



Everyone's Smart University

Project (Spring 2021)

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PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Conflict Management

1. Introduction :

The main purpose of this study is to identify management strategies adopted by schools' administration in the situation of conflict. The study also aims to determine the situation of conflicts in the Malaysian primary schools in aspect to the factors, stages, impression as well as the way to manage the conflict.

Conflicts exist at various levels within the school organization such as between teachers and administrators, teachers with teachers, parents with teachers and among fellow administrators. Effective school management depends on collaboration and teamwork among teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Decision making in educational systems is frequently characterized by conflict and disagreement due to differences in interests and opinions among these stakeholders. Head teachers who are the chief executives in schools need to manage conflicts using strategies that yield functional synergies and create a constructive school culture that results in teachers' and students' satisfaction with the school climate. Conflicts in a schooling organization need to be identified by the headmaster so that it will not deteriorate into a problem. The spread of uncontrolled conflict in a school system can become an "unseen flame" which can affect the stability of an organization. Many school headmasters tend to ignore conflicts that exist in their organization and choose to avoid dealing with them. These, results in an unhealthy situation and if prolonged will lead to various chronic problems.

2. Literature Review

The framework of this study is based on the Integrative Conflict Management Organisation Model and Conflict Integrative Simulation by Wahyudi (2006). The independent variables are represented by the aspects of position, type of school and grade of school which are incorporated into the research conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1. The main factors such as communication, authority, personality, limited resources, reward and human relations have been identified in these models as contributors to the existence of conflicts in schools which will be studied in this research. However, these conflict causing factors are also closely inter-related in contributing to the emergence of conflicts in schools. In the Integrative Conflict Management Model, the conflict management style varies with a leader's style. There are five styles in managing a conflict namely collaboration style, accommodation style, avoiding style, competition style and compromising style. Therefore this research will study the types of style often applied by headmasters, administrators and teachers in handling conflicts in schools.

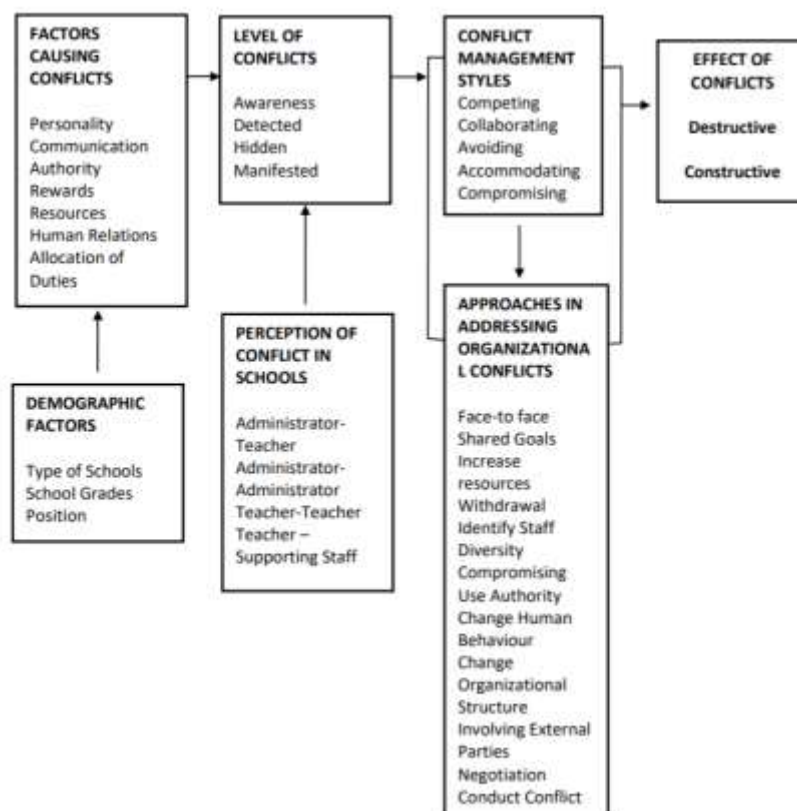


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for school conflict management (Source: Wahyudi, 2006).

Furthermore, the Integrative Conflict Management and Conflict Integrative Stimulation model, states eleven approaches for leaders in addressing organizational conflicts which are face-toface, shared goals, increase resources, withdrawal, identify staff diversity, compromising, use authority, change human behavior, change organizational structure, involving external parties, negotiation and conduct conflict management program. According to Wahyudi (2006), conflict can lead to either a functional or dysfunction effect to the organization depending on the approach taken by a leader. The approach that causes a functional effect will improve the quality of decision making, stimulate creativity, innovation and encourage changes in the organization while the destructive approach will cause ineffective communication, and alienate individuals who will make the organization ineffective (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997).

3. Methodology

Findings :

Perceptions of the Respondents on Conflict in Schools The table below shows the type of respondents' perceptions with regards to conflicts in schools.

Opinion On Conflict	Headmasters		Senior Assistants		Teachers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Conflict Among Teachers	61	4.6	115	8.7	174	13.3
Conflict Among Colleagues	35	2.7	65	5.0	82	6.3
Conflict Among Subordinates	15	1.2	56	4.3	80	6.1
Not happy with the school structure	54	4.1	108	8.3	223	17.0
Staff relationships	50	3.8	74	5.7	117	8.9

The data shows that conflict among teachers seemed to be the most prevalent based on the opinion of the Headmasters, Senior Assistants and Teachers. This follows by conflict between administrators and teachers. In addition, majority of respondents specified that they are not happy with existing school structure.

Factors that Lead to Conflicts in Schools:

Table below, shows the respondents' views on the factors that lead to conflicts in schools. These factors are including: Communication, Authority, Rewards, Resources, Personality, Human Relations and Allocation of Duties. The analysis on the factors presented here:

Factors Lead to Conflicts in Schools	Headmasters			Senior Assistants			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level
Communication	2.06	.72	Low	2.10	.766	Low	2.09	.857	Low
Authority	1.94	0.75	Low	1.98	.79	Low	2.50	0.88	Low
Rewards	1.98	.737	Low	2.06	.837	Low	2.24	.958	Low
Resources	2.10	.983	Low	2.08	.863	Low	2.18	.922	Low
Personality	2.02	.757	Low	2.05	.786	Low	2.17	.863	Low
Human Relations	1.89	.798	Low	1.97	.804	Low	2.07	.892	Low
Allocation of Duties	2.10	.755	Low	2.18	.821	Low	2.44	.952	Moderate

The data shows that the overall mean scores analysis for factors that lead to conflicts in schools such as communication, authority, rewards, resources, personality, human relations and allocation of duties seemed to be low according to the Headmasters', Senior Assistants' and teachers' personal assessment. In another words, factors that lead to conflicts in Malaysian schools are under control.

Conflict Management Strategies that Practiced By the Respondents:

Table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for conflict management strategies that frequently adopted by Headmasters, Senior Assistants and teachers in Malaysian primary schools.

Conflict Management Styles	Headmasters			Senior Assistants			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level
Collaborating	4.18	.725	High	4.05	.728	High	3.90	.756	High
Accommodating	3.74	.775	High	3.68	.799	High	3.67	.798	High
Avoiding	3.53	1.01	Moderate	3.64	.967	Moderate	3.66	0.93	Moderate
Compromising	4.18	.707	High	4.11	.708	High	3.94	.730	High
Competing	2.72	0.98	Moderate	2.58	1.04	Moderate	3.66	1.03	Moderate

The data in the above table shows that all types of conflict management strategies that have been adopted by all the respondents who seem more prone to adopt the collaborating, accommodating and compromising conflict management styles. Teachers like to adopt the avoiding and competing styles in combating conflicts. The Headmasters and senior assistants like to adopt the win-win and collaborating (integrating) approaches in overcoming conflicts. The data also shows that the school administrators seldom use the competing strategies in managing conflict.

The Effects of Conflict Management in Schools

Table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for effects of conflict based on the perceptions of Headmasters, Senior Assistants and teachers.

Effect of Conflict	Headmasters		Senior Assistants		Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Create positive change	4.21	.542	4.06	.702	3.94	.721
Increase trust	4.16	.449	4.01	.694	3.89	.699
Enhance confidence in making decision	4.28	.516	4.07	.663	3.94	.645
Enhance team work	4.30	.566	4.16	.642	3.99	.681
Encourage to search for new information	4.25	.486	4.08	.657	3.94	.650
Happy with the decision being made	4.07	.604	3.92	.714	3.79	.678
Increase work motivation	4.26	.592	4.08	.730	3.94	.727
Encourage creativity and innovation	4.24	.649	4.08	.714	3.90	.739
Enhance good relationships	4.26	.605	4.13	.714	4.02	.701
Giving inspiration towards finding of solutions	4.27	.540	4.14	.654	3.97	.598
	4.23	.621	4.07	.712	3.91	.691
Encourage healthy competition	4.26	.605	4.11	.678	3.96	.704
Increase work efficiency	4.30	.580	4.19	.654	4.03	.692
Deepen understanding of staff						

Above table shows that all the three types of respondents expressed about the effects of conflicts are that conflicts have made them to deepen their understanding of staff, enhance team work and promote good relationships.

Discussion

There are many factors that cause conflict in an organization and mainly interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict. However in schools, the interpersonal relationship that occurs in group work, discussion and handling task is a common circumstances and non-avoidance towards conflict due to differences in personality, values, interest, belief and attitude. Therefore it needs more consideration to build better relationship and understanding in order to minimize conflict. School administrators denying and do not consider individual personality need to face with conflict. The bigger the population in a school, the more array of combined personalities that the administrators have to handle. The most important resource in a school are teachers, therefore administrators need to comprehend them individually by creating good relationship.

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