

AN ASSESSMENT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN NAVAL DISTRICTS, NAVAL BILIRAN, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract: The study generally aimed to determine the conflict management styles of the school administrators in Naval districts, Naval, Biliran. Employing the descriptive survey method of research, 20 elementary school administrators, 40 teachers and 40 parents from the North and South districts of Naval were involved as subjects. Most of the school administrators in Naval districts are in the middle age (30-49 years old). The male population is twice the female which means that the female school administrators predominate their male counterpart. Among the school administrators, only one has earned units in doctorate degree, while only four has completed their master's degree. Most of the school administrators have been in the service for 6-10 years. Of the 17 school administrators, only three (3) have attended trainings; two in the division and one in the district. The results revealed that most of the school administrators have not attended any training at all. The elementary school administrators in Naval districts "often" employed strategies and styles in managing conflicts. The general perception of the teachers and parents validate the administrator's claim that he "often" employed strategies and styles in managing conflicts in their schools. The administrators should continuously upgrade and evaluate their management styles as a basis for their own development.

Keywords: assessment; conflict management styles; school administrators; naval districts.

I. INTRODUCTION

We do not live in a perfect world, and there are no perfect people or perfect employees. Therefore, there will never be a perfect workplace. In a workplace or organization where it is made up of people who come from very diverse cultural background, race, gender, and religion, they are bound to have ego clashes and differences because these people bring different ideas, goals, values, and beliefs to the organization.

Conflict is the result of people having different needs, opinions and expectations. It is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, values or goals. It may also arise in professional rivalry, grudges and behavioral problems (Hanson, 1991).

Organizational conflict is considered legitimate, inevitable and even a positive indicator of effective organizational management. Conflict, within certain limits, is essential to productivity.

Like many other organizations, the school, is never entirely conflict-free. Conflict occurs among teaching and non-teaching personnel as they interact in their day to day activities in school. Learning how to manage conflicts by acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict can decrease the odds of nonproductive escalation.

It is in this premise that the researcher was challenged to conduct this study to assess the conflict management styles of the administrators in North and South Districts of Calubian, Leyte.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following literature is reviewed to provide support and substance to the study.

Martin and Willower (1981) pointed out that school leaders encounter conflict on frequent basis.

Likewise, Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1992) stressed that the school leaders are also the primary builders of consensus and collaboration on their campuses (Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins, 1992).

In the same vein, Cornille, Pestle, and Vanwy (1999), also said that teachers under the supervision of the school leaders encounter conflict in their efforts to educate children (Cornille, Pestle, and Vanwy, 1999).

While, Putnam (1997) said that conflict can be negative and destructive, it can also result in positive changes within an organization (Putnam, 1997).

Researchers have identified the knowledge base and skills necessary for the development of successful school leaders. According to Wilmore (2003), conflict management is among those skills (Wilmore, 2003).

However, Coleman and Fisher-Yoshida (2004) revealed that few public school leaders have had the support and training necessary to engage in constructive conflict management, further limiting opportunities to teach and model conflict management skills to others (Coleman and Fisher-Yoshida, 2004).

As pointed out by Dave and Wendy (2011), conflict is the result of people having different needs, opinions and expectations. The reality of conflict is that in any human relationship, it is inevitable. More importantly, if handled well, conflict provides a powerful avenue for significant growth. Hence developing good conflict resolution techniques is very important.

In the same vein, Kemp (2009), stated that conflict is an inevitable aspect of life. If the process of conflict resolution is viewed as an opportunity for growth and change in a work environment the potential for a positive outcome is great. On an individual level, the ability to solve problems or manage change plays an important role in one's success. In the same way, the overall ability of a company to solve problems through collaborative efforts, has a strong impact on the organization's bottom line and overall success.

Meanwhile, Thomas (1976) suggested that five distinct styles of conflict management exist within the organizations, including collaboration, accommodation, competition, compromise, and avoidance.

In addition, Katz and Lawyer (1993) submitted that effective approaches to conflict include reflective listening, maintenance of civility, separation of positions from interests, and the delineation of group goals along with consideration of the interests of all who have a stake in the problem.

Deutsch (1994) maintained that unfavorable social context required conflict managers to be skillful at removing themselves from the context in order to observe and make conscious decisions.

Likewise, Cornille, Pestle and Vanwy (1999) recommended continuing education for teachers, emphasizing the most effective styles of conflict management for different situations.

Additionally, Deutsch (1994) suggested that effective conflict management training must emphasize social and cognitive skills. However, he maintained that training which focuses upon social and cognitive skills is difficult because of the lack of realistic feedback and because these skills cannot be developed through independent practice.

On the other hand, the need for effective conflict management training methods was addressed by Horowitz and Boardman (1994) who recommended formative and summative evaluation of programs to determine the best methods.

Conceptual framework. This study anchored on the conflict management styles assessment of school administrators in Naval districts, Naval, Biliran. To deeply appraise the intention of the study, it looked into the profile of the school administrators in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of years in service as administrators, and in-service trainings related to conflict management attended; identify the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators; and it looked into the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators as perceived by teachers and parents.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to assess the conflict management styles of the school administrators of Naval North and South districts in the municipality of Naval, Biliran, during the school year 2016-2017. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the personal profile of the school administrators in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of years in service as administrators, and in-service training related to conflict management attended?
2. What are the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators?
3. What is the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators as perceived by teachers and parents?

Framework of the Study

This study valued the following theoretical and conceptual framework as its strong foundation of this research.

Theoretical framework. This study is anchored on theory by Rahim (1983) also called as Social Systems Theory and the theory of Schermerhorn (2001) also called as Open System Theory.

Social Systems Theory. This study is anchored on the theory by Rahim (1983) on the Social Systems Theory. This theory states that organizational conflict is considered as legitimate, inevitable, and even a positive indicator of effective organization management. It is now recognized that conflict within certain limits is essential to productivity. Organizational conflict in educational systems is by no means the antitheses of the makings of quality of education.

Open System Theory. This theory discussed that whether or not conflict benefits an individual or an organization, it depends on two factors: first one is the intensity of the conflict and the other is the way conflict is managed. Functional conflict, or constructive conflict, stimulates people towards greater work efforts, cooperation, and creativity. At very low or very high intensities, dysfunctional conflict or destructive conflict occurs. Too much conflict is destructive and interferes with other more task-relevant activities; too little conflict may promote competency and the loss of a creative, high performance edge.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

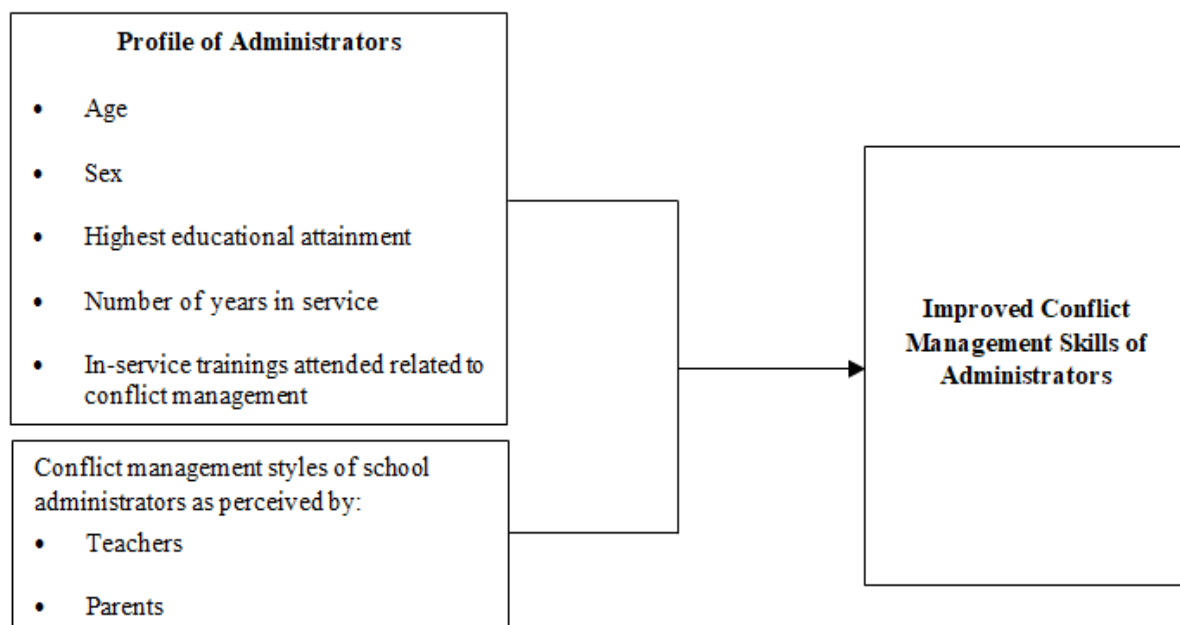


Figure 1: presents the conceptual framework of the study

Scope and Delimitation of the Study:

This study was centered on the assessment of the conflict management styles of the school administrators of Naval North and South Districts during the school year 2016-2017.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This segment of the study discusses the methods used. It describes and discusses the research design, research locale, research subjects, research instrument, data gathering procedure, data scoring and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-survey design using a survey questionnaire, document to collect quantitative data. This approach was found appropriate based on the contention of Best (1989) as it involved description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the prevailing conditions and concerns or relationships that may exist on variables under study.

Research Locale

The researcher conducted his study on the twenty-eight (28) elementary schools of Naval North and South districts.

Research Subjects

The respondents of this study were the 20 school administrators, 40 teachers and 40 parents, a total of 100 respondents. The selection of subjects was done through purposive sampling.

Research Instrument

The researcher used the survey questionnaire developed by the researcher herself composed of two parts. The first part determines the profile of the school administrators and their conflict management styles employed. The second part assesses the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators as perceived by the teachers and parents.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Biliran for his approval to distribute the survey questionnaires to the respondents needed for the study

The gathering of data was personally done by the researcher during the conduct of meetings with the teachers and parents.

After the retrieval of the questionnaires, the data had been collated, computed, tabulated, analyzed using the statistical measurement or tool to come up with the findings of the study, and was interpreted afterwards.

Data Scoring

In categorizing the data, the different descriptions were used. In describing the perceptions of school administrators' conflict management styles as well as the perceptions of teachers and parents, the scaling and descriptions below were used.

Ranges		Interpretation
4.20 – 5.0	-	Always
3.40 – 4.10	-	Often
2.51 – 3.50	-	Sometimes
1.51 – 2.50	-	Seldom
1.0 – 1.50	-	Never

Statistical Treatment of Data

The statistical treatment used in the study was the percentage in determining the profile of school administrators and the weighted mean in determining the conflict management styles of the administrators.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This portion of the study presents the results of the data gathered by the researcher. Said results are organized and presented with respect to the research objectives covering the respondent's personal profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of years in service as administrators, and in-service training related to conflict management attended; identifying the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators; and determining the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators as perceived by teachers and parents.

Personal Profile of the School Administrators

Table 1 presents the personal profile of the school administrators.

Table 1: Personal Profile of the School Administrators

Variables	Administrators	
	f	%
Age		
20-29	0	0
30-39	7	35.00
40-49	10	50.00
50-59	3	15.00
60-above	0	0
Total	20	100.00
Sex	f	%
Male	6	30.00
Female	14	70.00
Total	20	100.00
Highest Educational Attainment	f	%
BSEED	6	30.00
BSE	4	20.00
BEED	9	45.00
BSAgEd	0	0
BSIE	1	5.00
Total	20	100.00
Master's/Doctorate degree	f	%
Master of Arts in Education	4	20.00
Master in Management	0	0
Master in Public Administration	0	0
20 or more units in Master's degree	13	65.00
3-19 units in Master's degree	0	0
0 or no unit all	2	10.00
Doctor in Education	0	0
Doctor of Philosophy	0	0
Doctor in Management	0	0
Certificate of Academic Req.	0	0
20 or more units in Doctorate degree	1	5.00
3-19 units in Doctorate degree	0	0
Total	20	100.00
Number of Years in Service as School Administrator	F	%
Less than a year	1	5.00
1-5 years	6	30.00
6-10 years	11	55.00
11-15 years	2	10.00
16-20 years	0	0
Total	20	100.00
In-Service Trainings related to Conflict Management Attended	F	%
International	0	0
National	0	0
Regional	0	0
Division	6	30.00
District	2	10.00
None	12	60.00
Total	20	100.00

Age. As shown in table 1, the age bracket 40-49 years old obtained a highest frequency of 10 or 50 percent, while the age bracket 30-39 obtained the frequency of 7 or 35 percent, age bracket 50-59 obtained a frequency of 3 or 15 percent, and nobody falls on age brackets 20-29 and 60 years old and above. The results show that most of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts were 40-49 years old.

Sex. The data in table 1 showed that there were 14 or 70.00 percent of female and only 6 or 30.00 percent male. The results show that most of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts were female.

Highest educational attainment. The data in table 1 revealed that BEED obtained the highest frequency of 9 or 45.00 percent, followed by BSEED which obtained a frequency of 6 or 30.00 percent, BSE obtained a frequency of 4 or 20.00 percent, BSIE obtained a frequency of 1 or 5.00 percent, and nobody earned a BSAgEd degree. Meanwhile, 20 or more units in Master’s degree yielded a frequency of 13 or 65 percent, followed by Master of Arts in Education which obtained a frequency of 4 or twenty percent, 0 or no unit at all got a frequency of 2 or 10 percent, 20 or more units in Doctoral degree yielded a frequency of 1 or 5 percent, and nobody earned a degree in Master in Management, Master in Public Administration, 3-19 units in Master’s degree, Doctor in Education, Doctor in Philosophy, Doctor in Management, Certificate of Academic Requirements, and 3-19 units in Doctorate degree.

Number of years in service as school administrator. Data above have shown that 11 or 55.00 percent of the respondents have been in the position for 6-10 years, 6 or 30 percent have served for 1-5 years as school administrators, 2 or 10 percent served for 11-15 years and 1 or 5 percent have served for less than a year as school administrator. The data show that more than one half of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts have administrative experience of 6-10 years.

In-service trainings related to conflict management attended. It can be seen from the results that 12 or 60 percent have not attended any trainings, 6 or 30 percent have attended trainings in the division level and 2 or 10 percent in the district level. This means that most of the school administrators in Naval districts lack the necessary training skills to manage and resolve conflicts.

Conflict Management Styles Employed byThe School Administrators

Table 2 shows the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators.

Table 2: Conflict Management Styles Employed by the School Administrators

Strategies in Dealing with Conflict	WM	DI
1. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.	3.58	Often
2. I try to win my position.	3.41	Often
3. I give up some points in exchange for others.	3.65	Often
4. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.	3.23	Sometimes
5. I try to find a position that is intermediate between the other person’s and mine.	3.71	Often
6. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.	2.29	Sometimes
7. I try to show the logic and benefits of my positions.	3.41	Often
8. I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem	3.53	Often
9. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.	4.00	Often
10. I attempt to work through our differences immediately.	3.58	Often
11. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.	3.82	Often
12. I try to soothe the other person’s feelings and preserve our relationships.	3.47	Often
13. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.	3.47	Often
14. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.	3.94	Often
15. I try not to hurt other’s feelings.	3.88	Often
AWM	3.53	Often

The table above disclosed that the weighted means obtained ranged from 2.29 to 4.0. The statement that obtained the lowest weighted mean states that ‘in approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes,’ described as “Sometimes”. Meanwhile, the highest weighted mean obtained was the statement, ‘I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us,’ described as “Often.” The average weighted mean obtained was 3.53

described as “Often”. The results implies that the school administrators in Naval districts often employed strategies in dealing with conflict.

Conflict Management Styles Employed by the School Administrators

As Perceived by the Teachers and Parents

Table 3 shows the conflict management styles employed by the school administrators as perceived by the teachers and parents.

Table 3: Conflict Management Styles Employed by the School Administrators as Perceived by the Teachers

Strategies in Dealing with Conflict	WM	DI
1. School head is usually firm in pursuing his goals.	2.27	Sometimes
2. School head tried to win his position.	3.87	Often
3. School head gives up some points in exchange for others.	4.03	Often
4. School head feels that differences are not always worth worrying about.	3.72	Often
5. School head tried to find a position that is intermediate between the other person’s and him.	3.70	Often
6. In approaching negotiations, school heads tried to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.	4.03	Often
7. School head tried to show the logic and benefits of his positions.	4.12	Often
8. School head always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem	3.98	Often
9. School head tried to find a fair combination of gains and losses.	3.99	Often
10. School head attempts to work through our differences immediately.	3.79	Often
11. School head tries to avoid creating unpleasantness for himself.	4.04	Often
12. School head tries to soothe the other person’s feelings and preserve our relationships.	3.98	Often
13. School head attempts to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.	4.00	Often
14. School head sometimes avoids taking positions that would create controversy.	4.01	Often
15. School head tries not to hurt other’s feelings.	3.99	Often
3.84	Often	

Datafrom table above showed that the weighted means obtained ranged from 2.27 to 4.12. The lowest weighted mean obtained refers to the statement, ‘school head is usually firm in pursuing his goals’ described as “Sometimes”, while the highest weighted mean obtained states that the ‘school head tries to show the logic and benefits of his positions’, described as “Often”. The average weighted mean obtained was 3.84 described as “Often”. This means that the school elementary administrators in Naval districts often employed strategies in dealing with conflict, as perceived by the teachers.

Table 4: Conflict Management Styles Employed by the School Administrators as Perceived by the Parents

Strategies in Dealing with Conflict	WM	DI
1. School head is usually firm in pursuing his goals.	3.57	Often
2. School head tried to win his position.	4.02	Often
3. School head gives up some points in exchange for others.	3.72	Often
4. School head feels that differences are not always worth worrying about.	4.09	Often
5. School head tried to find a position that is intermediate between the other person’s and him.	3.33	Often
6. In approaching negotiations, school heads tried to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.	3.89	Often
7. School head tried to show the logic and benefits of his positions.	3.72	Often
8. School head always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem	3.78	Often
9. School head tried to find a fair combination of gains and losses.	3.67	Often
10. School head attempts to work through our differences immediately.	4.13	Often
11. School head tries to avoid creating unpleasantness for himself.	3.64	Often
12. School head tries to soothe the other person’s feelings and preserve our relationships.	4.17	Often
13. School head attempts to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.	3.67	Often
14. School head sometimes avoids taking positions that would create controversy.	3.55	Often
15. School head tries not to hurt other’s feelings.	3.60	Often
AWM	3.77	Often

As reflected in table 5, the weighted means obtained ranged from 3.33 to 4.17. The lowest weighted mean obtained is the statement 'school head tried to find a position that is intermediate between the other persons' obtained a weighted mean of "Often". While the highest refers to the statement 'school head tries to soothe the other persons' feelings and preserve their relationship, also described as "Often". The computed average weighted mean obtained was 3.77 described as "Often". The results mean that the parents perceived the elementary school administrators in Naval districts to have often employed strategies in dealing with conflict.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Most of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts were 40-49 years old. Most of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts were female. Not even one of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts has finished doctorate degree. Almost one half of the elementary school administrators in Naval districts have administrative experience of 6-10 years, and most of the school administrators in Naval districts lack the necessary training skills to manage and resolve conflicts.

The administrators had often employed styles in managing conflicts and the same was validated by the perceptions of the teachers and parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The administrators should continuously upgrade and evaluate their management styles as a basis for their own development. They should be sent to trainings relevant to their administrative functions in order to gain new insights, strategies and styles in managing and resolving conflicts in their respective schools. Seminars and symposia in enhancing the skills of the administrators more particularly in decision-making, supervising, public-relation, and conflict management skills should be conducted in the locality to minimize travel expenses. However, inviting persons from national and international organizations is hereby recommended. It is also recommended that the school administrators and teachers shall work together to avoid conflicts which result to management inefficiency. Lastly, a follow-up study employing a larger scope of respondents and duration of the experiment is hereby recommended.

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