

# Conflict Management Styles of Sta. Lucia National High School Teaching Staff

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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to identify the extent of implementation of different conflict management styles in Sta. Lucia National High School Teaching Staff and the challenges faced by the respondents in implementing different conflict management styles as a basis for an alternative and doable action plan. This study was conducted at Sta. Lucia National High School in Asturias District II, Asturias, Cebu. 44 teachers were approached through convenience sampling to request their participation as respondents. This study utilized a descriptive method employing an adaptive survey questionnaire supplemented with interviews to identify the challenges encountered in its implementation. The data gathered were the basis of the alternative and feasible intervention plan for school administrators. The study revealed that teachers in Sta. Lucia National High School often practice, if not sometimes the different conflict management styles. None of the teachers in the school always practiced conflict management styles in facing and resolving the issues and concerns in the school therefore it is recommended that the crafted intervention plan be implemented to train, upskill, and update teachers in handling conflict in the workplace and build harmonious relationships among the school personnel to achieve the desired goals of the school.

**KEYWORDS:** *Conflict Management Styles, Extent of Implementation, Descriptive-Survey Method, Sta. Lucia National High School*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought tremendous changes in many countries around the world specifically in the field of technology, communication, commerce, and even in education. With the advent of advanced technology, subtly changed the traditional means of communication. Mobile Technology has influenced the world in so many ways, it surely made communication easier and faster. Unfortunately, research reveals that when it comes to sociability and face-to-face communication, mobile technology has a detrimental impact. According to studies, mobile technology might reduce communication and intimacy.

In an organization such as a school where different behaviors, views, beliefs, values, and interests coexist, these differences among groups and individuals are expected to bring conflict. Rahim (2011) was able to distinguish five different management approaches to counter conflicts. These are; **Avoiding** which is a type of conflict management where there is an existence of avoidance. It is

characterized by the acceptance that any effort to either discuss or contest the conduct of another is pointless. Avoiding is also a conscious effort to delay with the hope that the conflict or issue will be resolved over time.

In an avoidance approach, the individual ignores or disregards both parties' interests, avoids getting engaged in the conflict, and allows events to unfold as they please without seeking to conflate them to satisfy either party's objectives (Rahim 2002).; **Accommodating**, this kind of conflict management requires that the parties involved accept the views of one another. Both or one is ready to give the other party or side what is needed. This strategy is regarded as the acceptance that the preservation of pleasant interpersonal affairs is more significant than forming disagreements among colleagues; **Compromising**, this management strategy is such parties have almost the same if not equal capacity to pull issues further that will result in conflict. But both decided to give in by accepting and agreeing to see how a resolution can

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be established; **Collaborating** involves finding a solution to the conflicting situation that satisfies both parties. An effort has to be made to actively pursue effective problem-solving actions so that all parties can accomplish equally satisfying results (win-win). In this strategy, individuals seem to be just as concerned with the wants of others as their own; however, they are not willing to give up their positions to merely soothe the wants of other individuals; **Competing**, this type of conflict management strategy often involves individuals who are assertive and have the will power to fight till they achieve their goal and the other is losing.

To resolve and cater to the issues of conflict in school, The Department of Education issued a DepEd Order No. 35 s. 2004 entitled "Revision of Grievance Machinery of the Department of Education" which has the primary goal to settle grievances at the lowest possible level in the Department of Education and to provide a catalyst for the development of capabilities of personnel to settle disputes. It is also supported by the issuance of DepEd Order No. 15, s. 2012 entitled "DepEd Policy Framework For The Implementation of the Alternative Dispute Resolution System" which also has the primary objective to manage disputes at the lowest level, provide alternative procedures, and enhance the existing mechanism in managing disputes.

According to a study by Ramazan Ertürk (2021), when evaluating the beneficial effects and repercussions of disputes in schools, a medium-level conflict will generate positive results in terms of individual and organizational aspects, increasing the performance of schools. However, because an increase in the level of conflict can have negative consequences for individuals, interpersonal relationships, and organizations, both teachers and school administrators should have a thorough understanding of conflict and effective conflict management abilities.

Valente, et.al (2020) also revealed that conflicts cannot be eliminated since they are inherent in human beings and are an essential element of their moral and emotional development. They also exist at all schools. The school is situated in an environment where conflict arises regularly and takes significance as a result of the numerous interpersonal relationships that occur in the school setting. Thus, because conflict is a natural aspect of school life, instructors must be able to manage it constructively. Recognizing the wide range of school conflicts, this chapter attempted to present the major reasons in the classroom and the teacher-student relationship. It's critical to confront and resolve conflict with abilities for correctly

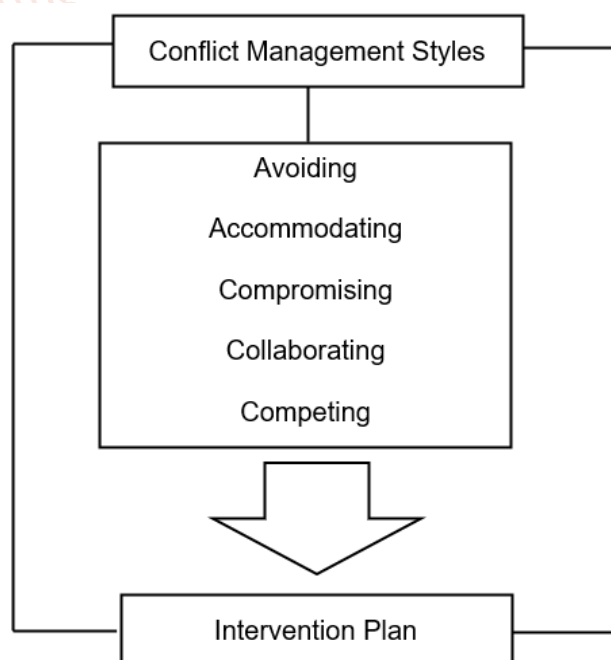
managing and constructively resolving conflict, developing cooperative partnerships, and producing integrative solutions. Valente, et.al (2020) also highlighted the need for teachers to develop their management skills through training. This goes to show that identifying the different conflict behaviors, the extent of their implementation, and giving solutions to them inside the school plays an important role in achieving the set goals.

### 1.1. Objectives of the study

This study specifically aims to answer the following questions:

- 1.1.1. What is the extent of implementation of conflict management style of the teaching staff of Sta. Lucia National High School,
- 1.1.2. What are the challenges met during the administration of the different conflict management styles?

### 1.2. Framework of the study



**Figure 1. Framework of the Study**

Figure 1 delves into the framework which presents the variables of the study on the different conflict management styles of teachers as they encounter the common conflict cases in the school such as the conflict between teachers (teacher vs teacher); conflict between teacher and student (teacher vs student); and conflict between teacher and administrator (teacher vs administrator). The result of the study will be the basis of the doable intervention plan to address the conflict in school.

## II. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the descriptive survey method was used to identify the preferred conflict management style of the teaching staff of Sta. Lucia National High School

and to distinguish the challenges met by the teachers during the administration of the different conflict management styles. Through the administration of a survey questionnaire, 44 teaching personnel of Sta. Lucia National High School, Asturias District II was requested to answer the survey questionnaires. The respondents of this study were communicated by the researcher through a school group chat and were requested to answer a Google form to collect relevant data needed for this study. Some of the respondents had difficulty accessing the Google form, instead, they were given printed-out survey questionnaires. Before the sending of the survey questionnaires, a formal letter request was sent and approved by the principal. Interview on voluntary convenience was also employed in this study for the researcher to obtain rich data.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The school as an educational institution is composed of different sub-groups or organizations such as

departmental groups (English Department, Science Department, etc.), Parent-Teachers Association, Faculty Officers, and different school-based organizations. Sta. Lucia National High School has a total of 44 teaching staff and is considered a big school. With this number of teaching staff, conflict among and between teachers is inevitable. The increasing intensity of interactions of teachers with different views and opinions, perspectives in life, family orientation, and race, and from the different organizations and departments will somehow lead to a more complex misunderstanding and conflict. Conflict itself does not bring useful functions to organizations; instead, the useful functions of conflicts begin with the employee's awareness and acknowledgment of the value of conflict and improving conflict management skills (Rahim, 2011).

**Avoiding.** The table below shows the respondent's conflict management style to Avoid.

**Table 1 Avoiding Style: Problems are solved in a non-confrontational approach**

Avoiding		Interpretation
When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible.	2.13	Sometimes
Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious.	2.86	Often
I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.	2.6	Often
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	2.53	Often

Legend:

3.26 - 4.00: Always

2.51 - 3.25: Often

1.76 - 2.50: Sometimes

1.00 – 1.75: Rarely

Based on the data tabulated, it emanated that the behaviors under avoiding; “*When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible*” was rated as **Sometimes**; “*Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious*” was rated as **Often**; “*I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself*” was rated as **Often**.

As reflected in Table 1, the behaviors under avoiding have an average weighted mean of 2.53 which is rated as **Often**. This goes to show that the respondents often implement an avoiding style in managing conflict in the workplace.

In a study on the use and misuse of avoiding style in conflict management, Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann (2006) characterized "avoiding" as having a low level of aggressiveness and cooperation. When someone is in this conflict mode, they are aware that there is a conflict but choose to ignore, sidestep, be non-committal, or retreat from the topic or conversation. It puts the parties in a lose-lose situation where they choose not to address one other's feelings, opinions, or aspirations. Rather than dealing with the conflict, problem, or disagreement, efforts are taken to avoid or delay it. The objective is to prevent conflict, at least for the time being.

**Accommodating.** The table below shows the respondent's conflict management style to Accommodating.

**Table 2 Accommodating Style: Cooperating to a high degree where you may have to give in to maintain relationships.**

Accommodating	$\bar{X}$	Interpretation
I try to meet the expectations of others	2.86	Often
I try to accommodate the wishes of my friends and family	2.93	Often
I may not get what I want, but it is a small price to pay for keeping the peace.	3.00	Often
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	2.93	Often

Based on the data tabulated, it revealed that all the behaviors in accommodating style were rated as **Often**. This implied that the respondents often meet other's expectations, accommodate the wishes of the person involved, and sacrifice for peace to manage the conflict. As reflected in Table 2, the accommodating style has an average weighted mean of 2.93 interpreted as **Often**.

**Compromising.** The table below shows the respondent's conflict management style to Compromising.

**Table 3 Compromising Style: Conflict was resolved through a middle-ground approach**

Compromising	$\bar{X}$	Interpretation
I try to negotiate and adopt a "give-and-take" approach to problem situations.	3.06	Often
I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on.	2.80	Often
To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway.	2.53	Often
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	2.79	Often

Based on the data tabulated, it showed that all the behaviors under compromising were rated as **Often**. This means that the respondents often negotiate adopt and take approaches, compromise when solving problems, and meet people halfway in managing conflict. As shown in Table 3, the behaviors under compromising have an average weighted mean of 2.79 rated as **Often**.

Fook, C. Y., & Abdulhusain, A. H. (2019) revealed that to create a healthier working environment for teachers, most school administrators have embraced a compromise and collaboration style of conflict management, enabling senior teachers to help settle conflicts and reforming school procedures are essential.

**Collaborating.** The table below shows the respondent's conflict management style in collaborating.

**Table 4 Collaborating Style: Problems are solved in a way for all involved to get what they want, and negative feelings are minimized**

Collaborating	$\bar{X}$	VD
I explore issues with others to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.	2.60	Often
When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can to keep the lines of communication open.	3.00	Often
I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved?	3.13	Often
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	2.91	Often

Based on the data tabulated, it emanated that all the behaviors under collaborating were rated as **Often**. This implied that the respondents often applied the collaborating style when exploring issues, gathering much information when there was an agreement, and seeing conflict from both sides. As reflected in Table 4, the behaviors under collaborating have an average weighted mean of 2.91 rated as **Often**.

Fook, C. Y., & Abdulhusain, A. H. (2019) highlighted that To create a healthier working environment for teachers, it is necessary to empower experienced teachers to help resolve conflicts and reform school procedures. The majority of school administrators have embraced a conflict-resolution strategy based on collaboration and compromise.

**Competing.** The table below shows the respondent's conflict management style to Competing.



**Table 5 Competing Style: Conflicts were resolved by way of an authoritarian approach**

Competing	$\bar{X}$	VD
I generally argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view	1.93	Sometimes
I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating. I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows.	2.26	Sometimes
I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right.	2.93	Often
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	2.27	Sometimes

Based on the data tabulated, it revealed that the behaviors of competing

“I generally argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view” and “I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating. I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows” were rated as **Sometimes**; while “I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right.” was rated as **Often**. As reflected in Table 5, the behaviors under competing have an average weighted mean of 2.27 rated as **Sometimes**. This goes to show that the respondents sometimes argue and insist on the merit of one's point of view while figuring out what needs to be done was practiced often by the respondents.

From the tabulated data of all the different conflict management styles, it revealed that the average weighted mean of avoiding style is **2.53** rated as **Often**; Accommodating Style **2.93** rated as **Often**; Compromising Style **2.79** rated as **Often**; Collaborating **2.91** rated as **Often** while Competing Style has an average weighted mean of **2.27** rated as **Sometimes**. This implied that among the different conflict management styles, none of which was practiced always.

Chandolia, Elisavet, and Sophia Anastasiou (2020) revealed that in schools, it appeared that there was a lot of conflict. Among the most common origins of conflict were interpersonal and organizational factors. A variety of conflict management strategies were demonstrated by school administrators. Smoothing and Forcing were the most common styles found, followed by Compromise and Collaborative. Leaders of schools were less likely to show avoidance. A laissez-fair leadership style, on the other hand, was not as effective in resolving conflict as a transformational or transactional leadership style. Chandolia, Elisavet, and Sophia Anastasiou (2020) also stressed that the success of conflict management can be linked to a person's leadership and conflict management style.

In Addition, Adam A. Kay, and Daniel P. Skarlicki, (2020) also revealed that by promoting collaboration and reducing avoidance, mindfulness helps to facilitate constructive conflict management, demonstrating that the benefits of mindfulness in conflict management go beyond its affective effects. Furthermore, mindfulness can be an effective tool for promoting constructive conflict management in the workplace. As to leadership, conflict management plays an important role in the employees' satisfaction with work. To achieve organizational goals, people must be motivated and happy, and leaders must consider elements such as work performance, motivation, and job satisfaction (Anastasiou, 2020).

**Table 6. Challenges met during the implementation of different Conflict Management Styles.**

Challenges	f	Rank
Failure to Communicate and Listen	28	1
Misunderstanding the Loss/Risk Analysis	26	2
Failure to give Opponents Face, Respect, and Dignity	25	3
False First Impressions and Perceptions	24	4
Partisan Perception, Judgmental Overconfidence, and Wrong Baselines	15	5
Insufficient Focus on Underlying Interests	13	6
Inadequate Planning and Preparation	10	7

Based on the data tabulated, it revealed that among the challenges met by the respondents, Failure to communicate and Listen ranked as the top challenge met by the respondents; ranked 2, Misunderstanding the Loss/Risk Analysis; ranked 3, Failure to give Opponents Face, Respect, and Dignity; ranked 4, False First Impressions and Perceptions' ranked 5,

Partisan Perception, Judgmental Overconfidence, and Wrong Baselines, ranked 6, Insufficient Focus on Underlying Interests and Inadequate Planning and Preparation was the last.

Table 6 shows that among the challenges in the implementation of different conflict management

styles, failure to communicate and listen topped the ranking. This goes to show that communication and listening play a vital role in overcoming conflict in school. It also implies that improving one's listening and communication skills plays a vital role in understanding other's emotions, ideas, and needs leading to a harmonious atmosphere in the workplace.

Touitou, (2020) the heart or center of effective conflict management has been established by research and experience to be effective communication. Constant and persistent communication is the best antidote in conflict management strategies, and with consistent and deliberate planning, one is better prepared to successfully counter crises.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, one must develop their skills in managing conflict in the workplace because conflict when not addressed efficiently and effectively can hinder the achievement of the set goals of the department. One of the ways to develop skills in conflict management is to practice or implement the different conflict management styles that are appropriate to the conflict experienced. Research has proven that a combination of two or more conflict management styles somehow helps in the resolution of the conflict.

The results of the study revealed that the teachers in Sta. Lucia National High School often practices, if not sometimes the different conflict management styles. None of the teachers in the school always practiced all conflict management styles in facing and resolving the issues and concerns in the school.

It is recommended that school administrators especially those handling big schools that an alternative and doable intervention plan be implemented to properly guide the teachers in addressing conflict in the workplace. Training, Upskilling, and updating teachers on the application of different conflict management styles through LAC SESSION and Small group discussion are also highly recommended.

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