

ABSTRACT

The Relationship Between Teachers' Knowledge of the Code of Ethics (1992) and Interpersonal Conflicts

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This study examines the relationship between teachers' knowledge of the Code of Ethics and interpersonal conflicts. A secondary purpose looks at the implications for managing these conflicts in schools.

A descriptive methodology involving the correlational design was utilized with a sample of five (5) secondary schools in which interpersonal conflicts involving teachers were reported. The sample included 50 randomly selected teachers of all categories from each school – a total of 250 subjects. A Teachers' Questionnaire was used to collect the data.

The analysis utilized Pearson's Correlation Coefficient as well as descriptive statistics (mean scores, frequency counts and percentages). The findings revealed no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of the Code of Ethics with respect to the principles that relate to students, colleagues and employers (management) and interpersonal conflicts in terms of teacher-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-management relationships. However, there is correlation between teachers' knowledge of the Code of ethics in relation to colleague and teacher-managerial relationship. This correlation is positive and is at a low level. Therefore, it suggests that with some knowledge of the Code of Ethics in this respect, there will be situations that lead to interpersonal conflicts involving teachers and management. Teacher – management relationship is found to be the most frequent context in which interpersonal conflict involving teachers occur. Discussion is reported to be the popular conflict management strategy used by teachers. These teachers own copies of the Code of Ethics for self-acquaintance of its content since they believed that this Code of Ethics sets standards of behaviour in the teaching learning process.

These findings are significant since they point to other factors which influence interpersonal conflicts between teachers and their interfacing community. Further study is needed in this respect. Although the Code of Ethics is a regulatory mechanism, it does not seem to prevent conflict-generating situation in schools: a reality which adversely impacts on the overall state of teaching as a profession.