A STUDY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS IN RELATION TO THEIR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE.

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Abstract

The study examined the conflict resolution strategies adopted by principals in relation to their emotional intelligence and organizational climate. Data was collected by multistage random sampling technique from a sample of 250 principals of private senior secondary schools of five districts of Punjab (Moga, Ludhiana, Patiala, Ferozjpur and Jalandhar). Standardized tools for assessment of Conflict Management Behavior, emotional intelligence and organizational climate scale were used in this study. The data were analyzed by employing mean, SD, t ratio, r and step up multi regression analysis. Results show that Competition is the most preferred conflict resolution strategy adopted by both male and female school principals. It was found that Self development (EI_G) was the only dimension of emotional intelligence which was found to be a positive predictor of the collaboration (ST2) strategy in case of male principals. In case of male principals perceiving favorable organizational climate. Empathy (EI_B) was the only dimension of emotional intelligence which was found to be a negative predictor of competition (ST_1) strategy of conflict resolution. In case of male principals perceiving unfavorable organizational climate. Self-development (EI_G) was a positive predictor and Self-awareness (EI_A) was a negative predictor of collaboration (ST_2) strategy of conflict resolution.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational administration is concerned with the management of things as well as human relationships, in order to achieve efficiency in the working of personnel. One of the foremost task of administration is planning and brining into existence an organization or structure. Efficiency of school administration depends largely upon the close cooperation of the principal and his staff. In a democratic organization the head of the institution should realize the importance of democratic practices. He/she should seek the cooperation of his/her staff, treating them as his equals. Both, the head and the staff should work as a team. Today's dynamic society expects best out of the principals' knowledge and leadership competencies for maximum educational achievement. In order to play an effective role, the principals must possess emotional competencies and skills. If the principal is an individual of definite ideas and has been in his position long enough to win support for his ideas, then these will be reflected in the human resource and organizational climate of his school. Conflict is an essential element in dynamic organization and schools are no exceptions. Schools frequently appear to be centers of tension, sometimes a manifestation of problems in the community (Karen 1987). The term conflict is viewed in a variety of ways because of its confusion with those conditions which lead to situations of different conflict (Beck & Michael 1975). Because of diverse and varied definitions of conflict, attitude towards it and meanings of its role are also varied. Conflict in schools takes different forms, for example teachers seem reluctant to obey the principals, they do not seem to follow rules or accept extra work, and they do not easily get along with their principals. Principals too adopt an authoritative approach, for example they pressurize teachers for continuous involvement in the school activities. It therefore becomes common that conflict between teachers and the school principals occur frequently at any time in the school. (Gebretensay, 2002) When two or more persons work together or live together, there is every possibility of the generation of conflict owing to difference of opinion, clash of interest or even misunderstanding. But the existence of conflict should not cause alarm; it is the sign, more often, of close relationship between the persons working in the institution. Zero conflict is indicative of absence of relationship among people comprising institutions. No institution is free of conflicts. Nor should they be. In fact, it is hard to conceive of any vital, responsive institution in a dynamic society which is conflict less. Conflict is after all, as natural as harmony and it is difficult to envision the attainment of positive social goals and even many personal ones without it.

As already stated above, conflict also arises within the institutions. It affects the work efficiency of the principals and of the staff because they are different psychologically, which comes in the way of fulfilling their range of responsibility. Since, it is an indispensable component of behavior, one should not, be afraid of it. Normal conflicts exist at every level in the institution. When this level of conflicts starts moving up, efforts are made to contain at least it reaches the highest level.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In any educational institution, the way of principal's deals with various conflicting situations has a direct influence on the functioning of an institution. Conflict tends to arise constantly and affect the functioning of the institution.   The principals in educational institutions have to face a number of problems while interacting with their management, staff and students. Some time these conflicts are the roots of all the problems and some times these encourages healthy competition. Still conflict in an organization are viewed a must for its development. A serious scanning of the researches conducted in the area of education reveals that very few studies have been conducted to study of conflict resolution in educational institutions. Educational management today is becoming more complex due to multiple funding, diversity of stake holders, privatization of education, fast evolution of management trends. Hence it becomes significant to study conflict resolution strategy of principals, who are major steering force in efficient running of an organization. The reviews of researches on conflict management have provided the basis of selecting organizational climate and emotional intelligence as two significant variables in relation to which of conflict resolution strategy can be meaningfully studied.

OBJECTIVES

The present investigation had been undertaken with the view to fulfill the following objectives:

1.   To study the conflict resolution strategies adopted by school principals.

2.   To find the level of emotional intelligence among school principals.

3.   To study the perception of organizational climate of the institution among school principals.

4. To study the relationship between dimensions of emotional intelligence and tendency to adopt conflict resolution strategies among school principals.

5. To study the relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and tendency to adopt conflict resolution strategies among school principals.

6. To find out the difference in tendency to adopt conflict resolution strategies preferred by principals with respect to gender.

7. To analyze the difference in the tendency to adopt conflict resolution strategies in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

8. To find out the difference in the tendency to adopt conflict resolution strategies in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

9. To find out predictors of conflict resolution strategies of principals from among the independent variables of emotional intelligence and organizational climate.

HYPOTHESES

The present study has been carried out with the following hypotheses.

1. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies of male principals.

2. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies of female principals.

3. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and conflict resolution strategies of male principals.

4. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and conflict resolution strategies of female principals.

5. There will be no significant difference in conflict resolution strategies preferred by principals with respect to gender.

6. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt competition (ST_1) as conflict resolution strategy in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

7. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt collaboration (ST_2) as conflict resolution strategy in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

8. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt compromise (ST_3) as

conflict resolution strategy in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

9. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt avoidance (ST_4) as conflict resolution strategy in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

10. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt accommodation (ST_5) as conflict resolution strategy in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

11. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt competition (ST_1) as conflict resolution strategy in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

12. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt collaboration (ST_2) as conflict resolution strategy in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

13. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt compromise (ST_3) as conflict resolution strategy in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable) organizational climate.

14. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt avoidance (ST_4) as conflict resolution strategy in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable) organizational climate.

15. There will be no significant difference in the tendency to adopt accommodation (ST_5) as conflict resolution strategy in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

16. The independent variables of emotional intelligence and organizational climate differentially predict conflict resolution strategies among principals.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted on principals of five district of Punjab state. A sample of 250 school principals was drawn from the universe of 1150 senior secondary school principals from unaided private schools. Tools of conflict resolution strategy, emotional intelligence, and organizational climate were selected. Data was collected from the sample by administering the standarazied tools for conflict resolution strategy, emotional intelligence and organizational climate to the principals of the selected schools.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

In the present study of the conflict resolution strategies adopted by principals in relation to their emotional intelligence and perception of organizational climate, the investigator has adopted multistage random sampling technique and selected a sample of 250 senior secondary school principals of five districts of Punjab. These were Moga, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala, and Ferozepur. There were equal numbers of male and female principals in the sample under study.

TOOLS OF THE STUDY

Keeping the objectives of the study in mind following tools were used in the present study:

1- Emotional Intelligence Scale by Anukool Hyde, Sanjyot Pethe and Upinder Dhar (2001).

2- Organizational Climate Scale by Sanjyot Pethe, Sushma Chaudhari,and Upinder Dhar (2001).

3- Conflict Management Behavior Questionnaire by Thomas and Kilmann (1974).

DELIMITATIONS

1.   The study has been confined to a sample of 250 senior secondary schools principals.

2.   The study has been delimited to private unaided schools located in the five districts (Moga, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala, and Ferozpure) of Punjab state only.

3.   The study has been delimited to the study of conflict resolution strategies, emotional intelligence and organizational climate only

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

1.   Mean, median, standard deviation and skewness of the scores of conflict resolution strategies, emotional intelligence and organizational climate of school principals was calculated.

2.   't'- ratio was calculated to know whether there are mean differences in the scores of different conflict resolution strategies, and levels of emotional intelligence and organizational climate of school principals.

3.   'r' - was calculated to find out the relationship between different conflict resolution strategies, and dimensions of emotional intelligence and organizational climate of school principals.

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4.   Step-up-regression equation was set up for ascertaining the predictability from dimensions of emotional intelligence and organizational climate for conflict resolution strategies.

MAJOR FINDINGS

(1)-The findings related to objective no1, 2 and 3 are enlisted as no 1 to 8.

1.   54% school principals showed high levels of emotional intelligence.

2.   56% school principals perceived organizational climate of their school to be unfavorable

3.   Competition is the most preferred conflict resolution strategy adopted by both male and female school principals' i.e (42%).

4.   On comparing different conflict resolution strategies with respect to gender it was found that male school principals use competition (44%) and accommodation (12%) as the dominating strategy more then female school principals (39% and10% respectively). Female principals use collaboration (19%), compromise (11%) and avoidance (10%) as the most preferred strategies as compare to male principals (17%, 10% and 7% respectively).

5.   Principals with high emotional intelligence preferred competition as the most dominating conflict resolution strategy i.e. 39% followed by collaboration (19%), compromise (12%), accommodation (10%) and avoidance (8%).

6.   Principals with low emotional intelligence also preferred competition as the most dominating conflict resolution strategy i.e. 48% followed by accommodation (13%), collaboration (13%), compromise (10%) and avoidance (9%).

7.   Principals in favorable organizational climate prefer competition as the most dominating conflict resolution strategy i.e. 43% followed by collaboration (17%), compromise (11%) accommodation (9%), and avoidance (8%).

8.   Principals in unfavorable organizational climate also prefer competition as the most dominating conflict resolution strategy i.e. 41% followed by collaboration (19%), accommodation (13%), compromise (10%) and avoidance (9%).

(2)-The findings related to hypothesis no H1 to H4 concerning correlation are listed from 9 to 12.

9.   Out of 10 dimensions of emotional intelligence only 3 dimensions of emotional intelligence i.e. Empathy (EIB), Self-development (EIG) and Commitment (EII) were significantly correlated with Collaboration (ST_2) strategy of conflict resolution in case of male

principals. Value orientation (EIH) was significantly correlated with Accommodation (ST$_5$) strategy of conflict resolution. The other six dimensions of emotional intelligence i.e Self-awareness (EIA), Self motivation (EIC), Emotional stability (EID), Managing emotions (EIE), Integrity (EIF) and Altruistic behavior (EIJ) were not found to have any significant correlation with any conflict resolution strategy.

Hence the hypothesis no-1 that there will be no significant relationship between dimensions of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies of male principals was partially accepted.

10.   Out of 10 dimensions of emotional intelligence only one dimension i.e Self-awareness (EIA) was significantly correlated with (ST$_4$) avoidance strategy of conflict resolution in case of female principals.

Hence the hypothesis no-2 that there will be no significant relationship between dimensions of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies of female principals was accepted.

11.   No significant relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and different conflict resolution strategies of male principals was found.

Hence the hypothesis no-3 that there will be no significant relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and conflict resolution strategies of male principals was accepted.

12.   No significant relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and different conflict resolution strategies was found in case of female principals.

Hence the hypothesis no-4 that there will be no significant relationship between dimensions of organizational climate and conflict resolution strategies of female principals was accepted

(3)-The findings related to hypothesis no H5 to H15 concerning significance of difference between means are listed from 13 to 27.

13.   No significant difference was found in preference for (ST$_1$) competition as conflict resolution strategy among male and female principals.

14.   No significant difference was found in preference for (ST$_2$) collaboration as conflict resolution strategy among male and female principals.

15.   No significant difference was found in preference for (ST$_3$) compromise as conflict resolution strategy among male and female principals.

16.   No significant difference was found in preference for (ST$_4$) avoidance as conflict

resolution strategy among male and female principals.

17.   No significant difference was found in preference for (ST_5) accommodation as conflict resolution strategy among male and female principals.

18.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST1) competition as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

19.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_2) collaboration as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

20.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_3) compromise as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

21.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_4) avoidance as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

22.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_5) accommodation as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals with high and low emotional intelligence.

23.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_1) competition as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

24.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_2) collaboration as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

25.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_3) compromise as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

26.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_4) avoidance as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

27.   No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (ST_5) accommodation as conflict resolution strategy was found in principals perceiving favorable and unfavorable organizational climate.

(4)-The findings related to hypothesis no H16 to locate predictors of conflict resolution strategies have to be listed from 28 to 35.

28.   Self development (EI_G) was the only dimension of emotional intelligence which was found to be a positive predictor of the collaboration (ST2) strategy in case of male principals.

29.   Value orientation (EI_H) was a negative predictor and Altruistic behavior (EI_G) was a

positive predictor of accommodation (ST$_5$) strategy of conflict resolution from among the 10 dimensions of emotional intelligence in case of male principals.

30.   In case of female principals no dimensions of emotional intelligence and organizational climate was found to be a significant predictor for any conflict resolution strategy.

31.   In case of female principals perceiving favorable/ unfavorable organizational climate again no significant predictors were found for conflict resolution strategy.

32.   In case of male principals perceiving favorable organizational climate. Empathy (EI$_B$) was the only dimension of emotional intelligence which was found to be a negative predictor of competition (ST$_1$) strategy of conflict resolution. No predictors for any other conflict resolution strategy were found from other dimensions of emotional intelligence.

33.   In case of male principals perceiving unfavorable organizational climate. Self-development (EI$_G$) was a positive predictor and Self-awareness (EI$_A$) was a negative predictor of collaboration (ST$_2$) strategy of conflict resolution.

34.   In case of male principals perceiving unfavorable organizational climate. Managing relations (EIE) was a positive predictor and Altruistic behavior (EIJ) was a negative predictor of the compromise (ST3) strategy of conflict resolution.

35.   In case of male principals perceiving unfavorable organizational climate. Value orientation (EI $_H$) was a negative predictor and Integrity (EI$_F$) and Commitment (EI$_I$) were positive predictors of accommodation (ST5) strategy of conflict resolution. Besides predictors of strategies i.e collaboration (ST$_2$), compromise (ST3) and accommodation (ST5) no predictors for competition (ST$_1$) and avoidance (ST$_4$) from 10 dimensions of emotional intelligence were found in case of male principals perceiving unfavorable organizational climate. So hypothesis no-16 stated that the independent variables of emotional intelligence and organizational climate differentially predict conflict resolution strategies among principals is partially accepted.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

On the basis of the results and conclusions, certain educational implications can be drawn:

Emotional intelligence significantly predicts use of different conflict resolution strategies. Hence principals may be trained to enhance their EQ which will help them to attain their goals. As empathy, self development and commitment are significantly correlated with collaboration so in

service programs for focusing on enhancement of these dimensions of emotional intelligence would help them to achieve efficiency through collaboration.   Encourage principals to accept advanced job training to improve their own emotional intelligence. On the basis of enhanced emotional intelligence principals can improve atmosphere in schools and hence have better organizational climate and better handling of conflicts. Principals should not be rigid in their thinking and in ways of dealing with staff, students and their parents. Training of principals should include integration of thoughts and emotions, heart and mind for appropriate behavior at the right time. They should be taught to strike a balance between rational thoughts and emotions. Proper organizational climate should be maintained in order to achieve educational objectives.

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