

“Perceptions of Decision Making and Conflict Management in Sulu’s Secondary Schools”

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.803016S>

Received: 18 March 2024; Revised: 02 April 2024; Accepted: 05 April 2024; Published: 07 May 2024

ABSTRACT

A descriptive-exploratory research design through a quantitative research method was utilized since the objective of the study was to trace the desired explanations on the decision-making and conflict-management measures as perceived by the teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu. The statement of the Problem Specifically sought to answer questions on the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, What is the extent of effectiveness of decision-making and conflict management as perceived by the teachers themselves, Is there a significant relationship between decision-making and conflict-management measures when data are grouped according to age, gender and educational attainment?

The following were the significant findings after the statistical computation and analysis was employed:

1. On the Demographic Profile of the Respondents More than half of the teacher-respondents are basically young because 64% of them are below 40 years old. More than half are females and almost half earned units in doctoral program.
2. The teachers perceived as *effective on the* decision-making and conflict management among teachers
3. There is no significant relationship between decision-making and conflict-management measures when data are grouped according to age, gender, and educational attainment.

The study concluded that the teacher were determined to update their knowledge in educational programs regardless of age and length of service. teachers should exert more effort in making their decision-making and conflict-management in school very effective and productive for all concerned. The demographic profile of the respondents is not significantly related to their decision-making and conflict-management in the organization

Keywords: Decision Making, Conflict Management, Administrators

INTRODUCTION

One of the thrusts of the school is to promote harmonious relationship among teachers in order to ensure smooth operation. However, it could not be avoided that problems would likely occur as a result of personal grudges, misunderstanding, and differences in their views, professional rivalry, behavioral problems and the like. Along this line, both administrators and teachers need to adopt sound decision-making by promoting the welfare of the school through peaceful and diplomatic resolution of conflicts and thus fostering harmonious

relationship, a key factor in the preservation of camaraderie and effective interpersonal relationship geared towards the realization of the objectives and goals of the organization.

Theoretically, the management of conflict is absolutely essential to the effectiveness and competitiveness of organizations. Notably, the lack of proficient conflict management has a pervasive detrimental impact on relationships, which develop within the organizations, and the productivity they are expected to fulfill. It has been observed that well-managed conflict is a key to creativity, communication and goal achievement (Dipaola & Hoy, 2001:239).

Moreover, when values and beliefs contradict, conflict arises. Conflict is unavoidable. It exists in all walks of life. No one is exempted. Conflict is said to arise when the individual needs, wants, values or ideas clash with those of others. As Nicholson (1992) stated, “A conflict exists when two people wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent.” In other words, the goals, methods, aims or objectives of two or more people are in contradiction.

However, conflicts do not have to end with someone losing and with both parties hating each other. Many do end this way, according to George W. Bush’s statement (1991) Conflict is a “social interaction process, whereby individuals or groups come to perceive of themselves at odds” (Achinstein, 2002:4). Uline et al (2003:785) agree that conflict can occur when two persons interact and are found to be having different interest. Conflict therefore occurs when the action of a person is interfering, obstructing or in some way making other’s behavior less effective.

Conflict is neither good nor bad. Conflict can be a positive force that facilitates needed change. Whitfield (1994:4-5) identified the positive aspects of conflict when he wrote that conflicts enable us to learn something more about ourselves, In this context therefore, the appearance of a conflict in a situation becomes in itself a mortar or glue that holds people together. Conflict is necessary in every organization because it “is absolutely necessary. Without it we just couldn’t get the job done” (Whitfield, 1994:10). When you say: “I want what I want when I want It,” you are being inordinately selfish and that could lead to quarrels or resentment, and could even spell death of personal love which unfortunately is so often the byproduct of conflict (Vera, 1989).

Therefore, there really is a need for study conflict management considering the many reported cases, incidences and reports that affect the provision of quality educational services and affecting the learning of the students. The students are the recipients of the services of the teachers.

In resolving conflicts, it is vital to ensure sound decision-making by assessing the nature of the problem, formulating objectives, establishing alternative courses of actions, analyzing the different alternative courses of action, implementing the most appropriate course of action and making an evaluation. The success of decision-making depends on how well the different steps are carried out and the integration of the different aspects of management such as planning, organizing, controlling, directing, implementation and evaluation.

It is against this background that this study was conceived in order to assess the decision-making and conflict management effectiveness among teachers as perceived by the teachers themselves in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section centers its brief discussion on the following aspects: research design, research locale, respondents

of the study, research instrument, sampling design, data gathering procedure, validity and reliability and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

A descriptive-exploratory research design through a quantitative research method was employed in assessing the effectiveness on decision-making and conflict management as perceived by the teachers themselves in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

This method utilized because a descriptive method collates, tests and validates data. Description emerges following creative exploration, and serves to organize the findings in order to fit them with explanations, and then test or validate those explanations (Kratwohl, 1993).

Research Site

The study conducted among the teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu namely: Indanan National High School, Maimbung National High School, Jolo National High School and Sulu National High School during the School Year 2017-2018.

Indanan National High School is located in the municipality of Indanan, Sulu, Maimbung National High School, Maimbung, Sulu, Jolo National High School, Jolo, Sulu and Sulu National High Sulu, also of Jolo, Sulu. The abovementioned secondary schools come from three (3) out of the nineteen (19) municipalities in the province of Sulu.

Participants

The respondents of this study were the one hundred (100) teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu namely: Indanan National High School, Maimbung National High School, Jolo National High School and Sulu National High School during the School Year 2017-2018.

Specifically, respondents included in this study are those teachers coming from all grade levels such as grades 7, 8, 9, 10 and senior high schools at grades 11 and 12. Of the one hundred (100) hundred respondents, twenty-five teachers will be used as representative samples in each of the four (4) chosen public secondary schools. Table below shows the distribution of samples in this study.

Distribution of samples according to School

Schools	Number of Teacher-Respondents
Indanan National High School	25
Maimbung National High School	25
Jolo National High School	25
Sulu National High School	25
TOTAL	100

Sampling Design

A non-probability sampling method through purposive sampling procedure will be employed in this study. That is, due to access, availability and time constraints, representative samples from Indanan National High School, Maimbung National High School, Jolo National High School and Sulu National High School will be purposively chosen as samples of this study. The use of purposive sampling procedure will ensure the collection of desired quality and quantity of data used in this study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in generating the primary empirical data was a self-devised questionnaire based from the theories of Robbins, Coulter and Newstrom, on decision-making and conflict management as perceived by the teachers themselves in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu. The questionnaire constitutes closed-ended or fixed questions stated in English language, developed specifically to meet the study objectives. The instrument consists of three (3) blocks.

Validity And Reliability

The instrument used in this research was adapted and based from the instrument of Robbins, Coulter and Newstrom. This standardized instrument was already used in previous studies; thus, their validity and reliability are already established. Therefore, there is no need for the present researcher to undergo revalidation and retesting processes of the reliability of this instrument.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the collection of data, a permit to administer the questionnaire will be sought from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies of the Sulu State College and then from the Schools Division Superintendent, and from the four (4) respective secondary school principals. The researcher conducted the launching and administration as well as the retrieval of the questionnaire personally.

Statistical Treatment of Data

In generating the primary empirical data for this study, the following statistical tools were employed:

1. Simple Percentage. The simple percentage is a parametric measure, which will be used to determine the demographic profile of the teachers in terms of age, gender and educational attainment.
2. Weighted Mean. This is a non-parametric measure that used the modified four-point scale on the basis of the parametric limits.

The non-parametric scale utilizing the four-point, scale response:

Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Interpretation
3.26	4.00	Very Effective
2.51	3.25	Effective
1.76	2.5	Less Effective

3. Chi-square was the statistical measure used to correlate between the decision-making and conflict management measures as to age, gender and educational attainment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, its analysis, and interpretation of data on the decision-making and conflict management among administrators and teachers as perceived by teachers in public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, and educational attainment.

For age, 17% of the teachers are between 25-29 years old, 20% are between 30-34 years old, 27% are between 35-39 years old, and 36% are 40 years old and above.

For gender, 39% are males and 61% are females.

For educational attainment, 17% are BSEEd graduate, 30% are BSSEd graduate, 40% earned units in master's program, 11% completed master's program, and only 2% earned units in doctoral program. None of the respondents finish the doctoral program.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents N=100

Age:	Frequency	Percentage
25-29 years old	17	17
30-34 years old	39	39
35-39 years old	27	27
40 years old and above	36	36
Gender:		
Male	39	39
Female	61	61
Educational Attainment:		
BSEEd Graduate	17	17
BSSEd Graduate	30	30
With units in Master's Program	40	40
Completed Masters Program	11	11
With units in Doctoral Program	2	2

Completed Doctoral Program	0	0
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Extent of Effectiveness of Decision–Making Among School Administrators and Teachers, as Perceived by the Teachers Themselves in Selected Public Secondary Schools in the Division of Sulu

Table 2A shows that in terms of decision-making, the teachers perceived as *effective* when among teachers have group discussion where they communicate best, emphasizes planning for his/her future goals, looks for creative approaches when faced with solving a problem, good at seeing possibilities, works well with those who are open-minded, and likes to follow rules. However, the teachers perceived as *less effective* when administrators and the teachers become frustrated when under stress. The average weighted mean of 3.00 confirms that the teachers perceived as *effective* the decision-making among teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

According to Robbins and Coulter (1999), the decision-making process begins with identifying a problem and formulating decision criteria and allocating weights to every choice, moves on to developing, analyzing, and selecting an alternative that can resolve the problem and concludes with evaluating the decision’s effectiveness.

The theory of Robbins and Coulter (1999) emphasized that managers have different styles when it comes to making decisions and solving problems. They are either problem avoiders, problem solvers or problem seekers.

Table 2: A Extent of Effectiveness of Decision-Making as Perceived by the Teachers Themselves in Selected Public Schools in the Division of Sulu N=100

Decision-Making Tool Situation	Weighted mean	Interpretation
1. Prime objective is to achieve recognition for work.	2.94	Effective
2. Enjoys jobs that allow independent action.	2.94	Effective
3. Works with people who are committed and responsive.	2.99	Effective
4. Looks for new approaches or ideas.	3.17	Effective
1. Communicates best by having a group discussion.	3.09	Effective
2. Emphasizes planning for his/her future goals.	3.25	Effective
3. Looks for creative approaches when faced with solving a problem.	3.08	Effective
4. Needs broad coverage of many options when using information.	2.96	Effective

5. Looks for possible compromises when not sure what to do.	3.04	Effective
6. Avoids using numbers and formulas whenever possible.	2.67	Effective
7. Good at seeing many possibilities.	3.12	Effective
8. When time is limited, refuses to be pressured.	2.88	Effective
9. In social settings, observes what is going on.	3.09	Effective
10. Good at remembering people's faces.	3.07	Effective
11. The work provides him/her in achieving personal goals.	3.04	Effective
12. Works well with those who are open-minded.	3.16	Effective
13. Becomes frustrated when under stress.	2.47	Less Effective
14. Imaginative	2.90	Effective
15. Decisions are typically broad and flexible.	3.04	Effective
16. Likes to follow rules.	3.13	Effective
Average	3.00	Effective

Legend:

SCALE	RANGED	INTERPRETATION
4	3.26-4.00	Very Effective
3	2.51-3.25	Effective
2	1.76-2.50	Less Effective
1	1.00-1.75	Not effective

Extent of Effectiveness of Conflict Management as Perceived by the Teachers Themselves in Selected Public Secondary Schools in the Division of Sulu

Table 2B shows that in terms of conflict management among school administrators and teacher, the teachers

strongly agree that it is *very effective* when administrators and teachers collaborates and cooperates in resolving conflicts. On the other hand, they agree that it is *effective* when administrators and teachers assesses the nature of the conflict and determines the real cause of the conflict, calls the attention of the persons involved in the conflict, allows feedbacks, suggestions, and opinions before arriving at a final decision, makes referrals and consultations in order to resolve the conflict, and adapts trust and positive attitudes in resolving conflicts. The average weighted mean of 3.10 confirms that the teachers agree and perceived as *effective* the conflict management among administrators and teachers.

In Ghaffar’s study (2014), he stressed that conflicts are neither constructive nor disruptive but the ways these are handled make them either positive or negative.

In Newstrom’s theory (2001), of conflict management styles, it was emphasized that willingness to identify the underlying causes to share information openly and to search for mutually beneficial solutions is the hallmark of collaborative style.

Table 2: Extent of Effectiveness of Conflict Management Among School Administrators and Teachers, as Perceived by the Teachers Themselves in Selected Public Secondary Schools in the Division of Sulu N=100

Conflict Management Tool Situation	Weighted mean	Interpretation
1. Assesses the nature of the conflict and determines the real cause of the conflict.	3.14	Agree
2. Calls the attention of the persons involved in the conflict.	3.14	Agree
3. Calls the involved persons to present each of their side.	3.12	Agree
4. Collaborates and cooperates in resolving conflicts.	3.59	Strongly Agree
5. Allows feedbacks, suggestions and opinions before arriving at a final decision.	3.18	Agree
6. Makes referrals and consultations in order to resolve the conflict.	3.15	Agree
7. Encourages open interactions between parties involved.	3.12	Agree
8. Adopts trust and positive attitudes in resolving conflicts.	3.18	Agree
9. Expresses emotions with regard to the problems	2.72	Agree
10. Resolves conflict through assessing	2.94	Agree

personality differences.		
11. Makes decisions on the basis of the policies and hospitals.	2.93	Agree
12. Makes careful monitoring and evaluation of the attitude and behavior of the teacher	3.00	Agree
13. Assesses the strengths and weaknesses	3.09	Agree
Average	3.10	Agree

LEGEND:

SCALE	RANGED	INTERPRETATION
4	3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)
3	2.51-3.25	Agree (A)
2	1.76-2.50	Disagree (D)
1	1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Significant Relationship between Decision-Making and Conflict Management Measures When Data are Grouped According to Age, Gender, and Educational Attainment

The chi-square was used to determine the significant relationship between decision-making and conflict management measures when data are grouped according to age, gender, and educational attainment.

The computed χ^2 value is 0.747. at $\alpha=.05$ and $df=2$, the χ^2 critical value is 5.99. Since the computed χ^2 value of 0.747 is lesser than the χ^2 critical value of 5.99, the null hypothesis is accepted.

There is no significant relationship between decision-making and conflict-management measures when data are grouped according to age, gender, and educational attainment.

The study of Vestal (2011) indicated that gender could not predict a clear preference for any of the five possible conflict-management behaviors.

Table 3: Significant Relationship between Decision-Making and Conflict-Management Measures When Data are Grouped According to Age, Gender and Educational Attainment N=100

Profile	Decision-Making (DM)	Conflict-Management (CM)	TOTAL
Age	49	51	100

Gender	53	47	100
Educational Attainment	47	53	100
TOTAL	149	151	100

DM (Decision- Making; (Conflict Management)	Observed O	Expected E	O-E	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
Age DM	49	49.67	-0.67	0.009
Age CM	51	50.33	0.67	0.009
Gender DM	53	49.67	3.33	0.223
Gender CM	47	3.33	-3.33	0.220
Educational Attainment DM	47	-3.33	-2.67	0.144
Educational Attainment CM	53	50.33	2.67	0.142
TOTAL	300	300		0.747

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Below presents the summary of findings of the study, its conclusions, and recommendations on the decision-making and conflict-management among school administrators and teachers, as perceived by the teachers themselves in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

Summary

The following were found in the study:

On the Demographic Profile of the Respondents

More than half of the teacher-respondents are basically young because 64% of them are below 40 years old. More than half are females and almost half earned units in doctoral program.

On the Extent of Effectiveness of Decision-Making and Conflict Management among School Administrators and Teachers, as Perceived by Teachers

The teachers perceived as *effective* the decision-making of school administrators and teachers of selected

secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

The teachers perceived as *effective* the conflict-management of school administrators and teachers of selected public secondary schools in the Division of Sulu.

On the Correlation between Decision-Making and Conflict Management Measures When Data are Grouped According to Age, Gender and Educational Attainment

There is no significant relationship between decision-making and conflict-management measures when data are grouped according to age, gender, and educational attainment.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following is concluded:

The age bracket of some teachers means that some of them entered the teaching force in less than 10 years while some of them had been in the service for more than 10 years already. The 40 teachers with units in masteral program goes to show that the teachers are determine to update their knowledge in educational programs.

The school administrators and teachers should exert more effort in making their decision-making and conflict-management in school very effective and productive for all concerned.

The demographic profile of the respondents is not significantly related to their decision-making and conflict-management in the organization.

Recommendation

The following conflict management measures are recommended based on the findings of the study and its conclusions:

1. All members of the organization should be involved in decision-making to avoid miscommunications and misinformation's on certain issue.
2. Should understand their jobs in order for them to assign each one where they will be productive and avoid conflict within the organization.
3. Praise and recognition should be accorded to those who work hard to avoid discouragement and conflict in the future.
4. Always promote good interpersonal relations among all members of the organization.
5. Transparency of all school activities should be encouraged to avoid misconceptions among subordinates.
6. Should learn to compromise on certain issue whenever the need arises to settle it.
7. All members of the organization should be encouraged to cooperate on certain activity to avoid conflict of interest.

8. Collaboration and cooperation of all concern should be encouraged in resolving conflicts.

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