

## EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERS IN HANDLING CRUCIAL CONFLICTS

*by:*

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School leaders play an important role in meeting modern society's increasing demands for effective school management. They may adopt various leadership styles, which can be a critical factor in the success of the school and its leadership. In this context, school principals play an important role in ensuring growth, goal attainment, and corporate success. School leaders are expected to carry out complex tasks while also acting as managers and leaders. Their responsibilities include providing assistance to teachers, students, and parents, as well as communicating with parents and other stakeholders. This variety of tasks, complexity, and multidimensional roles is referred to as the art of leadership. The art of leadership is critical for a school to be effective in its specific internal and external variables, such as parents' and society's expectations, teachers' workload, and school climate, which includes a culture of change and innovation. Furthermore, school leaders may be required to perform under less-than-ideal conditions, deal with difficult situations, and experiment with different approaches to resolving conflicts and maximizing the potential outcome of their schools.

School conflict is one issue that school leaders are expected to handle successfully in their units. Conflict occurs naturally in organizations as a result of people interacting with one another. Managers can handle conflict differently depending on their personality traits, organizational setting, and the nature of the conflict. It is expected that successful management intervention will increase the positive rather than the negative outcomes of conflicts in an organization. Conflict, for example, can result in the exchange of ideas, modernization, and adaptation required for organizational success. It can also have a significant negative impact on the workplace, which is sometimes exacerbated by

conflict-inducing factors such as poor communication and differences in views, values, and priorities within an organization. In other words, conflict management will always be a management issue, and conflict management can make a difference in terms of the consequences of conflict for both the individual and the organization.

It is important to note that conflicts are unavoidable in all human interactions, particularly in organizations. Conflicts are inevitable in schools, as they are in other organizations, due to a large number of people with diverse personalities. Conflict can be harmful if it leads to ineffective communication, breakdown of work relationships, tension, argument, poor performance of team members, and hostility, all of which have a negative impact on the smooth operation of schools (Bano et al., 2013; Makaye & Ndofirepi, 2012). However, if conflicts are handled properly, benefits may be realized, contributing to solidarity within conflicting groups and reconciliation of legitimate interests, which, in turn, strengthens relationships, improves identification of problems and solutions, increases knowledge and skills, and protects peace. As a result, the ability to manage or resolve conflict is essential for leaders for the smooth running of learning institutions.

To be effective in their schools, school managers and leaders must understand what conflict management entails and possess high conflict competence. When conflict managers have determined and defined the nature of the conflict in a conflict situation, they attempt to find resolutions. Various conflict resolution writers have highlighted various approaches to resolving these conflict situations. Many of these are applicable in a school setting. Effective school principals will possess the characteristics emphasized in conflict literature. Smoothing, compromising, forcing, withdrawal, and problem-solving are the five conflict resolution strategies identified by Blake and Mouton (1964). Furthermore, Dana (2001) asserts that leaders must understand the structure in order to effectively analyze conflicts.

The role of school leaders in conflict resolution and management is thus critical to the effective and efficient organization of school management. Because conflict is natural in any organization, management must deal with it rationally in order to maximize its benefits while minimizing its dysfunctional consequences. Understanding the root causes of conflicts is therefore critical for developing a workable approach to conflict management.

*References:*

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