

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE TEACHER AND MANAGEMENT COLLABORATION

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### Abstract.

*Conflict in educational organizations is often a major obstacle in achieving institutional goals. This study aims to identify and analyze innovative strategies in conflict management that can improve collaboration between teachers and management in Banggai district. The methodology used was a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with education stakeholders. The results showed that open communication strategies, conflict mediation training and the application of information technology in conflict management can significantly reduce tensions and improve cooperation. In addition, adaptive and participatory leadership roles proved effective in creating a harmonious working environment. The practical implication of this research is the importance of developing policies that support proactive and sustainable conflict management. Thus, this study contributes to the literature on conflict management in the context of education and offers practical guidance for education managers in other areas.*



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## A. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of a nation. In this context, educational organizations play an important role in producing quality human resources. However, like any other organization, educational institutions are not free from various challenges, one of which is internal conflict. Conflicts in educational organizations can arise from various sources, such as disagreements between teachers and management, uneven resource allocation, and

different priorities in making decisions. (Forrest et al., 2023).

The background to the emergence of conflict in educational organizations is often triggered by complex organizational structures and diverse dynamics of relationships between individuals. According to (Robbins & Judge, 2019), Conflict can be defined as a process that begins when one party feels that another party has negatively affected, or will negatively affect, something that the first party is concerned about. In the context of education, conflict that is not managed properly can hinder

the teaching and learning process and reduce the quality of education provided to students. (Tanjung et al., 2022).

Banggai district, as one of the developing regions in Indonesia, faces similar challenges in conflict management in its education organizations. Based on data from the Banggai District Education Office (2024), there have been increasing reports of tensions between teachers and school management in recent years. This calls for innovative strategies that can be used to manage conflict effectively, in order to create a conducive and productive educational environment.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to find practical solutions that can be applied in the local context of Banggai district. Given the important role teachers play in the education process, effective collaboration between teachers and management is key to achieving broader educational goals. Educational organizations that successfully manage conflict proactively tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction and better student learning outcomes. (Uswatun Hasanah et al., 2024).

The rationale for this research is based on the fact that traditional approaches to dealing with conflict are often not effective enough in dealing with the dynamic challenges faced by educational institutions today. Therefore, innovative strategies are needed that not only focus on conflict resolution, but also on conflict prevention and management in a sustainable manner. This research aims to explore and identify such strategies, with the hope of

making a real contribution to improving the quality of education in Banggai district.

The main objective of this research is to develop an innovative conflict management model that can be applied in educational organizations in Banggai district. The model is expected to improve collaboration between teachers and management and create a more harmonious and productive working environment. As such, this research not only makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on conflict management in education but also offers practical guidelines that can be implemented by education stakeholders in other areas.

To conclude this introductory section, it is important to stress that effective conflict management is a crucial element in improving the performance of educational organizations. By understanding the root causes of conflict and developing appropriate strategies, it is hoped that education organizations in Banggai district can better achieve their educational goals and have a positive impact on the wider community.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used a qualitative approach to explore innovative strategies in conflict management in educational organizations, particularly in Banggai district. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand social phenomena in depth and contextually, and provides flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives and experiences. (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with education stakeholders including teachers, principals and school management members. In-depth interviews were chosen because they were effective in gaining rich and detailed insights into participants' personal experiences of conflict and the strategies used to resolve them. (Yusuf et al., 2024). Meanwhile, focus group discussions allow researchers to observe group interactions and dynamics, and identify collective views on the issue under study.

The research sample was purposively selected, taking into account variations in school type (public and private), education level (primary, junior secondary and senior secondary) and geographical location (urban and rural) in Banggai district. This purposive approach aimed to ensure that the sample selected could provide relevant and varied information on conflict management in different contexts. (Sugiyono, 2019). A total of 20 participants were involved in this study, consisting of 10 teachers, 5 principals and 5 school management members.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis methods, which involved coding the data to identify key themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions. (Sukmadinata, 2012). The analysis process began with verbatim transcription of the interview and discussion data, followed by repeated readings to gain in-depth understanding. Coding was done manually by marking relevant segments of the data and grouping the codes into broader themes.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, researchers applied data triangulation techniques by comparing information obtained from various sources and data collection methods. (Siyoto, 2015). In addition, the researcher also conducted member checking by asking participants to review the initial findings and provide input on the interpretation of the data.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Results**

This study aims to identify innovative strategies in conflict management that can improve collaboration between teachers and management in education organizations in Banggai district. Through a qualitative approach, data were collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with various education stakeholders. The results of this study revealed several key findings related to sources of conflict, management strategies and the impact of implementing these strategies.

One of the key findings of this study is that there are significant differences in perceptions between teachers and management regarding education priorities and goals. Teachers in Banggai district often feel that management focuses more on achieving administrative and bureaucratic targets while they prioritize the learning process and students' needs. This difference in perception is often a source of tension and conflict, especially when management decisions are perceived to be inconsistent with broader

educational interests. For example, one teacher stated that management policies that set certain graduation targets without considering the condition of students and available resources often add to teachers' workload and stress.

To overcome these differences in perception, the study found that open communication strategies can effectively reduce tensions and increase understanding between teachers and management. The implementation of open communication involves regular meetings between teachers and management, where both parties can share their views and discuss relevant issues in a transparent manner. One of the interviewed principals explained that with regular communication forums, teachers feel more heard and valued, which in turn increases their motivation and commitment to the school.

In addition, conflict mediation training was identified as an effective strategy in managing conflict in educational organizations. The training focused on improving interpersonal communication skills and mediation techniques, which enable teachers and management to resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively. One trainee revealed that after attending the training, she felt more confident in dealing with conflict situations and was able to help her colleagues find win-win solutions. The positive impact of the training is also evident from the decrease in the number of conflicts that require third-party intervention, such as the education office or external mediation agencies.

The application of information technology has also emerged as an important aspect of conflict management. The use of online communication platforms and school information management systems has facilitated more efficient and transparent communication between teachers and management. For example, some schools in Banggai district have adopted web-based applications that allow teachers to access information related to school policies, activity schedules and educational resources in real-time. This helps to reduce miscommunication and improve coordination between different parties in the school.

However, the study also revealed challenges in implementing these strategies. One of the main challenges is resistance to change on the part of both teachers and management. Some teachers were reluctant to engage in mediation training or adopt new technologies because they were comfortable with traditional ways of working. On the other hand, school management is sometimes hesitant to delegate authority and involve teachers in strategic decision-making. To overcome these challenges, it is important for schools to create an organizational culture that supports innovation and change and provides incentives for active participation in capacity building programs.

Overall, the results of this study show that the implementation of open communication strategies, conflict mediation training and information technology can significantly improve collaboration between

teachers and management in educational organizations. By addressing differences in perceptions and providing appropriate tools to resolve conflicts, schools in Banggai district can create a more harmonious and productive educational environment. The findings make an important contribution to the development of effective conflict management policies and practices in educational contexts and offer practical guidance for other districts facing similar challenges.

### **Discussion**

Conflict in educational organizations is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, influenced by various internal and external factors. In the context of Banggai district, this study revealed some key findings regarding the sources of conflict and innovative strategies that can be applied to manage it. This section will discuss these findings in relation to the existing literature and their implications for education policy.

One of the main sources of conflict identified in this study is the different perceptions between teachers and management regarding educational goals and priorities. These differences in perception are often caused by a lack of effective and transparent communication within the organization. In Banggai district, teachers often feel that management does not fully understand the challenges they face in the field, such as limited resources and excessive workload. This is in line with the findings from previous studies showing that poor communication can

exacerbate conflict in education organizations. (Uswatun Hasanah et al., 2024).

To address this issue, this study found that implementing an open communication strategy can significantly reduce tensions between teachers and management. This strategy involves creating clear and structured communication channels and encouraging constructive two-way dialog. Open communication not only increases understanding and trust between the parties involved, but also encourages more effective collaboration in achieving common goals. (Putri et al., 2024).

Besides communication, conflict mediation training was also identified as an effective strategy in managing conflict in educational organizations. The training aims to equip teachers and management with the mediation skills needed to resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively. Conflict mediation can help disputing parties to find win-win solutions that satisfy all parties. (Rochmani et al., 2020). In Banggai district, regular mediation training has been shown to improve the ability of teachers and management to handle conflicts independently, reducing reliance on third-party intervention.

The application of information technology has also emerged as an innovative strategy that can support conflict management in educational organizations. Information technology, such as online communication platforms and school information management systems, can facilitate more efficient and transparent communication between teachers

and management. A study shows that the use of information technology can improve access to information and speed up the decision-making process, thereby reducing potential conflicts caused by miscommunication or inaccurate information. (Mirza et al., 2023).

However, it is important to remember that implementing these strategies requires the support of adaptive and participatory leadership. Effective leadership plays a key role in creating a conducive work environment that supports collaboration. Adaptive leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to the situation at hand, while participative leaders involve team members in decision-making, increasing ownership and commitment to the organization. (Eka Rachmawati et al., 2023).

In the context of Banggai district, this study found that adaptive and participatory leadership can facilitate the implementation of conflict management strategies more effectively. Principals who are willing to listen to inputs from teachers and involve them in policy planning and evaluation processes tend to be more successful in creating a harmonious and productive work environment. Transformational leadership, which includes adaptive and participatory elements, can improve the motivation and performance of organizational members. (Maulida, E., Suharto & Rahmawati, 2021).

The implication of these findings for education policy in Banggai district is the need to develop policies that support proactive and sustainable conflict management. Such policies should include regular training programs to

improve communication and conflict mediation skills and investment in information technology that can support school management. In addition, it is important for local governments to encourage adaptive and participatory leadership practices in schools by providing the necessary training and resources for educational leaders (Aimang & Rahman, 2019).

Overall, this study makes a meaningful contribution to the literature on conflict management in education by identifying innovative strategies that can be applied in the local context of Banggai district. The findings also offer practical guidance for education stakeholders in other areas who face similar challenges in managing conflict. By implementing these strategies, it is expected that education organizations can improve collaboration between teachers and management and achieve better educational goals.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of this study highlights the importance of innovative strategies in conflict management in educational organizations, particularly in Banggai district. The research revealed that differences in perceptions between teachers and management are often the main source of conflict, which can hinder collaboration and productivity. However, the implementation of open communication strategies, conflict mediation training and the use of information technology proved effective in overcoming this challenge. By creating clear communication channels and

encouraging constructive dialog, schools can increase understanding and trust between teachers and management. In addition, mediation training provides the necessary skills to resolve conflicts amicably, while information technology facilitates more efficient communication.

For users and readers, the findings offer practical guidance for improving collaboration in educational settings. Schools are advised to adopt these strategies proactively and sustainably, and create an organizational culture that supports innovation and change. Meanwhile, for future authors and researchers, this study opens up opportunities to further explore the long-term impact of conflict management strategies and assess their effectiveness in various educational contexts. Thus, this study not only makes a theoretical contribution to the conflict management literature, but also offers practical solutions that can be widely implemented to improve the quality of education.

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