

Causes of Conflict and Effective Methods to Conflict Management at Islamic Secondary Schools in Yala, Thailand

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Abstract— This study presents the perceptions of teachers and school principals toward the causes of conflict and effective methods to conflict management at selected Islamic private secondary schools in Yala Province, Thailand. The sample of the study was 313 respondents which consist of 11 principals and 302 teachers. The instruments used were survey questionnaire and interview with the selected respondents. The data was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 15.0 for Windows. The results show, the principals perceived that the main cause of conflicts occurred in school was ‘ambiguously defined responsibilities’ and the teachers agreed that ‘different perception’ was the major cause of conflict in school. Interestingly, both principals and teachers were strongly agreed that the most effective method to solve conflict is to ‘identify the causes and take appropriate steps to the solutions’. Moreover, the findings suggest that the best solution of conflict is by applying Islamic principles such as shura, halaqoh and using the Qu’ran and Hadith to guide them out of conflicts. It is hope that the findings of this study may guide the principals, teacher-administrators, educational leaders, teachers, and all group or individual in educational organization to manage conflicts wisely and successfully towards the harmonious working environment with optimum productivity in the era of globalization, especially the principals and teachers of Islamic and government schools in Thailand.

Keywords, Causes - Conflict – Effective- Solution

I. INTRODUCTION

CONFLICT may involve individual or group disagreements, struggles, disputes, quarrels, or even physical fighting and wars. It ranges from work issues of responsibility, power, authority, and ethics to interpersonal matters like misunderstandings, difference of opinion and poor communication between two persons. Conflict can be harmful to employee satisfaction and job performance if it becomes excessive and unmanageable. Conflict also rampantly occurs at school. Principals have experienced with many problems of school administration such as financial problem, school climate and school facilities. Conflict management also is a part of school administration problem. Conflict happens whenever and wherever in school hence principal’s decision making can influence everyone and

control the situation to get better or worse. Unresolved conflicts can lead to job dissatisfaction, high absenteeism and turnover, prolonged disruption of activities, and lack of concerted effort by organization members.

A. Definition of Conflict

Wright [1] stated that the word conflict is derived from the Latin word *conficere* meaning to strike together. It was anticipated that conflict may occurred in a physical sense when two or more different things moves to occupy the same space at the same time which there is logical inconsistency and the process of solution are identical. Laue [2] expressed that conflict may arise when wants, needs and beliefs between two or more parties struggle to agree. Chung & Megginson[3], Carrell et al.,[4], and, Dubrin [5] mentioned that conflict happens whenever disagreements exist in a social situation over issues of substance, or whenever emotional antagonisms create frictions between individuals or groups. They agreed that conflict continues when either side do not believe in a certain agreement and intertwine of the other party is merely impossible. Rahim [6] identifies that conflict takes various forms, such as dyadic conflict, involving persons or groups, and coalition behavior, involving more than two parties.

B. Nature of Conflict

De Janasz, et al [7] stressed that conflict is a fact of life in organizations. Conflict is not something that is a tangible product but it lies in the minds of the people who are parties to it. It does become tangible when it manifests itself in arguing, brooding, or fighting. The problem lies with the inability for people to manage and resolve it effectively. If managed effectively, conflict can be constructive. If not, conflict can be a destructive force in people and organizations.

Chung and Megginson [3] opine that we live in an age of conflict. In most organizations, the level and number of conflicts seem to be increasing. Employees are becoming more assertive in demanding their share of organizational rewards such as status, recognition, pay, benefits, and autonomy. Conflicts among groups are also increasing. As there are so many interest and pressure groups in organizations, it is difficult to find a sense of community and

reach any kind of agreement among them. Organizational tasks, as they become increasingly complex, demand cooperation between various functional and technical groups. This increased demand for task interdependence tends to foster group conflict. It was affirmed that dysfunctional conflict is an unhealthy, destructive disagreement between two or more people, that it shifts the focus of the people from the work to be done to the conflict itself and the parties involved. This type of conflict becomes an obstacle in front of any movement toward development or better performance in organization.

C. Factors of Organizational Conflict in School

Organizational conflict occurs at several levels and appears in different forms (Champoux, [8]. Rahim [6] divided organizational conflict into two types: Intra-organizational conflict which occurs within the organization and inter-organizational conflict which occurs between two or more organizations, including education institutions. Mohamad Johdi and Raman [9] affirmed that conflict cannot be evaded even in education as schools and colleges are a part of organizations. If conflict which arises in schools and colleges are not taken care of it will affect the educators as well as the students by creating unwanted divergence in their learning environment.

Basically, the factors of organizational conflict in school can be classified into two main categories: structural factors, which relate to the nature of the organization and the way in which work is organized; and personal factors, which relate to differences between organizational or school members.

D. Structural Factors:

Auerbach and Dolan [10], Rahim [6], Champoux, [8], De Janasz, et al., [7], and, Mohamad Johdi and Raman [9] identified structural aspects of an organization which are likely to cause conflicts. They are specialization, common resources, goal differences, interdependence, authority relationships, status differences, jurisdictional ambiguities, and, roles and expectations.

- **Specialization**

Employees in an organization either have general or specific tasks which when the majority of them are specialist, conflicts may arise. For example when one may have insufficient knowledge of the other's job responsibilities, dissatisfaction in either party may exist (Auerbach & Dolan, [10] and Rahim [6] anticipated that the management of organizational conflict involves channeling the energies, expertise, and resources of the members of conflicting groups for synergistic solutions to their common problems or attainment of overall organizational goals.

- **Common resources**

In many work situations, we are obliged to share resources, the scarcer the resource the greater potential for conflict. For example, having a class with extensive workload which only have one computer may create high chances of conflict [8] and [6].

- **Goal differences**

Champoux [8] identified that normally groups or departments in the organization have different and incompatible goals, increasing the chances of employees experiencing conflict. For example, a principal and a head of academic department have different goals for improving the way of teaching in school. The principal needs to recruit newcomer teachers who have more advance teaching techniques than long-teaching teachers in school. On the other hand, a head of academic department needs to train a new technique of teaching to long-teaching teacher [11].

- **Interdependence**

Sometimes one employee must depend on another to complete a task. When workers are in an interdependent situation, it is easy to blame a co-worker when something goes wrong (Auerbach & Dolan, [10] and Champoux [12]. For example, a principal may clash with a teacher who works in registration department because he/she provides inaccurate data of students [13].

- **Authority relationships**

Often, there is underlying tension between managers and employees (it means principal and teacher). This is because most people do not like being told what to do such as manager (principal) who is overly strict is frequently in conflict with their employees (teachers)-hence, the growing popularity of team approaches and empowerment strategies [10].

- **Status differences**

In many organizations even in school, manager or principal is granted privilege denied to other employees or teachers. For instance, manager and principal may enjoy flexible hours, free personal long-distance calls, and longer breaks. In the words of one management consultant, "If you want to know who is really important in the organization, just observe the signs in the parking lot and watch for the distance between the parking and the office building; the bigger the sign and the closer to the building, the higher the status of the incumbent". Auerbach and Dolan [10] and De Janasz, et al. [7], stated that human beings are unique who possesses a variety of physical, intellectual, emotional, economic, and social differences. However, some organizations are creating a more egalitarian appearance to reduce conflicts that result from status differences.

- **Jurisdictional ambiguities**

Jurisdictional ambiguities occur when the lines of responsibility in an organization or school are uncertain. When it is unclear who does what, teacher has a tendency to pass unwanted tasks onto the next teacher [10].

- **Roles and expectations**

A role refers to the behaviors and activities expected of an employee. Every employee plays one or more roles within the organization. These roles are usually defined through a combination of such elements as job title, description of duties, and agreements between the employee and the organization. Manager-subordinate conflict can result when the subordinate's role is not clearly defined and each party has a different understanding of that role [10] For example,

one teacher who has many roles at the same time, teaching students in many classes, being a consultant for students and working for finance department in school [14].

E. Personal Factors:

According to Auerbach & Dolan [10], and, Rahim [6] stated that the most common personal factors associated with organizational conflict are skills and abilities, personality conflicts, perceptions, diversity, and personal problems.

- **Skills and abilities**

Usually the members of a department or work team have different levels of skills and abilities. Conflict can result when an experienced employee must work with a novice who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills (Auerbach & Dolan, [10]. For example, a long-teaching teacher in school who was graduated many years ago and she is familiar to teach in the old way of teaching will have a conflict with young newcomer teacher who has an advance technique of teaching [13].

- **Personality conflicts**

Rahim [6] admitted that personality conflicts are a reality in any group setting, including the workplace. There always seems to be at least one co-worker who is difficult to get along with. One of the most difficult personality traits is abrasiveness. An abrasive person is often hardworking and achievement-oriented, but critical and insensitive to others' feelings. Other irritating personality traits include laziness and gossiping.

- **Perceptions**

Kellermann [15] suggested that conflict may be simply described as a clash between two individuals who are unwillingly or unable to fulfill expectations of each other. Much organizational conflict stems from the fact that employees and managers have different perceptions of situations. For example, a principal may feel that a teacher is underperforming in teaching, whereas the teacher may feel that the best job possible is being done [10].

- **Diversity**

There are increasingly heterogeneous. Differences in age, cultural background, ethics, and values can be a source of conflict among employees. For instance, a long-serving staff who feels loyal to the school may clash with a young newcomer staff who sees the school as nothing more than a stepping stone [10], [6]

- **Personal problems**

When we bring our personal problems to work, our performance tends to suffer and we may clash with co-workers who are obliged to "pick up the slack." (Auerbach & Dolan,[10]. For example, some teachers have a problem at their home then they could not teach effectively in their class because they lack of concentration [11].

- **Communication**

A common cause of conflict is poor communication, which can lead to misunderstandings and allow barriers to be erected. Probably the easiest way to prevent conflict is to ensure good communication. However, both too little and too much communication can lead to conflict. On the one hand, when there is too little communication, associates do not

know enough about each other's intentions, goals, or plans. Coordination becomes difficult, and misunderstandings are more likely to occur, which can result in conflict. On the other hand, too much communication can also result in misunderstandings that cause conflict Hitt, et al., [16]. For instance, a principal should be clear in details when he notices a new discipline for all teachers and students in school [11].

E. Statement of Problem

Principals have experienced with many problems of school administration such as financial problem, school climate and school facilities. Conflict management also is a part of school administration problem. Conflict happens whenever and wherever in school hence principal's decision making can influence everyone and control the situation to get better or worse. Actually, this challenge occurs every day at every level in school. Teachers are responsible to help their principals to solve conflict in school. The resolved conflict cannot happen without teacher's understanding and cooperation. Therefore, teachers also should know the strategy for solving conflict and try to solve it before the expansion of conflict. The researcher believes that if the principal and teacher can control and solve the conflict management in the school, the effectiveness and efficiency task such as administration, teaching and learning will be improved. For this reason, the researcher is interested to study conflict management among the principals at Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province.

F. Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of conflict and identify how school principals manage conflicts which occur at the selected Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province. More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the causes of conflict in Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province?
- 2) How do school principals manage conflict which occurs in school?

II. METHODS

This section describes the method and procedure that had been conducted to answer the research questions in the study. This research employed a mixed method (survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview) for collecting and analyzing the data because quantitative method (survey questionnaire) is suitable and easy for collecting data which refer to a numerous sample in the study. According to Slavin [17], mix method is to conduct a study using quantitative method first, followed by a qualitative study to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results.

A. Population and Sample

The population under consideration in this study comprised of principals and teachers of Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province, southern Thailand. Eleven schools were

selected by convenience sampling from 21 schools or 52.38% of the total number of schools. They were: 1) Tarbiatulwatan Association School, 2) Udomsasnwittaya School, 3) Thamwittaya Association School, 4) Phatnawittaya School, 5) A-sasuldinwittaya School, 6) Satree Islamwittaya Association School, 7) Darul-ulomnibongbaru School, 8) Srifaridabaruwittaya School, 9) Mahaddawah Islamiah School, 10) Maahad Islamiah School, and 11) Darulhudawittaya School.

B. Instrumentation: Survey questionnaire

The researcher obtained a recommendation letter from the Institute of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia. The letter were given to the eleven school managers and school principals to seek their permission (there were two copies of letters; one in English and one in Thai). The school managers and the principals were personally contacted and informed by the researcher about the study and why the school was selected and the researcher directly requested the managers and principals to distribute the questionnaire to the selected staff. The heads of the academic departments were asked to distribute the questionnaire to teachers in their schools, collect and return them on the stipulated dateline. A total of 313 questionnaires (for 11 principals and 302 teachers) were distributed in the eleven schools, and all questionnaires were returned and qualified for data analysis.

C. Interview

For convenience basis in the interview session, the researcher randomly chose six out of eleven principals and constructed face to face interviews. Each participant was interviewed individually for about 30 minutes. The questions were translated into Thai language for the convenience of the respondents and to ensure the questions could be easily understood by the participants. The semi-structured interview sessions were conducted informally to allow the respondents to feel comfortable. All information given by the respondents were noted down as well as recorded.

D. Analysis of the Data

This section answers two research questions and all findings which collected from survey and interview will be described and explained. Data analysis adopts the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 17.0 for windows. Respondents' profiles were described via descriptive statistics in number of responses and percentage form.

E. Respondents' Demographic Background

This section presents some background information about the respondents in the study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents concern their position, gender, religion, highest qualification earned, professional qualification in

teaching or education, age, years of experience, location of school and number of students in their school.

F. The demographic profile of the Principals

The demographic profile of the principals of the 11 respondents who returned their questionnaires, 54.5% (n=6) held the position of principal and 45.5% (n=5) held the position of vice principal. A majority of the respondents, 90.9% (n=10) were male and 9.1% (n=1) were female and 100% (n=11) of them are Muslims. For the respondents' highest qualification earned, 45.5% (n=5) had a Bachelor's degree, 45.5% (n=5) had a Master's degree and 9.1% (n=1) had a Doctorate. In terms of years of working experience, 18.2% (n=2) of them had less than 5 years of experience in their position. In addition, 45.5% (n=5) had 5 to 9 years of experience, while 18.2% (n=2) of the respondents had 10 to 15 years of experience and 18.2% (n=2) had more than 20 years of experience.

G. Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

The demographic profile of the teachers of the 302 respondents who returned their questionnaires, the majority or 95% (n=287) of the respondents were teachers and only 5% (n=15) of them were Head of unit/subject. Most of the respondents, 68.5% (n=207) were females compared to males 31.5% (n=95). The majority or 95.7% (n=289) of them were Muslims and only 4.3% (n=13) were Buddhists. The respondents' highest qualification earned was 1.7% (n=5) with a certificate, 3% (n=9) with a diploma, 91.4% (n=276) with a Bachelor's degree and 4% (n=12) with a Master's degree. Meanwhile, for their professional qualification in teaching/education, 17.5% (n=53) had a certificate, 3.3% (n=10) had a diploma, 77.8% (n=235) had a Bachelor's degree and 1.3% (n=4) had a Master's degree.

III. RESULTS

In order to answer the research questions, they were classified into three dimensions: 1) The causes of conflict 2) The process for managing conflict by school principals. The researcher has measured the dimensions using 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D) No Comment (NC), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). For reporting data, the researcher also collapsed these five categories into three: Disagree (D), No Comment (NC) and Agree (A).

A. Question One:

What are the causes of conflict in Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province?

- *Dimension One:*

The causes of conflict in Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province: Principals' Views

TABLE I
PERCEPTION OF PRINCIPALS IN ISLAMIC PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, YALA TOWARDS THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Item	St	D n	NC n	A n
1	Different perception is a cause of conflict in school.	27.3% (3)	-	72.7% (8)
2	Different working styles rarely is a cause of conflict in school.	36.4% (4)	-	63.6% (7)
3	Communication obstruction has never been a cause of conflict in school.	18.2% (2)	9.1% (1)	72.7% (8)
4	Ambiguously defined responsibilities always happen in school.	18.2% (2)	-	81.8% (9)

D= Strongly Disagree & Disagree; NC= No Comment ; A= Strongly Agree & Agree; N=11

Table I shows that the distribution of principals' perception in Islamic private secondary schools, Yala province towards the causes of conflict. The highest response was item 4 with nine (81.8%) of the respondents agreed that ambiguously defined responsibilities always happen in school and only two (18.2%) disagreed. The lowest response was item 2 with seven (63.6%) of the respondents agreed that different working styles rarely is a cause of conflict in school while four (36.4%) of the respondents disagreed.

• Dimension One:

The causes of conflict in Islamic private secondary schools in Yala province: Teachers' Views

A summary of the teachers' perception concerning the causes of conflict for 302 teachers in the Islamic private secondary schools, Yala province, Southern Thailand can be observed in Table II.

TABLE II
PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS IN ISLAMIC PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, YALA TOWARDS THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Item	Statement	D n	NC N	A n
1	Different perception is a cause of conflict in school.	16.9% (51)	3% (9)	80.1% (242)
2	Different working styles rarely are a cause of conflict in school.	25.1% (76)	2% (6)	72.9% (220)
3	Communication obstruction has never been a cause of conflict in school.	34.8% (105)	3.6% (11)	61.6% (186)
4	Ambiguously defined responsibilities always happen in school.	20.6% (62)	3.3% (10)	76.1% (230)

D= Strongly Disagree & Disagree; NC= No Comment; A= Strongly Agree & Agree; N=302

Table II presents the distribution of teachers' perception in Islamic private secondary schools, Yala province towards the causes of conflict. The highest response was item 1 with

242 (80.1%) of the respondents agreed that the different perception is a cause of conflict in school, while 51 (16.9%) of them disagreed and only nine (3%) responded with "no comment".

The lowest response was item 3, 186 (61.6%) of the respondents agreed that communication obstruction has never been a cause of conflict in school, meanwhile 105 (34.8%) of them disagreed and 11 (3.6%) of them responded with "no comment".

B. Research Question Two:

How do school principals manage conflict which occurs in school?

• Dimension Two:

The process for managing conflict by school principals: Principals' Views

Six items were employed to determine the conflict management namely for "The process for managing conflict by school principals" dimension. A summary of the principals' perception concerning the process for managing conflict by school principal at the Islamic private secondary schools, Yala province, Southern Thailand can be observed in Table III.

TABLE III
PERCEPTION OF PRINCIPALS IN ISLAMIC PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, YALA PROVINCE TOWARDS THE PROCESS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Item	Statement	D n	NC n	A n
5	Conflicts always occur in my school but we know how to manage and solve them.	9.1% (1)	-	90.9% (10)
6	It is better to lie low and live with the conflicts.	81.9% (9)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)
9	Conflicts are inevitable in organizations and nothing can be done about them.	45.4% (5)	-	54.6% (6)
10	A conflict is like a problem; we have to find the causes and take steps to find solutions.	9.1% (1)	-	90.9% (10)
11	It is foolish to be bothered by conflicts; they are there and we may better live with them.	27.3% (3)	-	72.7% (8)
14	When two parties are deeply involved in conflict, arbitration by an acceptable outside party may be very helpful.	36.4% (4)	-	63.6% (7)

D= Strongly disagree & Disagree; NC= No comment; A= Strongly agree & Agree; n=11

Table III presents that the highest responses were item 5, with ten (90.9%) of the respondents agreed that conflicts always occur in their schools but they know how to manage and solve them, while one (9.1%) of them disagreed and item 10 with ten (90.9%) of the respondents agreed that a conflict is like a

problem; we have to find the causes and take steps to find solutions. The lowest response was item 9 with six (54.6%) of the respondents agreed that conflicts are inevitable in organizations and nothing can be done about them, while five (45.4%) of them disagreed.

• Dimension Two:

The process for managing conflict by school principals: Teachers' Views

Six items were employed to determine conflict management namely for "The process for managing conflict by school principal" dimension.

A summary of the teachers' perception concerning the process for managing conflict by school principals for 302 teachers in the Islamic private secondary school, Yala province, Southern Thailand can be observed in Table 4.

TABLE IV

PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS IN ISLAMIC PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL, YALA TOWARDS THE PROCESS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Item	Statement	D n	NC n	A n
5	Conflicts always occur in my school but we know how to manage and solve it.	12.6% (38)	2.3% (7)	85.1% (257)
6	It is better to lie low and live with the conflicts.	61% (184)	3.6% (11)	35.4% (107)
9	Conflicts are inevitable in organizations and nothing can be done about them.	22.1% (67)	3% (9)	74.9% (226)
10	A conflict is like a problem; we have to find the causes and take steps to find solutions.	5.3% (16)	3% (9)	91.7% (277)
11	It is foolish to be bothered by conflicts; they are there and we may better live with them.	16.5% (50)	1.7% (5)	81.8% (247)
14	When two parties are deeply involved in conflict, arbitration by an acceptable outside party may be very helpful.	23.5% (71)	3% (9)	73.5% (222)

D= Strongly disagree & Disagree; NC= No comment; A= Strongly agree & Agree; n=302

Table IV presents the highest response was item 10, 277 (91.7%) of the respondents agreed that a conflict is like a problem; we have to find the causes and take steps to find solutions, meanwhile 16 (5.3%) of them disagreed and nine (3%) of them indicated they had no comment. The lowest response was item 6, 184 (61%) of the respondents disagreed and that it is better for them to lie low and live with the conflict and 107 (35.4%) of them agreed while 11 (3.6%) of them preferred to respond with "no comment".

The following sections discuss the summary of findings from the interviews by the researcher with the selected respondents.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The causes of conflict which occurred at Islamic Secondary Schools in Yala:

There were examples of causes of conflict in six participants' school. The researcher found that some cases of conflict were similar in each school especially the conflict between teachers and students' parents. In this study, there were four types of interpersonal conflict occurred in these schools.

First, the conflict between principals and teachers; most participants noticed that it rarely happened in a major way or become uncontrollable and unresolved in their school. The examples of cases of conflict which were mentioned by the participants occurred when some of the teachers did not follow the school discipline, had different perception at school meetings, and had some dissatisfaction at work and misunderstanding in communication. They opined that the method for solving in each conflict should be done by having face to face discussion to clarify things with each other through voting, negotiating and compromising.

Second, conflict between teachers and teachers. Most teachers noted that it was common when people worked together and it had never been a big problem for their schools because teachers knew how to manage conflict. If they could not solve the conflict by themselves, sometimes they would consult or ask the principal to help them by being the negotiator, the judge or the consultant to solve their conflicts. The cases of conflict were represented by six participants such as different working styles, different perceptions, teaching time schedule and an unfair task.

Third, the conflict between teachers and students. According to this type of conflict, most participants viewed that it happens every day because students always break rules or school discipline and teachers have to punish them therefore students are unsatisfied and get angry. But this type of conflict was never a big problem because everyone has his own responsibility, even students who break the rule or get punished. The participants confirmed that teachers in their school have never seriously punished their students as they must follow the procedure for punishment which is indicated in the school discipline. If a teacher does something differently, they must also confront the punishment from the school principal.

Finally, the conflict between teachers and students' parents. Some schools have never faced this problem. However, some have had to confront it. The participants opined that it happened because parents deeply believed in their children. Many cases occurred based on students' lies. An example of this type of conflict is when some students get a warning letter because they always miss the class although parents come to school to see their children off every day in front of the school gate. Hence when parents get this letter, they do not believe it and accuse the school of making things up. They do not know that their children skip classes; therefore the teacher has to show the attendance to prove the truth to solve this conflict.

The findings supported the factors of organizational conflict in school from [10], who found that the factors of organizational conflict in school can be classified into two categories: firstly, structural factors as different goals and secondly, personal factors as bringing personal problems to work. Moreover, types of conflict in school were categorized into 4 types as follows: principal and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and student, and teacher and students' parents which based on principals' experience of this study.

The effective methods to conflict management at selected Islamic Secondary Schools, Yala:

In response to this question, there are many effective methods for solving conflict in school which were used by the six principals. Most of them noticed that they used each method depending on the situation or case or if they know the source of conflict. If they know where a conflict started, they can solve it directly. The examples of effective methods were classified into six groups: (1) Having face-to-face discussion; it helps everyone to understand in the same way and be clear on every issue, (2) Being sincere to solve the problem; it means that the principal should be patient, be fair (no bias) and be conscious of every case, (3) Compromising; everyone should listen to and share each other's needs; try to put yourself in the opponent's shoes, (4) Negotiating; sometimes they used collaborative means and subordinate people depending on the situation and the goals of the people involved in the decision, (5) Voting; this is often used in meetings, and (6) Applying Islamic perspectives such as *shura, halaqoh* and using the Qu'ran and Hadith to guide them out of conflicts.

The results showed that the resolved conflict can be explained within both western and Islamic perspectives. From western perspectives, the results concurred with the five conflict-handling modes theory and conflict cycles concept [18]. Meanwhile, from the Islamic point of view, the concept of *syūrā* can be utilized as a part of resolved conflict in Islamic management and administration [19].

Mohamad Johdi & Raman [9] affirmed that conflict need to be managed appropriately and efficiently which would add important values to an organization as it act as a catalyst for change. This type of changes will lead to a conducive

environment in workplace whereby over a period of time it will result in high productivity. Apart from that, employees will also be able to foster good relationship among them and with the management. This is important because as a team they can work hand in hand to achieve the organizational goals.

The findings of this study have shown that every school had inevitably confronted with conflicts. There were four types of interpersonal conflict which were found in the school namely principal and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and student, and, teacher and students' parents. All the methods for solving conflict in school presented by participants of this study would not be successful without the understanding, acceptance and cooperation. A principal is the person who holds the most important role in schools. Conflict can appear in controlled or uncontrolled situations in schools, depending on the principals' management based on their knowledge, experiences, decisions, attitudes and characteristics. The principals thus should learn more about conflict management to effectively administer their schools. The study also recommended the principals to improve relationships between non-Muslim and Muslim teachers without bias and religious barriers, provide various complaining alternatives and state clearly teachers' responsibilities for each work.

In fact, [20] indicate that all types of organization need to have a suitable strategy for conducting conflict management. The benefits of conflict management should not be underestimated. Conflict which is managed effectively and appropriately would add substantial values to an organization, as it is considered as a healthy ingredient in business life in addition to acting as a catalyst for change. Conflicts which are managed well, will create a conducive workplace for its workers where relationships, trust and respect will prevail among them. Having such working environments will result in stimulated team spirit and increased productivity. Furthermore, with strengthened working relationships, the "us" versus "them" polarization can be eliminated. This is crucial as good working relationships are important to achieve organizational vision and missions.

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