

School Leaders' Conflict Management Styles and Teacher' Organizational Commitment in the New Normal

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Abstract: *The study aimed to determine the relationship between school leaders' conflict management styles in the new normal and the teachers' organizational commitment of elementary teachers and school heads of San Ildefonso North District, San Ildefonso, Bulacan. Results show that majority of the school head respondents (40%) were identified as controller, (30%) of the school head respondents were identified as compromiser and the remaining (30%) were identified as collaborator. No one among the respondents was identified as accommodator and avoider. School leader respondents favored the controlling style in handling conflicts followed by compromising and collaborating styles. No one preferred to use the accommodating and avoiding styles. Teachers regard more value on organizational commitment in the new normal setting in terms of continuance commitment rather than in affective and normative commitments. Highly significant relationship exists between school leaders' conflict management styles in the new normal and teachers' continuance commitment. However, no significant relationships are found between school leaders' conflict management styles in the new normal and teachers affective and normative commitments.*

Introduction

School leaders have a very pivotal role in responding to the rising demands of modern society for effective school management particularly in the new normal education. They may embrace different leadership styles, and this can be a critical parameter for the success of school and its leadership. In this context, school heads are a key parameter in ensuring growth, goal achievements, and corporate success. School leaders are expected to perform complex tasks and act both as managers and leaders. Their role includes: support to teachers, students and parents; liaising with parents and other stakeholders.

One issue that school leaders are expected to handle successfully in their units this new normal is the issue of school conflict. Conflict is a normal and necessary part of healthy relationships. After all, two people cannot be expected to agree on everything at all times. Therefore, learning how to deal with conflict rather than avoiding it, is crucial. On the other hand, organizational commitment is another controversial topic that the Department of Education is facing especially this pandemic due to CoVid 19. Organizational commitment refers to the extent to which an employee develops an attachment and feels a sense of allegiance to his or her employer. Commitment to career/profession is a relatively new idea and refers to a person's level of commitment to a career path rather than a commitment to one particular organization. We have seen over time a change in the way people's commitments to their organizations have changed. The average American now has seven careers over their lifetime (PSUWC, 2013).

Thomas-Kilmann (as cited by Vasilopoulos, et.al 2018,) with their Conflict Mode Instrument identifies five conflict styles—competing, compromising, collaborating, avoiding, and accommodating. There is no means to completely eliminate conflict, it definitely gives cloud to the school climate and might built an adverse effect to teachers' performance. School climate features the quality and character of school life found within the school and the school community, as well as its holistic organizational pattern and relationships as a result of the means on how the school operates in order to attain its mission in terms of collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press, and institutional vulnerability. As demonstrated by the research results, establishing an appropriate school climate that promotes professional interaction, support, and teacher commitment to students is a strong place to begin.

According to Tetteh & Obuobisa-Darko (2016), conflict is endemic in social life and whenever there is a difference of opinion there are chances of conflict. Conflict generally is seen as a struggle or misunderstanding between people who have opposing views, beliefs, values and perception about issues and situations. It is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about.

Saiti (2015), also stated that conflict may occur in any organization (and hence school) and, for schools, conflict management style is a joint activity and the degree of its effectiveness determines the type of impact of conflict on school performance. This empirical study investigates the potential sources of conflict in Greek primary schools, determine appropriate approaches for the handling of conflicts and offers recommendations, based on the findings, for a more creative conflict management style in order to enhance school performance. Understanding conflict will enable administrators to deal more effectively with the problems of organizational efficiency, stability, governance, change and effectiveness. Not only should administrators endeavor to understand conflict, but they must also be careful not to fall into a trap of viewing it from a negative perspective. Handled properly through an appropriate conflict management style, conflict can enhance an administrator's effort in reaching school goals in the new normal setting. For administrator's who realistically confront it, conflict can present a dynamic force which facilitates organizational growth, adaptation and survival.

Conflict management styles have positive significant relationship with career satisfaction. Specifically, it was found that; collaboration style of conflict management has a significant relationship with salary; accommodation style of conflict management has a significant relationship with promotion; and compromise style of conflict management has a significant relationship with career development. In the study also, concluded that conflict management styles measured in terms of collaboration style, accommodation style and compromise style enhances career satisfaction of health workers in tertiary health institutions in Rivers state (Onwuegbule ,2020).

Abdurrahman (2020) investigated that the styles which were the most frequently used by the principals were integrating and compromising relatively; while the least frequently used ones were forcing and avoiding. When the frequency of the used styles were compared it was found out that integrating style was seen to be used more frequently than all the other styles; compromising was more frequent than obliging, forcing and avoiding; obliging was more frequent than forcing; avoiding was also more frequent than forcing style. The differences restated in the findings were statistically significant. It is possible to signify that like other organizations, in educational institutions each style could appropriately be used in some cases. However, sometimes it might be inconvenient to use some of them. To illustrate, integrating and compromising styles are more suitable to use in educational environments, but obliging and forcing are less favorable styles to use as a course of the nature of educational organizations.

In the study of Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020) revealed that present work indicate that leadership and conflict management style was associated with the effectiveness of conflict management. The sample reflected a range of leadership and conflict management styles but it is difficult to derive causal relationships from a cross-sectional study. Further investigation is required to confirm a possible direct or indirect effect of leadership and conflict management styles on effective conflict management. In-service or pre-service training of school Principals in human resources management skills, including leadership and conflict management, can aid in improving the efficiency of leaders in Greek schools. The expected benefits of effective conflict management extend to other interacting parameters. Effective conflict management can create conditions that will improve school climate, teachers' job satisfaction and commitment and school performance.

According to Soelton and Rahasidhi (2018), states that an organizational commitment shows a power of someone in identifying involvement in an organization. So that organizational commitment will create a sense of belonging for employees towards the organization. It can also be concluded that organizational commitment is an attitude regarding employee loyalty to the organization and is an ongoing process of organizational members to express their concern for the organization and this continues to success and prosperity.

Organizational Commitment is the psychological attachment that employees have with their organizations. This plays a big role in ascertaining the bond that employees share with the organization, which helps to enhance employees' value to it. It is important to individual and organizations because of the desire to retain strong work force. Researchers and practitioners are keenly interested in understanding the factors that influence an individual's decision to stay or leave an organization (Jimoh &Ukpabi 2020).

Al-Jawazneh, B.E (2015) also concluded that styles for handling conflict have influence on commitment of at the Pharmaceutical companies in Jordan. The impact of cooperation style on employees' commitment dimensions indicates that Pharmaceutical firms confront difficult problems that require proper alternatives for better solutions. So that, other parties should be committed for successful implementation; moreover, for managing conflict effectively through applying cooperation style, there is need for enough resources and time for solving problem .With regard to cooperation style, it is the participants belief that they may not be right whereas the matter is with more importance to the other party; they are ready to provide some concessions in return for something from the other party in the future. This is in order to maintain relationship as it is important to keep the commitment of employees.

Bashir & Long (2015) suggest that co-worker support for training and supervisor support of training enhance emotional attachment/sense of belonging (i.e. affective commitment) and loyalty (i.e. normative commitments) among academic staff. Thus in this view the university authority could create an environment where there is a strong encouragement by colleagues and supervisors towards participating in training activities.

Given the abovementioned issues and inconsistencies in the findings on conflict management styles of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers, this paper will try to determine the conflict management styles of school administrators and its effect on organizational commitment of teachers. The findings of this paper hope to help the principal's teachers, head teachers, guidance counselors, aspiring school head and future researchers in improving the quality of education and educational leadership in general. The goal of the study is to add resolution to the inconclusiveness of the researches about the topics at hand.

Methodology of the Study

Research Design

The study will utilize the descriptive correlational method of research to the conflict management styles of school administrators and organizational commitment of teachers. A descriptive research design characterizes or describes given variables using quantitative means or measurements. In this research, the frequency conflict management styles and organizational commitment will be quantified using weighted mean procedures and were interpreted using a set of descriptors. To evaluate the effect of the predictor variables to the criterion, a correlational study was employed in which the relationship between or among variables was assessed and determined (Joseph, 2014).

Succinctly, the main tasks of this paper is to correlate and conflict management styles of school administrators and organizational commitment of the respondents. To accomplish this, the study will utilize a quantitative research approach by deliberately measuring and analyzing quantitatively the subject variables. A quantitative study investigates specific phenomena by obtaining numerical data to objectively and effectively characterize the nature, relationship, and difference between and among variables.

A set of standardized questionnaire on and conflict management styles of school administrators and organizational commitment will be used as primary data gathering tools.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study will be 15 school leaders and 60 teachers of all the public elementary schools at San Ildefonso North District Municipality of San Ildefonso, Bulacan who specifically described their conflict management styles and organizational commitment and their means of processing meaningful information by responding to the set of standardized instruments

Instruments of the Study

The study was utilized using the Jay Hall's Conflict Management Survey. Also, the organizational commitment will be measured using Organizational Commitment Scale which was developed by (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The scale is composed of three categories namely affective, normative and continuance and each category is consist of 8 descriptions.

Data Gathering

The mode of data gathering was the survey questionnaire method using google survey. Each of the respondents were given a well- structured, well-instructed, and standardized set of questions to describe quantitatively their conflict management styles and organizational commitment.

In gathering the data, the researcher carried out the following procedure:

A letter will be sent to the Public School District Supervisor to seek permission for the distribution of the standardized instrument that was used in the study. The set of instruments comprised of three (2) Likert scale questionnaires for conflict management styles and organizational commitment. With the endorsement, the researcher sought permission from the school heads of the respective participating schools for the distribution of the instruments. With the approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents personally. The researcher will collect the questionnaires from the respondents. The researcher check if all the items were answered religiously for the conduct of the study.

Data Analysis

The data collected will be tabulated and processed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings will be presented using the necessary tables and figures. In order to analyze and interpret the data gathered, the following statistical measures were used:

After describing the conflict management styles and organizational commitment of the respondents, the variables were subjected to regression analyses to quantitatively assess the effect of conflict management styles and organizational commitment. The regression analysis procedure statistically quantifies the degree or the magnitude of effect an independent variable cause to a dependent variable (Joseph, 2014).

Results and Discussions

School Leader's Conflict Management Styles in the New Normal

In terms of Competing/Controlling

Item " Life is conquered by those who believe in winning" obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.12 while the item "Point out publicly that the dissenting member is blocking the group move on without him or her if necessary" gained the lowest weighted mean of 0.91. average computed mean value is at 2.49.

In terms of Compromising,

Among the twelve items enumerated in the table, item "Enjoy the strategizing involved and the challenge of the conflict," registered the highest weighted mean value of 4.20 while the item "Would see that the most of your group's judgments were incorporated into the final negotiated decision without alienating too many members of either group," obtained the lowest mean value of 1.10. The total mean value is registered at 2.55.

In terms of collaboration,

The highest weighted mean value of 3.90 was registered for item “Share with the group your impression of what is going on, so that the nature of the impending conflict can be discussed” .Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean value of 1.10 was registered for item “ Tendency of groups to enter negotiations with a win or lose perspective .” The average computed mean value is at 2.59.

In terms of Accommodation,

Item “ Forestall or divert the conflict before it emerges by relieving the tension with humor” got the highest weighted mean value of 3.30 while the item “ Try to keep your misgivings yourself” attained the lowest weighted mean value of 0.10. The average computed mean value is at 1.42.

In terms of Avoidance,

Among the twelve items,“Irresponsible behavior on the part of the group’s leadership, resulting in the leaders placing emphasis on maintaining their own power position rather than addressing issue involved”. Registered the highest weighted mean value of 2.90.On the other hand, items “Not participate in the discussion and not feel bound by any decision reached,” garnered the lowest weighted mean of 0. The average computed mean value is at 1.05.

School Leaders’ Conflict Management Styles in the New Normal

Majority of the school head respondents (40%) were identified as controller, (30%) of the school head respondents were identified as compromiser and the remaining (30%) were identified as collaborator. No one among the respondents was identified as accommodator and avoider.

In terms of Affective Commitment,

Item “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this school,” obtained the highest weighted mean value of 4.24 which was verbally interpreted as “strongly agree”. Meanwhile, items “I do not feel like “part of the family in the school” and I do not feel strong sense of belonging to this school”, registered the lowest weighted mean value of 1.63 with a verbal interpretation of “strongly disagree”. The average compute mean value is at 2.82 with the verbal interpretation of “neither agree nor disagree”.

In terms of Continuance Commitment

The highest weighted mean value of 4.45 with verbal description of “strongly agree” was registered for item “This school deserves my loyalty”. On the other hand, “Item I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer”, received the lowest weighted mean value of 2.06 with the verbal interpretation of “disagree”. The average computed mean value was 3.71 with the verbal interpretation of “agree”.

In terms of Normative Commitment

Item “It would be very hard for me to leave our school right now, even if I wanted to,” obtained the highest weighted mean value of 3.60 which was verbally interpreted as “agree”. In contrast, item “One of the few negative consequences of leaving this school would be the scarcity of available alternatives” obtained the lowest weighted mean value of 3.04 with the verbal interpretation of “ neither agree or disagree”.

Relationship between School leaders’ Conflict Management Styles and Teachers’ Organizational Commitment

The conflict management styles of the school leaders significantly affect the organizational commitment of the teachers in terms of continuance commitment. On the contrary, not significantly affects the teachers’ organizational commitment of teachers in terms of affective and normative commitments.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. School leader respondents favored the controlling style in handling conflicts followed by compromising and collaborating styles. No one preferred to use the accommodating and avoiding styles.
2. Teachers regard more value on organizational commitment in the new normal setting in terms of continuance commitment rather than in affective and normative commitments.
3. Highly significant relationship exists between school leaders’ conflict management styles in the new normal and teachers’ continuance commitment. However, no significant relationships are found between school leaders’ conflict management styles in the new normal and teachers affective and normative commitments.

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