Conflict Management and Organizational Behavior: Principal Strategies

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Abstract

This study aims to explore conflict management strategies and organizational behavior within educational institutions, specifically focusing on the role of school principals in addressing conflicts between teachers and staff. The research addresses the pressing need for effective conflict resolution in school environments to uphold organizational goals and foster a conducive learning atmosphere. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, the study utilizes observation, interviews, and documentation as primary data collection methods. Through direct observation and interviews with key stakeholders, the research delves into the intricacies of conflict resolution strategies employed by school principals. The study identifies conflicts between teachers and educational staff stemming from disputes over values, interests, and perceptions. Principals adopt collaborative strategies, including coaching and mediation, to resolve conflicts and promote mutual understanding among conflicting parties. However, resistance from individuals driven by personal agendas hinders conflict resolution efforts. Limitations are acknowledged, particularly in areas with restricted technologies, such as some educational institutions in developing countries. These limitations may affect the implementation of conflict resolution strategies and organizational behavior management. This study contributes to the literature by providing insights into effective conflict management strategies within educational settings. By highlighting the pivotal role of...
school principals and exploring innovative approaches to conflict resolution, the research offers practical implications for enhancing organizational dynamics in schools. Future research could further explore the impact of cultural and contextual factors on conflict management strategies and investigate novel approaches to mitigate conflict in diverse educational contexts.

strategi pengelolaan konflik dan menyelidiki pendekatan baru untuk mengurangi konflik dalam konteks pendidikan yang beragam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Global challenges in education encompass the development of science, technology, information, arts, and culture. These challenges must be addressed and resolved to achieve desired outcomes and goals (Farhana, 2023). Therefore, schools must always be prepared to face and overcome these challenges to thrive in a better educational environment. Issues and conflicts are organizational processes that enhance performance and productivity in achieving organizational goals (Anita et al., 2022). Problems arising within an organization are typical and can positively and negatively impact its development. Each case presents different issues, thus requiring different solutions. Therefore, finding positive solutions for the organization depends on how leaders manage these issues (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

Conflict is a situation where there is a difference between two or more individuals or groups in perception, values, interests, or goals. Conflict can occur at various levels, from interpersonal to intergroup conflicts or even conflicts involving nations. Conflict can arise in multiple contexts, including social, political, organizational, and personal environments (Mahesa & Hadijah, 2024). In organizational settings, conflict often occurs for various reasons, such as differences in interpreting rules or policies, competition among individuals or departments, differing needs, or disagreements about the appropriate ways to achieve common goals. Organizational conflict can arise among employees, between employees and management, or among various organisational units or departments (Nurjanah & Hanifuddin, 2022; Safitri, 2023).

Conflict can have multiple impacts depending on how the conflict is handled and responded to. The adverse effects of poorly managed conflict include decreased productivity, interpersonal tension, morale decline, disruption in workflow, increased absenteeism, and even team member termination. However, conflict can also have a positive impact if handled constructively, such as fostering
innovation, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and generating new solutions to existing problems (Gintulangi & Arsana, 2021; Zhafran & Fiernaningsih, 2023). Organizations need to develop skills in managing conflict effectively. This involves a good understanding of the sources of conflict, identifying and resolving conflicts that promote fairness and satisfaction for all involved parties, and building open communication and collaboration among individuals and units within the organization (Siregar & Usriyah, 2021).

In sociology research, conflict does not always refer to hostility or confrontation; it can also be related to competition, tension, or disagreements (Hasan & Sukimi, 2023; Muhajirin, 2024). This is why the existence of conflict does not necessarily have to be interpreted as a destructive force, as in many cases, conflict is positive, even constructive because it is functional (As’ad & Mujib, 2020). Indeed, dynamism arises from conflict, creativity is born from conflict, and productivity, as the driving force and source of change from conflict, brings achieving goals closer to fruition. In educational institutions, school principals as the highest leaders must manage conflicts effectively to bring positive benefits and avoid negative impacts (Suncaka, 2023). Conflict management can be introduced in education by accurately identifying the forms of conflict that occur. Recognizing these forms of conflict allows for easy and accurate determination of the best solutions to address them (Wirawan, 2016). Accuracy in conflict management can have a positive impact on organizational productivity.

Conversely, consistently avoiding conflict as an adverse event can decrease individual and group productivity and organizational productivity in educational institutions (A. Alwy, 2022). Conflicts between teachers and staff arise due to misleading communication, language barriers, or disagreements where teachers magnify their egos (Wursanto, 2015). Therefore, discussing the strategies of school principals in addressing these conflicts, considering that conflicts can have a significant impact on the implementation of educational activities in schools, it is also necessary for school principals to address and resolve emerging conflicts, which is an urgent necessity (Anita et al., 2022).
The school principal is crucial in creating a conducive learning environment and fostering student development. They are responsible for the overall management of the school, including handling conflicts and influencing organizational behaviour (Gutama et al., 2024; Wulandari & Nugroho, 2020). Educational environments often serve as grounds for disputes among students, teachers, parents, and administrative staff. These conflicts may stem from differing values, interests, or perceptions (Anggraeni & Maftuh, 2020). Poorly managed conflicts can disrupt the organisation's overall performance, leading to decreased productivity, interpersonal tensions, and diminished motivation to achieve common goals (Syamsuddin, 2022). Amidst the complexity of the school environment, principals need to have effective strategies for managing conflicts and influencing organizational behaviour. These strategies should encompass proactive, collaborative approaches toward solutions (Hartawan, 2020).

The research findings by Tambunan & Degeng indicate that school principals can employ various strategies to resolve conflicts without disrupting teacher performance, student comfort, and parental trust (Tambunan et al., 2017). The study demonstrates that the principal's conflict management is executed through collaboration, accommodation, and compromise. By implementing these three conflict resolution approaches at SMP NU Bululawang, Malang Regency, it is possible to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of social unrest within the school environment (Ismail, 2022).

The research results by Ermoliza et al. show that 1) conflicts arise due to social jealousy resulting from disparities between civil servant teachers and honorary teachers, the formation of groups among teachers, and some teachers' disapproval if another teacher receives recognition for their success from the school principal or the Education Office; and 2) the managerial role of the school principal in addressing teacher conflicts involves taking several actions such as: (a) striving to remain neutral and objective to avoid appearing biased in conflicts among teachers; (b) always providing opportunities for all teachers to speak up and express their opinions; and (c) consistently motivating teachers to focus on
improving their competencies and fulfilling their duties and responsibilities at school (Eraliza et al., 2020).

Based on the above, the researcher has identified school guidelines for managing conflict and organizational behaviour conducted by school leaders to address one of the causes of school failure in fulfilling the school's vision and mission. Interested in studying these strategies, the researcher chose the title "School Principal's Strategies in Managing Conflict and Organizational Behavior at SMPN 05 Jember."

II. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method with field research. This study utilizes tools such as data collection: 1) Observation, which involves direct observation on-site and with careful consideration of the object or activity aimed at developing teacher professionalism; 2) Interviews, where respondents are interviewed directly to ascertain training activities; 3) Documentation, where the researcher gathers physical data such as documentation of face-to-face interviews with respondents who are the main topic of study regarding coaching activities (Darmayanti, 2023). Data analysis techniques in this research include data reduction, data presentation, and concluding. Data validation was carried out using source triangulation (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020; Ikhwan, 2021).

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Conflict Management and Organizational Behavior in Schools

Conflict often starts from small matters, wherein the school principal is responsible for identifying the causes of conflict from the beginning (Samsudin & Setyowati, 2022). Therefore, although conflict is seen as beneficial, it can also result in losses if used in battle (Pane, 2023). The analysis of conflicts experienced by individuals in schools can take various forms, such as being easily offended, differences of opinion, feelings of social jealousy, high ego, external issues brought into the school environment, interpersonal dissatisfaction, and discomfort with a decision (Suryani & FoEh, 2018). This can happen for various reasons. At SMPN 05 Jember, various conflicts occur between teachers and educational staff.
Conflicts can arise due to disputes or disagreements between individuals or groups.

As stated in interviews with the Director of SMPN 05 Jember, conflicts have occurred in this school. Especially in educational institutions where educators should collaborate, everyone has problems, and of course, there are differing opinions, which ultimately escalate each other's ego conflicts. Based on the information found, conflicts among teachers arise due to communication between teachers and staff that often leads to misunderstandings, difficult-to-understand words, or increasing differences of opinion that cause teachers to attack each other's egos. Conflict management strategies applied internally and externally by school leaders are consistent with interviews with school leaders. If a conflict occurs within the school environment, the cause of the problem needs to be considered first, whether due to personal feelings or conflicts between teachers. Conflict management in the school principal's management strategy includes collaboration strategies, which align with the principal's statement about finding the best solution for the school together.

Conflict within educational institutions, such as SMPN 05 Jember, often originates from minor issues, necessitating the school principal's proactive identification of conflict causes. While conflict can be constructive, it also carries potential losses if mishandled. Analysis reveals conflicts manifesting in various forms, including easily offended attitudes, differing opinions, social jealousy, inflated egos, external influences, interpersonal dissatisfaction, and discomfort with decisions. At SMPN 05 Jember, conflicts between teachers and staff arise primarily from communication breakdowns leading to misunderstandings and escalating egos. Interviews with the school director confirm the prevalence of conflicts within the institution, exacerbated by differing opinions escalating into ego clashes. Conflict management strategies, internally and externally applied by school leaders, align with collaborative approaches, emphasizing finding collective solutions. Principals adopt adaptive strategies, including coaching and mediation, to facilitate conflict resolution. However, obstacles arise when conflicting parties resist change, hindering conflict resolution efforts.
The conflict management strategy of the school principal is adaptive: mutual goodness through coaching. In addition, conflicting parties can use mediation, or coaching and communication, to resolve issues such as persuasion and self-reflection. The strategy used by the school principal in managing conflict and organizational behaviour includes collaboration strategies. The school principal collaborates to resolve disputes and find the best solutions. Additionally, in handling or addressing conflicts, the school principal strives to speak from the heart to understand the situation. Of course, to achieve good team collaboration performance, conflicts should not be prolonged, leading to poor team performance. Therefore, implementing strategies by the school principal is very efficient and effective because it can resolve disputes together and find optimal solutions. Conflict management has several hindering factors when the perpetrators refuse to change, especially themselves, even though we have offered the best solution.

**Principal Strategies with Conflict Management and Organizational Behavior**

Various factors support conflict management, including cooperation between parties both from the school principal and vice-principal, as well as third parties outside the school such as the community and stakeholders involved, including related issues, they have greater authority over events that contribute to resolving conflicts that have occurred. From the description above, the supporting factors in conflict management are good cooperation among individuals or teams, good communication, and appropriate tasks to manage everything well.

Organizational performance serves as the primary measure to gauge the success and sustainability of a business entity or institution. It reflects how much an organization can achieve its goals and objectives (M. Alwy, 2022). Organizational performance encompasses several interrelated aspects: productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. Productivity highlights an organization’s ability to generate output using available resources (Nurhasnah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, efficiency emphasizes the optimal utilization of these resources to achieve desired outcomes.
On the other hand, effectiveness relates to an organization’s capability to attain its goals and meet expected outcomes. Organizational performance can also be viewed through its ability to adapt to external and internal environmental changes and innovate in creating added value for stakeholders (Martoyo et al., 2023). These aspects and customer or stakeholder satisfaction form a crucial foundation for evaluating and enhancing organizational performance (Qoyyimah et al., 2022). By understanding these dynamics, organizations can take necessary steps to achieve competitive advantage and ensure long-term business sustainability.

The research findings by Tambunan et al., (2017) indicate that school principals can employ various strategies to resolve conflicts without disrupting teacher performance, student comfort, and parental trust. The study demonstrates that the principal’s conflict management is executed through collaboration, accommodation, and compromise. By implementing these three conflict resolution approaches at SMP NU Bululawang, Malang Regency, it is possible to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of social unrest within the school environment (Ismail, 2022).

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The results of Qoyyimah et al., (2022) research show that conflict is not always destructive but can also have a positive impact if managed properly. This is where the role of the madrasah principal is needed to manage conflict in the
school he leads. The principal must certainly make or prepare a strategy so that later problems that arise in schools can be controlled properly and maximally. This is to the duties and functions of the madrasah principal as a mediator so that later, the conflict does not become an obstacle for the madrasah to achieve its mission and goals [30].

Effective conflict management relies on cooperation between stakeholders, including school principals, vice-principals, and external parties like the community and stakeholders. These collaborations enhance conflict resolution effectiveness, leveraging broader authority and resources to address underlying issues. Good communication and task allocation are crucial factors in conflict management, ensuring efficient conflict resolution processes. Organizational performance is integral to assessing an institution's success and sustainability. Key aspects such as productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, and adaptability contribute to organizational performance evaluation. Organizations can achieve competitive advantages and ensure long-term sustainability by prioritising stakeholder satisfaction and innovation. Research findings by Tambunan & Degeng emphasize school principals' utilization of various conflict resolution strategies to maintain teacher performance, student well-being, and parental trust.

Collaboration, accommodation, and compromise strategies mitigate social unrest within school environments. Ermaliza et al.'s research underscores the role of school principals in managing conflicts arising from social jealousy and group formations among teachers. Neutral and objective stances, opportunities for teacher expression, and motivation for competency improvement are highlighted as practical managerial actions. Qoyyimah findings emphasize the dual nature of conflict, highlighting its potential positive impacts when managed effectively. The madrasah principal's role in conflict management is crucial, requiring strategic preparation to prevent conflicts from hindering institutional missions and goals. Effective conflict management in educational institutions demands proactive identification of conflict causes, collaborative resolution approaches, and strategic leadership to navigate conflicts constructively towards organizational growth and sustainability.
IV. CONCLUSION

The above research results show various conflicts between teachers and educational staff. Conflicts can arise due to disputes or disagreements between individuals or groups. This can also be caused by multiple factors, including disputes between individuals, groups, or factions, resulting in losses for the conflicting parties. Conflict management in the school principal's response strategy includes collaboration strategies, which aligns with the principal's statement that he wants to find solutions together, especially the best solution for the school. The conflict management strategy of the school principal is adaptive: mutual goodness through coaching. Additionally, conflicting parties can use mediation, coaching, and communication to resolve issues such as persuasion and self-correction. There are obstacles in resolving these conflicts; in other words, although providing them with solutions, some conflict parties need to listen to instructions, and they follow their egos, making conflict resolution difficult. The supporting factors in handling emerging conflicts are good cooperation among individuals or teams, good communication, and proper task allocation to ensure everything is well managed.

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY


