

Management Capabilities and Organizational Conflict Strategies in Improving the Performance of Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the effect of the school heads' management capabilities and organizational conflict strategies in improving the performance of public elementary schools. It utilized descriptive and correlational methods to gather data. The respondents of this study were 153 public elementary teachers in the Division of Quezon in Candelaria West District, who were randomly selected. The researcher used the Slovin formula to identify the number of samples. It was conducted during the third quarter of 2021-2022. Adapted and modified questionnaires from Rahim Conflict Inventory-II were used in generating data. Based on the result of this study, the management capabilities of the school head in terms of planning, communicating, decision-making, delegating, problem-solving, and motivating were perceived by the respondents as highly practiced. Meanwhile, in terms of organizational conflict strategies, the accommodating strategy garnered the highest mean and was found to be the "highly practiced" strategy in dealing with conflict. Likewise, compromise and collaborative strategies were also perceived as "highly practiced" while the competition and avoiding strategies were perceived as "practiced". The school's performance as described in its leadership practice of the school head, interpersonal relationship, shared school vision, instructional and mentoring support, and parent and community involvement were "highly performing." The study revealed a significant relationship between management capabilities and organizational conflict strategies to the performance of the school.

The study recommends organizing a series of workshops, seminars, conferences, and orientation programs on conflict resolution strategies for principals and teachers. This is appropriate for increasing the educators' knowledge, particularly about emerging ideas and innovations in conflict resolution in schools.

Keywords: *Management Capabilities, Organization Conflict Strategies, School Performance*

1. Introduction

The principal's management capabilities are vital in developing schools or educational institutions. Principals should have the ability to manage educational resources in their schools, such as educators and teachers, buildings and infrastructure, curriculum, and any potential for collaboration with other institutions. To fulfill the intended school's vision and mission and generate competent graduates, good management on all parts will develop an effective leadership practice (Ezeugbor and Victor, 2018). To empower and motivate the teaching personnel, the school administrator must also be skilled in all aspects of management. Having the highest authority in the school, the school head must be equipped with the managerial skills necessary to achieve the school's goals objectives, and mission. These include planning, communicating, decision-making, problem-solving, delegating, and motivating skills. The success and achievement of the school are largely impacted by the school leaders' ability. Thus, the management capabilities of the school head must be good at all times.

An organization is composed of people with different values, cultural backgrounds, and norms who work together to achieve common goals. A school as an educational organization is confined by particular rules and regulations to keep the peace and achieve a specific set of goals and objectives. Nowadays, teachers and other personnel are facing difficulties and problems in the work environment. Different information and previous experience related to a specific issue, different motivations, interests, and personal objectives, and inequitable task allocation were identified as the main causes of professional conflicts between teachers. Other significant conflict causes included inequitable school resource allocation, limited career advancement opportunities, subjective performance appraisal of teachers, violations of internal rules and regulations, and lack of transparency, clarity, and addressability (Catana, 2015). These serve as the spark that ignites organizational conflict.

Undoubtedly, conflict is a normal part of life, even in the environment. Conflict helps us to grow and learn. In a school setting, it is also very common. There are various scenarios of people troubled by conflict. But, a school as an avenue of learning and structure of human relationships must be a place where harmonious relationships should be observed. Conflict must not be disregarded for it might damage the relationship of personnel. Thus, the school head, must be aware of the happenings in the school and must be equipped with the strategies that can be used to deal with and handle conflict sensibly, fairly, and reliably. Principals must be able to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and form relationships. This triple threat prepares a principal to arrange any conflicts that may arise. It would also be an appropriate point of view to perceive conflicts as opportunities for organizational improvement rather than dangers.

Candelaria West District is one of the performing schools in the Division of Quezon. It has received various awards and recognitions in various contests and competitions. However, despite the grants and rewards, conflicts and job challenges are common in the district. As observed, there have been instances of resignation, personal relationship collapse, provocation, and even emotional breakdown. Offensive words are being uttered and expressed which cause sensitive damage to the teachers involved. Likewise, there are instances of quarrels and confrontation due to existing issues. There were also several concerns and feelings expressed by certain teachers. It indeed causes a great deal of anguish, heartache, disturbance in their profession, and even mental health issues. A good working environment is necessary not only for the children but also for the teachers. They spend more than eight hours in school along with their colleagues which is why harmonious relationships must be good at all times.

Teachers are essential for the transfer of knowledge to occur in their learners. It can be inferred teachers with positive mindsets can provide quality learning experiences to their learners. However, teachers being human beings are embedded with different attitudes and personalities of perceiving problems and issues. When the teachers involved in the conflict are deeply affected by the matters at hand, their teaching performance suffers as well. As such, the quality of teaching and learning may deteriorate. School performance is negatively impacted by conflict (Anwar, 2012). It is true since an individual's productivity is determined by their school performance. Poor conflict resolution reduces productivity, but a constructive strategy results in positive performance (Lazarus, 2014). Although it is impossible to have a conflict-free school environment due to individual variations and interests, if not managed properly, it can heighten disorder and chaos, thus immediate intervention and action are needed.

When conflict arises in the school, it necessitates conflict resolution, which can be accomplished tactfully through avoidance, accommodating, competition, collaborative, and compromise strategies. Unresolved conflicts can be detrimental to both personal and professional relationships. If two or more parties are unable to resolve their disagreement, these feelings may later lead to explosive behavior and resentment. That is why the school heads must be aware of the different conflict strategies that can be used to settle and deal with conflicts to build a harmonious relationship and avoid future problems.

The primary rationale prompts the researcher to study the principal's management capabilities and organizational conflict strategies to improve school performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Management Capabilities

The effectiveness of any system is largely determined by the type of its administrative setup and control. The achievement of an organization's goals and objectives is inextricably linked to its management capabilities. The school administrator, who is at the center of all operations, is burdened with a plethora of responsibilities, including effective delegation of authority, staff training, student management, and student performance management. Being an effective school principal involves a great deal of effort and commitment (Mohammed et al. (2020). Likewise, good school administrators balance their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they are doing what they believe is best for all stakeholders in the school environment. In effect, school principals are expected to effectively organize, staff, schedule, and prioritize their management responsibilities. Their outstanding leadership is crucial to the success of schools in this regard (Meador 2019). Kuara (2018) asserted that managerial capability correlates positively with

school performance. The quality of management and the leadership practices of the school principal also influence the quality of teacher performance. If the management style is poor, the school's performance suffers. So, if the principal fails to perform their duties successfully and efficiently, the school's performance would suffer, resulting in the Department of Education's unmet aim of providing quality education to every Filipino learner. The UNESCO journal (2016) stated that school leadership and administration is a new lever for improving school effectiveness, efficiency, and quality.

2.2 Organizational Conflict Strategies

According to Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013), conflicts are inevitable in schools, as they are in other organizations, due to many people with varied personalities. Conflict can be harmful if it leads to inadequate communication, breakdown of work relationships, tension, argument, poor performance of team members, and antagonism, all of which harm the smooth operation of schools (Bano et al., 2013). However, if conflicts are appropriately handled, benefits may accrue, contributing to solidarity within conflicting groups and reconciliation of legitimate interests, which, in turn, strengthens relationships, improves identification of problems and solutions, increases knowledge/skill, and protects peace. School administrators have essential roles and responsibilities, especially regarding the positive result of school conflicts. Thus, the school administrators should be able to turn conflict into an opportunity for the school and improve its effectiveness and efficiency by implementing robust conflict management strategies. Undoubtedly, teachers, parents, and administrators know that conflict resolution can help manage the process better and produce better results. Conflict should be viewed as an opportunity for the school's development by administrators and teachers (Ertürk, 2022). Instead of confronting conflict, developing problem-solving strategies, and managing conflicts to benefit the organization and its personnel, it is often possible to avoid and suppress conflict-related issues or solve them using authoritarian methods. Given the variety and inevitability of causes of conflict in schools, it is clear that the essential goal is to reduce friction and increase cooperation (Karcolu & Alioullar 2012). Conflicts should be managed in the most efficient way possible. It is important to note that attempting to eradicate or ignore all sources of conflict can impede the school's progress. As a result, the school will be more effective when a conflict is successfully managed rather than endangering the school and its personnel.

2.3 School Performance

In the educational sector, leadership styles and school performance are linked in the sense that, to increase the quality of education, school leaders must develop their professional competencies. The headmaster, headteachers, and department heads are in charge of properly and efficiently managing school resources. In Indonesia, good leadership is one of the most important requirements for educational management (Gultom, 2020). According to Marini (2016), school performance can be defined as the extent to which an educational institution is a social system with specific resources. It can achieve its goals without abusing its processes and resources or putting excessive pressure on its member. The fulfillment of school goals is linked to the availability of resources, which implies that schools in various settings and conditions have varying chances of achieving particular degrees of effectiveness. School, as an organized system of interaction, is made up of people who engage with one another and are linked in an organic relationship. Hallinger and Huber (2012) assert that effective principals create a clear vision and a sense of purpose for the school. They concentrate and focus staff attention on what is vital, rather than allowing it to be diverted and derailed by activities that will have little impact on students' work. They are aware of what is occurring in their classes. They have a strong understanding of their employee's strengths and weaknesses and understand how to capitalize on their abilities while minimizing their flaws, and can tailor their staff development program to the specific needs of their personnel and school. Tamen (2011) highlighted the value of community and educational leaders working together in the planning, policy formulation, and implementation of school programs. There's a compelling reason to strive for close community and institutional integration. According to Meador (2016), a leader must be versatile in dealing with other administrators, teachers, support personnel, students, and parents in a school setting. School principals are, in fact, the most accountable individuals for the efficiency and effectiveness of school supervision and management. They are the best people to provide and offer help, support, incentive, and leadership in the development of teachers. Because they interact with teachers, they are more dedicated, inspired, and committed to teaching. In a related study, Samoei (2014) discovered that principals and headteachers were proficient in

administrative planning, personnel, and resource organization, human relations, and public relations. They could not direct and control others. Administrative planning, managing, and decision-making showed significant variations between principals and teachers.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The figure below explains how the research flows. The independent variable box shows the Management Capabilities with six sub-variables namely planning, communicating, decision-making, problem-solving and motivating. The second independent variable is the organizational conflict strategies which was composed of avoidance, accommodating, competition, compromise, and collaborative. The study aimed to measure the correlation of the independent variables to dependent variable which was the school performance, which has five sub-variables namely leadership practice of the school head, interpersonal relationship, shared school vision, instructional and mentoring support and parent and community involvement.

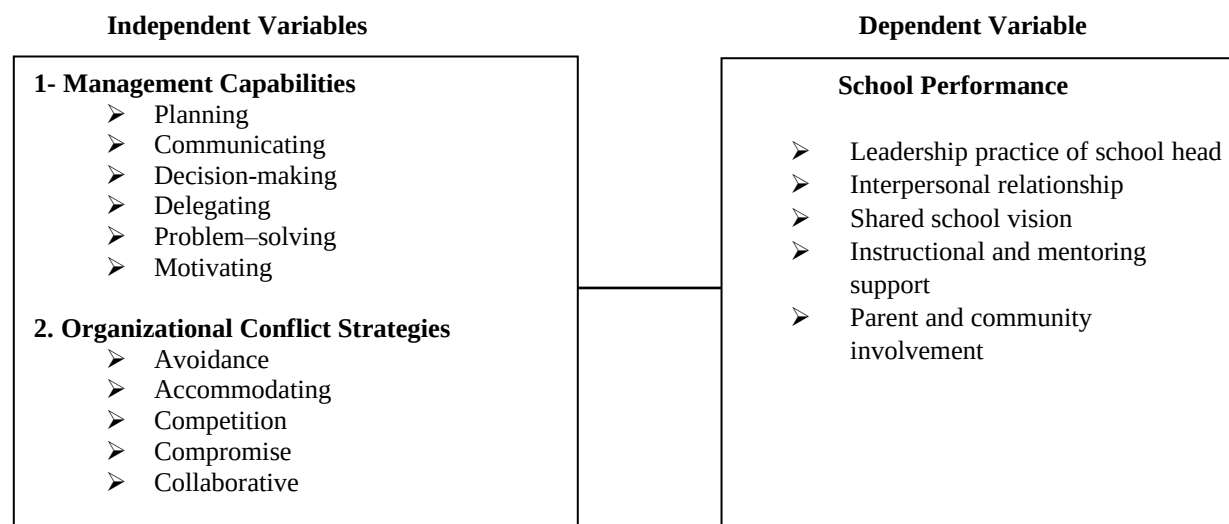


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm

3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were posited in the study:

H1. Management capabilities are significantly related to the school performance.

H2. Organizational conflict strategies are significantly related to the school performance.

4. Methodology

The descriptive and correlational methods were used in the study. The descriptive method relates to the research question, design, and data analysis used on a particular issue. This study was used to determine the relationship between management capabilities and organizational conflict strategies of the school head in improving the performance of public elementary schools. The respondents of this study were Teachers I – III and Master Teachers I – III of the Candelaria West District, which was composed of 153 participants who were randomly chosen. The Slovin formula was used to identify the number of samples needed. The study utilized an adapted questionnaire and a modified questionnaire from Rahim Conflict Inventory-II. It was conducted from December 2021 to June 2022. The respondents of the study were public elementary school teachers of the Candelaria West District. The researcher employed an adapted questionnaire and modified survey questionnaire from Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II, to determine the relationship between management capabilities and organizational conflict strategies in improving the performance of public elementary schools. The questionnaires were subjected to validation before their administration to the respondents. For content validation, the initial draft of the research instrument was presented to

the experts such as the school head, master teachers, English teachers, and Teacher III, for critique. A revision was made to come up with an accurate instrument. Comments and recommendations of the validators were considered. After validating the instrument, the researcher conducted pilot testing on thirty teachers outside her district to identify the Cronbach's alpha and reliability of the instrument. The questionnaires were made in the google form and distributed to every school head through the link. The data gathered were tabulated for statistical treatment with the help of her statistician. The data collected were treated as confidential and used only for the study. Several statistical tools were used to present, analyze, and interpret the data gathered. The mean and standard deviation were employed to evaluate the respondents' responses to the descriptive questions. For the inferential part, the Pearson-moment of correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the respondents' responses and determine the relationship between variables.

5. Result

5.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Table 1. Correlation between Management Capabilities of School Head and the School Performance

Management Capabilities	School Performance				
	Leadership Practices of School head	Interpersonal Relationship	Shared Vision	Instructional and Mentoring Support	Parent and Community Involvement
Communicating	.845**	.844**	.779**	.778**	.793**
Planning	.815**	.840**	.755**	.745**	.812**
Decision-making	.856**	.855**	.781**	.784**	.827**
Delegating	.845**	.853**	.796**	.795**	.787**
Problem-solving	.834**	.837**	.790**	.793**	.828**
Motivating	.838**	.830**	.781**	.775**	.781**

Legend: N= 153 ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 depicts the relationship between management skills and school performance. The result reveals that management capabilities in communicating, planning, decision-making, delegating, problem-solving, and motivating are significantly related at 0.01 level (2-tailed) to the school's performance regarding leadership practices of the school head, interpersonal relationships, shared vision, instructional and mentoring support, and parent and community involvement. In terms of communicating ($r=.778$ to $.845$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), planning ($r=.745$ to $.840$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), decision-making ($r=.781$ to $.856$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), delegating ($r=.787$ to $.853$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), problem-solving ($r=.790$ to $.837$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), and motivating ($r=.775$ to $.838$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The decision-making capability got the highest correlation between the leadership practices of the school head and interpersonal relationships. It implies that sound and effective decisions made by the school head greatly affect the management of the school. Also, strong association with the stakeholders and personnel is a necessary ingredient in improving the school performance. As observed in the district of the researcher, most of the school leaders organize a meeting or collaborative group discussion to deliberate about certain matters. They seek and recognize the opinion and viewpoints of the teaching staff before arriving at conclusion and making the right decision. Likewise, teachers holding ancillary services were given the authority to create plans, and set activities regarding their ancillary works, and the school head provide technical assistance if needs arise. It indicates that the school leaders have demonstrated the necessary capabilities to lead and govern the school and improve its performance. Management capability correlates positively with school performance. The quality of management and the leadership practices of the school principal also influence the quality of teacher performance (Kuala, 2018).

Management capability is one of the most fundamental characteristics of a principal in ensuring the school's overall success. The principal must have the appropriate, efficient, and effective management abilities and skills to manage and supervise the school's unique organization and environment. To achieve school objectives, the school principal, who serves as the manager, must have extensive experience and understanding of management. The planning, coordination, and efficient use of available human and material resources to achieve desired goals and objectives is referred to as management (Ganaden, 2020).

Thus, the management capabilities of principals such as planning, communication, decision-making, delegating, problem-solving and motivating have a positive impact on school performance with regards to the leadership practice of the school head, interpersonal relationship, shared vision, instructional and mentoring support, and parents and community involvement. As principals practiced the necessary management skills, the school performance will be greatly affected. It will result in the school improvement and the learners will significantly benefit.

Table 2. Correlation between Organizational Conflict Strategies and the School Performance

Organizational Conflict Strategies	School Performance				
	Leadership Practices of School head	Interpersonal Relationship	Shared Vision	Instructional and Mentoring Support	Parent and Community Involvement
Avoidance	.615**	.603**	.583**	.542**	.557**
Accommodating	.884**	.891**	.820**	.787**	.836**
Competition	.355**	.339**	.360**	.352**	.330**
Compromise	.788**	.804**	.756**	.730**	.761**
Collaborative	.870**	.864**	.819**	.790**	.838**

*Legend: N= 153 ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 2 reveals the correlation between organizational conflict strategies and school performance. As shown in the data, all of the conflict strategies significantly affect the school's performance. In a similar sense, according to Salim's (2017) research, there is a strong positive connection between conflict strategies and school performance.

In terms of avoidance, ($r=.542$ to $.615$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), accommodating ($r=.787$ to $.891$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), competition ($r=.330$ to $.360$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$), compromise ($r=.730$ to $.804$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$) and collaborative ($r=.790$ to $.870$, $N= 153$, $p<.01$). thus, the null hypothesis is also rejected.

Among the five strategies, the accommodating style got the highest correlation with leadership practices of the school head, interpersonal relationships, and shared vision. In contrast, the collaborative style obtained the highest correlation between instructional support and parent and community involvement. It can be concluded that most school heads prefer to use these strategies in resolving conflict to maintain and value the harmonious relationship within the school setting. Both styles foster trust, respect, and relationships, which are essential for a conducive and heartening environment. These strategies reduce hostility by allowing free expression.

On the other hand, the competition strategy received the lowest mean in all school performance variables. It denotes that the respondents perceived this strategy as aggressive, confrontational, uncooperative, and using coercive power. A school head that uses a competition strategy seeks control over a discussion of both substance and ground rules. It also implies that this strategy is not a good practice in improving the performance of the school.

Administrators typically employ the dominance, integration, compliance, and compromise styles and the avoidance style. Domination, integration, and avoidance are the most commonly utilized conflict management strategies (Vaiz, 2017). Likewise, in the research of Bayar (2015), the most common conflict-resolution tactics used

by school administrators are avoidance, compliance and obedience, compromise, coercion, and negotiation. To sum it up, different conflict strategies are used in every organization, depending on the needs and situation.

6. Discussion

The study revealed the following findings:

1. Management capabilities of the school head as to planning, communicating, decision-making, delegating, problem – solving and motivating were "highly practiced."
2. The respondents perceived organizational conflict strategies such as accommodating, compromise, and collaborative as "highly practiced" while avoidance and competition were "practiced".
3. The school's performance as described in its leadership practice of the school head, interpersonal relationship, shared school vision, instructional and mentoring support, and parent and community involvement were "highly performing."
4. There is a significant relationship between management capabilities and school performance.
5. There is a significant relationship between organizational conflict strategies and school performance.

7. Conclusion

The findings gathered in the study led to the formulation of the conclusion:

Respondents perceived management capabilities in terms of planning, communicating, decision-making, delegating, problem-solving and motivating significantly related to the school performance. Likewise, organizational conflict strategies in terms of avoiding, accommodating, collaborative, competition and compromise also correlates with the school performance. It is therefore concluded that the null hypothesis was not sustained.

8. Recommendations

Based on the result obtained, the following recommendations were hereby made;

1. In terms of problem-solving skills, it is recommended that school leaders recognize subordinates' points of view to come up with a better outcome.
2. Before implementing available conflict resolution strategies, school leaders should first identify the actual causes and nature of the conflict among the school's personnel.
3. It is suggested that the principal implement the best practice of a win-win strategy so that no personnel troubled by conflict will judge favoritism.
4. A series of workshops, seminars, conferences, and orientation programs on conflict resolution strategies for principals and teachers could be organized. This is appropriate for increasing these educators' knowledge, particularly about emerging ideas and innovations in conflict resolution in schools.

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