah Mohammed^{1*}, Abdulai, N.¹, Suhiyini, B. H. Adam¹

¹Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies, P. O. Box TL 1350, Tamale, Ghana-Africa

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Issah Mohammed

Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies, P. O. Box TL 1350, Tamale, Ghana-Africa

Article History

Received: 05.04.2023

Accepted: 08.05.2023

Published: 13.05.2023

Abstract: This study examines inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationships among senior high school teachers in the Tamale Education Metropolis. The study made use of qualitative research methodology, as such, case study design was adopted. Purposive sampling technique was used to select fifteen (15) teachers and five (5) secondary school head teachers. An interview schedule with open-ended questions was developed to conduct face-to-face in-depth individual interviews. Data collected through pen-and-paper personal interviews were analysed using deductive thematic analytical method. Findings were that tribal differences, religious diversity, superiority complex, gender differences, political ideologies, gossiping and backbiting, poor leadership styles and student-teacher intimate relations were some of the inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationships among teachers in the secondary schools of the Tamale Education Metropolis. Recommendations made were that senior high schools heads should work with the Regional Metropolitan Education and the Ghana Education Service to organize workforce diversity management training to educate all teachers and school managers on the need to embrace all the differences that exist among them and to also confront their own ethnic, cultural, political and gender stereotypes. School heads should foster in teachers a school culture that is characterised by positive teacher-teacher interpersonal relations and to appeal to all teachers who practice superiority complex to desist from such an act as it inhibits good teacher-teacher relations. School heads in their official meetings should sincerely talk to teachers to do away with all forms of gossips and backbiting. Heads of senior high schools should work with the Regional Metropolitan Education and the Ghana Education Service to organize workshop on the Code of Conduct for all teachers. In the same workshop, the need for teachers to desist from teacher-student intimate relations should be emphasised and the kind of relationship that should exist between teachers and students should also be highlighted.

Keywords: Inhibitors, Positive, Interpersonal, Relationships, Schools heads, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Positive interpersonal relationship among teachers in schools and its significance in today's dynamic and complex school environments cannot be underplayed (Khan, Yusoff, Hussain, & Binti, 2019). Interpersonal relationship according to Stoetzer (2010) is the relationship that exists between two or more teachers in schools, it is developed through constant association and interaction with co-teachers and it is also an important component of a working life in schools (Singh & Kassa, 2016). Interpersonal relationship involves the effective management of teachers' relationships in their professional working environment (Asongo, Aguji & Utile, 2018). Interpersonal relationship is a strong bond and association among individual teachers working in the same school (Banerjee, 2019; Chaudhary, 2019). While Parker (2023) explains that interpersonal relations is the ability of teachers to interact with each other in a healthier ways that build stronger relationships.

Teachers as the most important resources in any educational institutions need to have high levels of positive relations with each other so as to achieve high levels of team work, collaboration and effective teaching and learning (Singh & Kassa, 2016). Positive interpersonal relations among teachers do play a critical role in teachers work success and career progress (Banerjee, 2019). It allows for the realisation of effective communication and understanding among

Copyright © 2023 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

CITATION: Issah Mohammed, Abdulai, N., Suhiyini, B. H. Adam (2023). Inhibitors of Positive Interpersonal Relationships among Teachers. *South Asian Res J Human Soc Sci*, 5(3): 55-64.

teachers (Banerjee, 2019; Chaudhary, 2019; Juneja, 2022). Teachers need to share a high level of professional friendship in schools to aid in their classroom delivery and positive contributions towards school affairs (Chaudhary, 2019; Parker, 2023). Ensuring and maintaining good teacher relations is critical to schools functionality (Parker, 2023).

It is important to highlight in this paper that there is limited literature on teacher-teacher interpersonal relationships in schools, as such, the number of studies on interpersonal relationships in organisations do not include inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationships among teachers in schools. The question that needed to be answered is: what are the inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationships among senior high school teachers in the Tamale Education Metropolis?

Despite the importance of positive interpersonal relationships among teachers in schools, as it has been postulated in Nigeria by Obakpolo (2015) that a school environment with a high level of teacher interpersonal relationship does expose teachers to ideas sharing and new ways of learning, while in Namibia, Rothmann and Welsh (2013) opined that teachers who cultivate good relationships with each other do tend to feel safe and happy in carrying out their duties. In spite of the significance of positive interpersonal relationships to schools, in the case of interpersonal relationship among teachers in senior high schools of the Tamale Education Metropolis, there seems to be inadequacy of professional relationships among teachers, there seems also to be signs of interpersonal conflicts and poor communication among the teachers. This is why Singh and Kassa (2016) remind us of how educational managers and human resources practitioners have in recent days try to acknowledge the effects of poor teacher interpersonal relationships on school effectiveness and teacher performance. In addition, Chaudhary (2019) states that the negative effects of poor interpersonal relations among teachers do include single brain decision making, monotony, lack of collaboration and low teacher performance.

Given the importance of positive interpersonal relationships among teachers in schools, this study was designed to examine inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationships among senior high school teachers in the Tamale Education Metropolis. The paper is organised as follows: Section one deals with the theoretical background of the study. Section two presents factors contributing to poor interpersonal relationships among teachers in schools. The research method and design employed in the study are presented in section three while the results of the study and discussions of the research findings are presented in section four. The last section comprises conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC) theory which was developed by Timothy Leary, as such; it was coined as Leary Circumplex or Leary Circle (Leary, 1957; Randy & David, 2008). The Interpersonal Circumplex is a psychological theory for understanding interpersonal motives and interactions among teachers, the theory assists teachers to understand their own behaviours, the interpersonal skills they possess and how other teachers perceive these behaviors and interpersonal skills in influencing how teachers relate positively or negatively with each other (University of Virginia Medical Center, 2023).

Fournier, Moskowitz and Zuroff (2011), Smith (2013) have outlined that the Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC) theory puts the behavior of teachers into two main dimensions or segments: 1. Affiliation (warmth, friendliness vs. hostility and quarrelsomeness) and 2. Control (dominance, directives vs. submissiveness, deference). Using Interpersonal Circumplex as a theoretical basis, the University of Virginia Medical Center (2023), Smith, *et al.*, (2010), in their study of married couples' relationships revealed three risk factor domains: 1. Hostile domain (verbal aggressiveness and conflict), 2. Hostile submissiveness (anxiety and depression) and 3. Protective factors (marital satisfaction, warmth, friendliness).

Furthermore on the theoretical understanding of Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC) theory in professional teacher relations, Locke (2019), Abele and Wojciszke (2018) explained that social motives, behaviours and interactions among teachers in schools can be grouped into two domains:

1. **Agency:** Where agentic behaviors include school managers and their teachers showing status, power, abilities or accomplishments when in their professional interactions and relations with each other. These behaviours may lead to either positive or negative interpersonal relations among teachers in the school environment.
2. **Communion:** Where communal behaviours among teachers may include school managers and their teachers showing cooperativeness, kindness, generousness and trustworthiness in dealing with each other. Teachers who effectively use both agency and communion have more chances of building good interpersonal relations with other teachers (Locke, 2019).

A teacher who pursues agency wastes his or her time and resources on relations and actions that bring back nothing good (fruitless relations), while those who pursue communion waste their time and resources on other teachers who in return give them nothing (Leary, 1957; Saucier, *et al.*, 2014). For the achievement of a balanced interpersonal

relationships in schools, it is important for teachers and school managers to be unagentic (where they display passiveness and yielding) as well as agentic (where they show firmness and assertiveness). Locke (2019) explained that for the achievement of balanced relations in schools, managers and teachers should always show uncommunal (being wary and unsupportive) as well as communal (being opened to others and being engaged).

Factors Contributing to Poor Interpersonal Relations among Teachers

Gossiping among teachers has been noted by Agba (2018) as one of the inhibitors to positive interpersonal relationships among teachers, he opined that school managers and their teachers do sometimes allow themselves to be influenced to disassociate themselves and to hate a particular teacher because of some comments made against such a teacher.

It has been noted by Jouany and Martic (2023) that lack of trust and transparency among teachers do result to poor professional relationships in schools. A school environment characterized as lack of trust, honesty and transparency among teachers will not encourage teachers to do their best because honesty, transparency and trust are important in any professional relationships (Juneja, 2022; Parker, 2023).

Teachers with different aims, attitudes, thought processes will have difficulties in relating well with each other in schools (Juneja, 2022). Differences in culture, race, experience, education, occupation, socio-economic class, and other environmental factors can be inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationship among teachers (Chaudhary, 2019).

Ineffective and poor leadership style has been cited as one of the factors contributing to negative interpersonal relations among teachers in schools, for example, in America, Parker (2023) reports that 50% of employees do resign from their jobs at some point in their lives because of the toxic relationship they have with their bosses. Dilutions of supervision and command have the potential of breeding poor relations in schools (Chand, 2023).

It has also been reported by Parker (2023), Chand (2023) that unequal pay and low and poor wages has the potential of contributing to damage employee relationships especially when there is a constant request for pay raise which has been declined. Parker again mentioned lack of job flexibility, unclear policies, workplace bullying, unresolved conflicts poor communication and misunderstandings as contributors to poor teacher relations in schools (Chand, 2023; Parker, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

The study made used of qualitative research approach to shed light on the inhibitors of positive interpersonal relations among senior high school teachers in the Tamale Education Metropolis (Mack, *et al.*, 2011). Purposive sampling technique was used to select fifteen (15) teachers and five (5) secondary school heads to provide the most relevant insights into the inhibitors of positive relations among teachers (White, 2005). To gain informed consent, permissions were sought from school managers and teachers (Babbie, 2008). Data were collected through face-to-face in-depth individual interviews (Neuman, 2003). This was done through the use of pen-and-paper personal interviews (PAPI) in order to ensure the strongest return rate and to provide a true sense of anonymity (Gilbert, 2022). Questions asked were open-ended to ensure the provision of rich information and the openly expressions by the school heads and teachers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Data were analysed using deductive thematic analytical method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results and discussions of the study based on the study objective are: (i) tribal differences, (ii) religious diversity, (iii) superiority complex, (iv) gender differences, (v) influence of political ideologies, (vi) gossiping and backbiting, (vii) poor leadership style and (viii) student-teacher intimate relations. These results are discussed in detailed below:

Tribal Differences

The study found tribal factors to have contributed to teacher poor relations in schools. It was revealed that some of the teachers are tribalistic as such relate well in schools with colleague teachers who are their tribe mates and who also come from the same region or towns than those who are from different tribes or towns. It was also revealed that teachers do mingle well and are more concerned with the affairs and well-being of their tribemates in schools, as such; show unconcerned to teachers from different tribes. A teacher had the following to say: *Some teachers are so tribalistic to a point that they relate well with teachers from their tribe or home town.* In support of this finding, Prachi (2015) highlights that for positive interpersonal relations to sustain, individual teachers must share similar interest, back ground and tribal connections in schools.

What a Head teacher said was that: *Teachers from the same tribe and geographical areas are more in good talks with each other than those from other tribes, I think so.* This is why Tsui, *et al.*, (1992) highlight that demographic similarity among teachers in schools do leads to high level of interpersonal relations among selected teachers which may occur without extensive interactions and engagements. While Parker (2023) explained that tribal as well as cultural differences do build up tension and poor relations in the workplace. Some assertions from another teacher were that: *It is easier mingling with teachers who understand your local language because communication and sharing of personal problems becomes easier than those who do not.* To confirm these findings, Song and Oshfski (2008) opined that workplace interpersonal relations either positive or negative are influenced by ethnic background and family ties.

Religious Diversity

The study found religious affiliation to have contributed to teacher poor relations in the schools. It was revealed that teachers who are followers of a given religion try as much they could to relate well with each other and are also so concerned with each follower well-being and growth in the schools than teachers who belong to different religious affiliation and denomination. It was again found that teachers who belong to the same religious denomination either as Traditionalists, Christians or Muslims are so motivated to relate well with each other in schools than those of different religious denomination. Some views from a teacher were: *Apart from the formal organization, teachers here belong to different religious beliefs and affiliations, so that motivates them to relate well with their church members at the expense of other teachers from different religious background.* To concur with this finding, in Lebanon, Messarra and El-Kassar (2018) claimed teachers do feel the necessity to join and identify themselves with similar religious ideologies in schools in order to feel safe and to defend their religious interest and individual well-being. On the other hand, Gebert, Boerner, Kearney, Jr, Zhang and Song (2014) believed that when religious diversity among teachers in schools is poorly managed, there is bound to be poor interpersonal relations among the diverse religions.

What a head teacher said was that: *Muslims here are found moving well and sharing lots in common while Christians are in good relations with their Christian brothers and sisters because of their religious differences though such is not good for our unity.* To corroborate this finding, Singh and Babbar (2020) are of the views that workplace religious differences and practices results in differentiation, discrimination and also deteriorate interpersonal relations among teachers. A teacher's claims were: *Who is in good terms or in good relations depends on the religion or denomination because we may have Muslim or Christian teachers who belong to different denominations as such do have some concerns for each other well-being.* In support of these findings, Hogg and Terry (2000) are of the belief that teachers as individual do identify themselves with given religious ideologies in order to reduce school uncertainty and to promote their desired behaviours and expectations.

Superiority Complex

It was found in the study that there is poor interpersonal relation among teachers in schools because of the existence and practice of superiority complex by some teachers. The study uncovered that experienced and long serving teachers do practice some level of superiority complex through the thinking that they are the best, they have achieved higher level of pedagogical competency in schools, as such, they have less concerned with building good relations with others who have not achieved lots in the teaching profession. It was also found that teachers who in a particular school have served for a very long time have superiority complex in dealing with teachers who have not served such schools for a very long time. A head teacher said the following: *Some teachers practice superiority complex because they have been in the profession and also serving in a given school for so long and so they must be respected by the younger teachers at all times.* As mentioned by Brennan (2021), Haverport (2021), that teachers with superiority complex are mean to other teachers, they are arrogant; they show excessive pride, are smug and condescend because of their achievements in the teaching profession. What a teacher said was that: *What I can say is that there is a disregard for the concerns and contributions of other colleague teachers by some old teachers in the schools because of that there is a lack of good relations among us.* To support these finding, Haverport (2021), Brennan (2021) mentioned that teachers who practice superiority complex in schools do belief that their abilities, accomplishment and experiences are somehow dramatically better than other teachers because of that they think their heads and shoulders are above all other teachers.

The study further revealed that superiority complex of long serving teachers do contribute to poor interpersonal relations in schools because these category of teachers always want to have some level of command and control over colleague teachers as such, newly employed teachers always distance themselves from older teachers. A teacher was heard saying that: *There is superiority complex among some members of school management and even some senior staff members because they think they know it all and are the best in the schools.* According to Gupta and Romanoff (2023), teachers who practice superiority complex do act as better than others and also do exaggerate their achievements and accomplishment in school so as to escape from feelings of insecurity. A head teacher was heard claiming that: *Superiority complex teachers want to have some level of command over others, disregard others opinions and do not want to have adequate interpersonal relationships with colleague teachers.* To corroborate these findings, Gupta and Romanoff (2023) opined that teachers with superiority complex are fond of placing excessive values on their opinions

and contributions in schools while disregarding others. On the other hand, Haverport (2021) asserts that the negative aspect of superiority complex is that colleague teachers will always stay away from superiority complex teachers who habitually disregard others achievements and accomplishments in schools.

Gender Differences

Gender difference among teachers was also found to be a contributive factor to inadequate interrelations and interpersonal relationships among teachers. It was revealed that male teachers do relate well with each other in schools than female teachers as well as female teachers relating well among themselves than their male counterparts. A teacher's comment was that: *Gender difference among us is a reason why some teachers do not relate well with each other so as to avoid suspicion and gossiping.* To support these findings, Song and Oshfski (2008) are of the views that interpersonal relations among teachers in schools are usually based on gender differences. Another teacher claimed that: *The difference in gender can be a reason why some teachers have poor relations in schools.* To concur with this statement, Prachi (2015) mentioned that gender differences and differences in aims and attitudes among teachers are some reasons why there is poor relation in schools. A head teacher mentioned that: *Most married female teachers are less concerned with building good relations with male teachers because of the gender difference and marital status.* In relations to this finding, Torppa (2010) explained that female teachers to a large extent are sensitive to the kind of interpersonal relations they have with their male counterparts.

Influence of Political Ideologies

The study uncovered that some teachers' interactions and ways of lives in schools are based on political ideologies and beliefs. A head teacher said the following: *In this school, some teachers are found sometimes only interacting well based on political affiliations and beliefs.* A teacher mentioned that: *Teachers in this school mostly relate based on political ideologies.* It was revealed that there are situations in staff meetings where there are counter reactions and exchange of harsh and unpleasant words because of teachers' political differences and ideologies. This is the reason why Bodla, Afza and Danish (2014) described the practice of political ideologies and the existence of politics in schools as unethical, unfair and unjust behavior.

It was again found that in meetings, these different political camps always disagree on points and contributions made by teachers from different political camps. A teacher lamented as: *Sometimes in meetings, teachers can be harsh in their submissions against other teachers' contributions simple because of political differences.* This is the reason why Karim, Abdul-Majid, Omar and Aburumman (2021) lament that the practice of politics and the existence of political differences display by teachers in schools at a greater degree promotes interpersonal conflict and distrust among teachers. A head teacher said the following: *There are teachers who form sections and groups in staff meetings with a common goal of disagreeing with other teachers' submissions and contributions who are from different political parties or who have different political ideologies.* To corroborate these findings, Wooll (2021) claimed that a school environment that is characterized by politics and the existence of political ideologies can mar the good relationships teachers enjoy, it can lead to backstabbing among teachers and can lead to the formation of unhealthy cliques.

Furthermore, it was revealed that the number of teachers who socially support a bereaved teacher or a teacher who has a wedding or naming ceremony is usually based on that teacher's political affiliation. A teacher said the following: *A teacher who has a social gathering or occasion usually gets supports and attention from other teachers who belong to the same political affiliation or party as the teacher with the occasion.* Another teacher's point of view is that: *I think only very close friends and political party affiliates do attach some seriousness to a social gathering a particular teacher has which is not good at all because we are here to support each other as teachers.* This kind of finding could be one of the reasons why Chinomona and Mofokeng (2016), Karim, *et al.*, (2021) claimed that politics and political ideologies held by teachers in schools do undermine the importance attached to social support and interpersonal exchange of relations among teachers. Again, Erkutlu and Chafra, (2016), Zhang and Dai (2015) believed that the devastating effects of political practices in schools by teachers include the causing of an individual teacher to feel ostracised and discriminated at when he or she badly needs all teachers to support him/her.

Gossiping and Backbiting

The study further found gossiping and backbiting among teachers to have contributed to the existence of poor interpersonal relations among teachers in schools. It was revealed that teachers have the tendencies of intentionally misrepresenting what a colleague teacher has said to others and they gossip and talk lots among themselves which sometimes is brought to the attention of the one being gossiped about. What a teacher said was: *Lying, gossiping and backbiting are destructive factors that affect good teacher-teacher relation in this school. Teachers unprofessionally do all these which do not help in any way.* To confirm these findings, Wooll (2021) explained that workplaces where there are gossips can cause hurt feelings, reputational damage and can lead to poor interpersonal relations. Furthermore, Cooks-Campbell (2022) mentioned that a school environment full of gossip can inhibit fruitful discussions, can strain trust between teachers, can affect teachers' moral and work quality.

It was further revealed that there are tendencies among teachers where they base their decisions on hearsay and where they wrongfully report colleague teachers to school management and education officials which sometimes generate tension in schools. The following sentiment was made by a teacher: *Teachers who are supposed to be each other keepers are rather seen bewitching each other and seen reporting one another to school heads and higher authority unprofessionally.* To support these findings, Vandersteen (2014) reports on the negative aspects of workplace gossip which include teachers using gossip as a weapon for competition, conflict and personal vendetta. Furthermore, Song and Guo (2022) are of the views that a school environment that is characterized by gossip does reduce teachers' motivation, self-worth and spiritual satisfaction.

It was also uncovered that there is poor teacher-teacher relationship because some teachers behave unprofessionally by maliciously talking about colleague teachers to students and go beyond that to incite them to report colleague teachers to parents and school management. The following feelings were made by a teacher: *Sometimes, students are incited by teachers to report other teachers to family members and school authority which sometimes bring about misunderstanding amongst the teachers.* Another teacher mentioned that: *Sometimes we are our own enemies because we gossip a lot about our colleagues in the mix of students who in turn inform such teachers what has been said about them which subsequently generates misunderstanding and poor interpersonal relationships in schools.* With regards to these findings, Cooks-Campbell (2022), Vandersteen (2014) claim workplace gossip can signal an open welcoming school environment, but warns that, if workplace gossip is over practiced or when exchanges of interpersonal relations among teachers make up negative gossip, this can lead a school to experience poor teacher-teacher relations and a toxic school environment.

Poor Leadership Style

The study found favoritism and discrimination on the parts of school management as major causes of poor teacher relations in schools. The study revealed that some school managers have use the following divide and rule style in the management of their teachers: openly making certain teachers feel special and favoured, causing disagreement among teachers in the way they delegate, the way they relate well with section of the teachers and act unfriendly and dismissive of other teachers' plans and contributions. A teacher feelings were that: *Favoritism that is practiced by school heads is to be blamed for the poor relations among us.* Based on this finding, May (2021) opined that no teacher in a school likes to feel that he or she is been left out because of managers favouritism, as such, May (2021) claimed workplace favouritism is dangerous, toxic, injustice and an impediment to positive interpersonal relations. To buttress what May (2021) has highlighted, Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe (2019) claimed that a school head whose leadership style is based on sectionalism and divide and rule philosophy always creates an environment where some teachers feel marginalized and neglected as well as an environment of poor teacher-teacher interpersonal relationship.

Another teacher claims were: *School managers use poor leadership style where they respect and relate well with some teachers while dismissing other teacher plans.* In response to this unpleasant finding, Mahali (2018) emotionally claimed that teachers who work in school environment of divide and rule management style do experience the worst kind of employee-manager relationship. Also, Shan, Ishaq and Shaheen (2015) have mentioned the need for an existence of good interpersonal relationship between school heads and all their teachers because *Interactional Justice* as a concept puts an emphasis on the fairness based on the quality of relationships that should exist between school heads and all their teachers. What a school head said was that: *You see Dr. some of the school heads do practice discrimination among teachers and also use divide and rule tactics.* Contrary to these findings, Bilal, Muqadas and Khalid (2015) put an emphasis on the expectations all teachers have about their school leaders in treating them fair and justice.

The study again found that management do sometimes insult and correct colleague teachers in the presence of students which do not always go down well with the teachers been corrected. A school head's sentiment was that: *Some of us do create these poor relations when we try correcting our teachers in the presence of our students, some heads do even insult teachers in the presence of other teachers and students.* What a teacher said was that: *Insulting fellow teachers will also mar the good relationship in the school environment.* To confirm this finding Parker (2023) asserted that unfair treatment and humiliating of teachers by their managers may build up negative relations in school environment. Again, Mahali (2018) is of the views that it is very stressful and also has the potential of damaging good teacher-leader interpersonal relations where teachers are subjected to demeaning strategies of divide and rule.

Student-Teacher Intimate Relations

The study found a few selected teachers to unprofessionally and immorally try to have intimate relations with their female students which sometimes lead to sexual relations. It was revealed that teachers who are tagged or labelled with this kind of unprofessional behaviour on campus are disliked, hated and usually have poor relations with all other teachers. A teacher expressed the following sentiment: *I think there is poor relations among some teachers because of the immoral sexual act male teachers have with female students in this school. No teacher wants to relate well with these kinds of teachers because of their unprofessional conducts.* To confirm these finding, the assessment of Girl's Education

in Rundu, Namibia, by Felton and Haihambo-Muetudhana (2002), Katjiua (2013) was that teachers were found to have allowed female students to live with them in their rooms on school grounds. Again, Chanika (2003) reports on how male teachers sexually abuse female primary school students at Chiradzulu district of Blantyre in Malawi. To react to these unfortunate and unpleasant findings, the Namibia Ministry of Education (2004), the Ghana Education Service Council (2017) have explained that no teacher should be involved in any form of romance or sexual relations with students because teachers in all education sectors have been made to understand the code conduct that governs their relationships in the teaching profession.

It was also revealed that in some selected schools, few teachers do exhibit signs of poor interpersonal relations among themselves, signs of bad blood, signs of bitterness and unwillingness to collaborate and be team players because these teachers each try to have intimate relations with one particular female student in which they all know though there may not be sexual relations. A comment from another teacher was: *Student-teacher intimate relationship can also cause bitterness which will go a long way to mar teacher-teacher relationship and interaction on campus*. A head teacher said the following: *Teachers going into relationships with female students often results in teacher clashes and leads to bad blood among them*. Contrary to these unprofessional and unethical findings, Nuland (2009), Katjiua (2013), McCallum (2001) have all highlighted that the existence of any relationship between teachers (both male and female teachers) and their students (both female and male students) in schools should be professional and should focus on education where the teacher is expected to be fair, honest and truthful.

CONCLUSION

Inhibitors of positive interpersonal relations among teachers have led to single brain decision making in schools, it has led to lack of ideas sharing and collaboration among teachers. Tribal differences among teachers as inhibitors of positive relations have also made it impossible for teachers to relate well in schools and to genuinely concern themselves with the affairs and well-being of colleague teachers. The existence and practice of religious diversity and affiliations among teachers in schools has had a negative impact on the extent teachers from different religious backgrounds relate well with each other and the extent they ensure the establishment of good relations among themselves. A phenomenon of superiority complex being practice by some teachers has also contributed to a decline in good teacher-teacher relationship in schools. Gender differences among teachers do also contribute to inadequacy of interrelations and interpersonal relationships between male and female teachers.

Other inhibitors of good interpersonal relations among teachers include the practice of political ideologies and beliefs by teachers in schools, a phenomenon of unpleasant behaviours in the form of gossiping and backbiting among teachers, favoritism and discriminatory practices by some school leaders and the existence of unprofessional and immoral practices in the form of student-teacher intimate relations in some schools. These mentioned inhibitors of positive interpersonal relations among teachers do affect school functionality, team work and fruitful discussions among teachers, they do have devastating effect on democratic practices in schools, teacher collaboration and teacher effectiveness. Last but not least, the use of only five senior high school teachers and school heads in the Tamale Education Metropolis was the limitations; there is therefore the need to conduct such a study by including both primary and junior high school teachers and school heads so as to establish much broader and more wider predominant inhibitors of positive interpersonal relationships among teachers in the Tamale Education Metropolis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The heads of senior high schools should work with the Regional Metropolitan Education and the Ghana Education Service to organize workforce diversity management training in all Education Districts, Municipals and Metropolitans for all teachers and school heads. In these workshops, diversity management experts should be made to educate all teachers and school managers on the need to embrace all the differences that exist among teachers and to also confront their own ethnic, cultural and gender stereotypes in ways that allow for stronger and effective interpersonal relations among all teachers. It is recommended that all school heads in their weekly meetings should foster in teachers a school culture that is characterized by positive teacher-teacher interpersonal relations so as to achieve effective teaching and learning. School managers should appeal to all teachers who practice superiority complex to desist from such an act as it inhibits good teacher-teacher relations. These kinds of teachers should be made to treat all other teachers as important and the best.

The Ghana Education Service should empower all school heads the skills and tactics in handling extreme political practices and ideologies by teachers. Teachers should be encouraged to practice frank and open discussions of differences in opinions and to move away from the practice of extreme political ideologies that have the potentials of creating disagreement among teachers.

School heads in their interactions with teachers should sincerely talk to them to do away with all forms of gossips and backbiting. Teachers should be told to first of all investigate what has been said to them about other teachers, they should put an end to the tendencies of intentionally misrepresenting what colleague teachers have said to them about a particular teacher and they should not allow any iota of gossip or backbiting to inhibit the professional interpersonal relations they always enjoy. Also, the heads of senior high schools should work hand in hand with the Regional Metropolitan Education and the Ghana Education Service to organize workshop for all teachers on the kind of relationship that should exist between teachers and students. The same training session should be used to remind all teachers about their Code of Conduct.

To foster good interpersonal relations in teachers and their school heads and to put an end to some school heads' tendency to insult and to humiliate teachers, the Metropolitan Education should organize leadership training for all secondary school heads. In this training, management and leadership experts should be made to train all school heads on democratic leadership style, collegial leadership style, collaborative and participatory leadership styles. These experts should include in the training the devastating effects of using favouritism and divide and rule strategy as a school leader. The same training sessions should be used to drill school heads on various scenarios (positive and negative) in relations to teacher-teacher interpersonal relations.

REFERENCES

- Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2018). *Agency and Communion in Social Psychology*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Agba, A. M. O., Ushie, E. M., & Agba, M. S. (2009). External Factors in Industrial Crisis in Nigerian Civil Service. *Nigerian Journal of Labour Law and Industrial Crisis*, 3(3), 75-94.
- Agba, M. S. (2018). *Essential Readings in Performance Management and Evaluation*, Calabar: Fabulous Prints.
- Asongo, T. Aguji, C. and Utile, B. J. (2018). The Effects of Interpersonal Relations Practices on Productivity of Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSIT), Abuj/a. *Global Journal of Human-Social Sciences*, 18(5), 19-23
- Babbie, E. R. (2008). *The Basics of Social Research*. Fourth edition. United States of America: Thomas Wadsworth.
- Banerjee, S. (2019). *Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace*. Retrieved January 25, 2023 from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/interpersonal-relationship-workplace-sumista-banerjee/>
- Bilal, A. R., Muqadas, F., & Khalid, S. (2015) Impact of Organizational Justice on Job Satisfaction with Mediating Role of Psychological Ownership. *Global Management Journal for Academic & Corporate Studies*, 5(2), 63-74.
- Bodla, M., Afza, T., & Danish, R. (2014). Relationship between Organizational Politics Perceptions and Employees' Performance: Mediating Role of Social Exchange Perceptions. *Pak. J. Commerce Soc. Sci.*, 8(2), 426-444.
- Brennan, D. (2021). What Is a Superiority Complex? Retrieved April 6, 2023 from <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-is-a-superiority-complex>
- Chand, S. (2023). 5 Causes of Poor Employer-Employee Relations. Retrieved February 6, 2023 from <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/employee-management/5-causes-of-poor-employer-employee->
- Chanika E. (2003). *Male Teacher Sexual Abuse of the Girl Child in the School Context: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Chiradzulu District*, Blantyre: Common Wealth Education Fund. Stellenbosch University <http://scholar.sun.ac.za>
- Chaudhary, A. R. (2019). *Interpersonal Relationship at Workplace*. Retrieved from January 20, 2022 from <https://allthingstalent.org/interpersonal-relationship-at-workplace/2019/04/08/#>:
- Chinomona, E., & Mofokeng, T. M. (2016). Impact of Organisational Politics on Job Dissatisfaction and Turnover Intention: An Application of Social Exchange Theory on Employees Working in Zimbabwean Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). *J. Appl. Bus. Res.*, 32(3), 857-870.
- Cooks-Campbell, A. (2022). How to Handle Gossip in the Workplace and Encourage Communication. Retrieved March 15, 2023 from <https://www.betterup.com/blog/gossip-in-the-workplace>
- Erkutlu, H., & Chafra, J. (2016). Impact of Behavioral Integrity on Workplace Ostracism the Moderating Roles of Narcissistic Personality and Psychological Distance. *J. Appl. Res. High Educ.*, 26(4), 366-385.
- Felton, S., & Haihambo, C. K. (2002). *Girls' Education in the Kavango*. Windhoek: UNICEF.
- Fournier, M. A., Moskowitz, D. S. D., & Zuroff, D. C. (2011). Origins and Applications of the Interpersonal Circumplex. Retrieved March 20, 2023 from <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118001868>.
- Gebert, D., Boerner, S., Kearney, E., King Jr, J. E., Zhang, K., & Song, L. J. (2014). Expressing Religious Identities in the Workplace: Analyzing a Neglected Diversity Dimension. *Human relations*, 67(5), 543-563.
- Ghana Education Service Council (2017). *Code of Conduct for Staff of the Ghana Education Service*. Retrieved April 10, 2023 from <https://ges.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GES-CODE-OF-CONDUCT.pdf>
- Gilbert, H. (2022). CERE has a Question for you: Does Anyone use Paper and Pencil to Collect Data Anymore? Retrieved February 4th, 2023 from <https://cere.olemiss.edu/cere-has-a-question-for-you-does-anyone-use-paper-and-pencil-to-collect-data-anymore/>

- Gupta, S., & Romanoff, S. (2023). What Is a Superiority Complex? Retrieved April 7, 2023 from <https://www.verywellmind.com/superiority-complex-causes-characteristics-and-coping->
- Haverport, L. (2021). How to Manage Superiority Complex in the Workplace. Retrieved April 7, 2022 from <https://www.internzoo.com/superiority-complex/>
- Hogg, M. A., & Terry, D. J. (2000). Social Identity and Self-Categorization Processes in Organizational Contexts. *Academy Of Management Review*, 25(1), 121-140.
- Jouany, V., & Martic, K. (2023). Interpersonal Communication: Definition, Importance and Must- Have Skills. Retrieved January 27, 2023 from <https://haiilo.com/blog/interpersonal-communication-definition-importance-and-must-have-skills>
- Juneja, P. (2022). Factors Affecting Interpersonal Relationship. Retrieved January 25, 2022 from <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/factors-affecting-interpersonal-relationship.htm>
- Karim, D. N., Abdul-Majid, A., Omar, K., & Aburumman, O. J. (2021). The Mediating Effect of Interpersonal Distrust on the Relationship between Perceived Organizational politics and Workplace Ostracism in Higher Education Institutions. Retrieved April 9, 2023 from [https://www.cell.com/heliyon/pdf/S2405-8440\(21\)01383-9.pdf](https://www.cell.com/heliyon/pdf/S2405-8440(21)01383-9.pdf)
- Katjiua, J. B. (2013). Effects of Teacher Sexual Relationship with Learners on the Delivery of HIV/AIDS Programmes in schools: Focus on Two High Schools in Rundu. Unpublished Dissertation: University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- Khan, M. A., Md Yusoff, R., Hussain, A., & Binti Ismail, F. (2019). The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship of HR Practices and Employee Job Performance: Empirical Evidence from Higher Education Sector. *International Journal of Organisational Leadership*, 8(1), 78-94
- Leary, T. (1957). *Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality*. New York: Ronald. ISBN 1592447767.
- Locke, K. D. (2019). Development and Validation of a Circumplex Measure of the Interpersonal Culture in Work Teams and Organizations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 850.
- Mahali, R. (2018). Divide and Rule must become Divide and Empower #Work Culture. Retrieved February 10, 2023 from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/divide-rule-must-become-empower-work-culture-rabisankar-mahali/>
- May, E. (2021). 20 Signs of Favoritism at Work and what You Can Do about it. Retrieved March 12, 2023 from, <https://www.niagarainstitute.com/blog/signs-of-favoritism-at-work>
- McCulum, F. (2001). *Cracks in the Concrete: The Demise of the Teacher's Role in Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*. University of Australia: AARE.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in Education: Evidence Based Inquiry*. 6th Ed. London: Pearson Ed. Inc.
- Messarra, L. C., & El-Kassar, A. (2018). Effects of Religious Diversity on Employees' Perception and Reaction. *Contemporary Management Research*, 10(1), 59-80,
- Namibia Ministry of Education. (2004). Code of Conduct for Teachers. Retrieved April, 11, 2023 from <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/2004/3144.pdf>
- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Toronto: Pearson.
- Nuland, S. (2019). *Teachers Code: Learning from Experience*. Paris: IIEP.
- Nwinyokpugi, P. N., & Omunakwe, P. O. (2019). Interpersonal Relationship at work: Enhancing Organisational Productivity of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. *Journal of Research in Business and Management*, 7(1), 22-33
- Obakpolo, P. (2015). Improving Interpersonal Relationship in Workplace. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 5(6), 115-125
- Parker, L. (2023). 7 Toxic Factors that Damage Employee Relations. Retrieved February 5, 2023 from <https://inside.6q.io/damage-employee-relations/#:~:text=Leading%20industry%20>
- Prachi, J. (2015). Factors Affecting Interpersonal Relationship. Retrieved November 15, 2022 from <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/factors-affecting-interpersonal-relationship.htm>
- Randy, J. L., & David, M. B. (2008). *Personality Psychology*. 3rd edition. McGraw-Hill.
- Rothmann, S., & Welsh, C. (2013). Employee Engagement: The Role of Psychological Conditions: Management Dynamics. *Journal of the Southern African Institute for Management Scientists*, 22(1), 14-25.
- Saucier, G., Thalmayer, A. G., Payne, D. L., Carlson, R., Sanogo, L., Ole-Kotikash, L., & Zhou, X. (2014). A Basic Bivariate Structure of Personality Attributes Evident Across Nine Languages. *Journal of Personality*, 82(1), 1-14
- Shan, S., Ishaq, H. M., & Shaheen, M. A. (2015). Impact of Organisational Justice on Job Performance in Libraries: Mediating Role of Leader-Member Exchange Relationship. *Library Management*, 36(2), 70-85
- Singh, K. R., & Babbar, M. (2020). Understanding Religious Diversity and its Implications at the Workplace. *Nmims Journal of Economics and Public Policy*, 5(4), 10-21
- Singh, N. R., & Kassa, B. (2016). The Impact of Human Resource Management Practice on Organizational Performance: A Study on Debre Brehan University. *International Journal of Recent Advances in Organizational Behaviour and Decision Sciences*, 1(1), 643-662.

- Smith, T. W., Traupman, E. K., Uchino, B. N., & Berg, A. C. (2010). Interpersonal Circumplex Descriptions of Psychosocial Risk Factors for Physical Illness: Application to Hostility, Neuroticism, and Marital Adjustment. *J Pers*, 78(3), 1011–1036.
- Smith, T. W. (2013). Interpersonal Circumplex. In: Gellman, M.D., Turner, J.R. (eds) Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine. Springer, New York, NY. Retrieved February 9, 2023 from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_1584
- Song, S. H., & Olshfski, D. (2008). Friends at Work. A Comparative Study of Work Attitudes in Seoul City Government and New Jersey State Government. *Administration & Society*, 40(2), 147-169.
- Song, X., & Guo, S. (2022). The Impact of Negative Workplace Gossip on Employees' Organizational Self-Esteem in a Differential Atmosphere. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.
- Stoetzer, U. (2010). Interpersonal Relationships at Work: Organizational Working Conditions and Health. Unpublished PhD thesis. Karolinska Institute, Stockholm. Sweden.
- Torppa, C. B. (2010). Gender Issues: Communication Differences in Interpersonal Relationships. Retrieved April 12, 2023 from <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/FLM-FS-4-02-R10>
- Tsui, A. S., Egan, T. D., & O'Reilly III, C. A. (1992). Being Different: Relational Demography and Organizational Attachment. *Administrative science quarterly*, 549-579.
- University of Virginia Medical Center (2023) Interpersonal Circumplex - A Model for Understanding Interactions. Retrieved February 10, 2023 from <https://www.medicalcenter.virginia.edu/wwp/>
- Vandersteen, S. (2014). Gossip in the Workplace. Retrieved April 10, 2023 from <https://glenora.net/gossip-in-the-workplace/>
- White, C. J. (2005). Research: A practical Guide. 1st edition. Pretoria: Inthuthuko Investment.
- Wooll, M. (2021). How to Navigate Office Politics no Matter Where You Work. Retrieved March 20, 2023 from <https://www.betterup.com/blog/office-politics#:~>
- Zhang, X. Dai, L. (2015). The Relationship between Neuroticism and Experience of Workplace Ostracism in new Employees. *Open J. Soc. Sci.*, 3(2), 80–87.