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# SCHOOL CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: A STUDY IN NURUL FIKRI ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SIDOARJO EAST JAVA

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## Abstract

*A school comprises of various individuals that look to accomplish specific tasks through collaboration to reach school missions. Each individual contribute to school growth and has diverse unique characteristic, such as their own needs, capabilities, experiences, motivations, knowledges, and values. Thus, situation in school can be unpredictable and principal should understand the roots of any conflict and manage it. Aims of this study is to explore conflict in islamic elementary school located in Nurul Fikri Islamic Elementary School Sidoarjo East Java and analyze how principal face the conflict by using conflict management strategy. This study using qualitative method. Finding of this study is school conflict that occurred caused by lack of communitation, unmatch beetwen job description and qualification, goal conflict, limited source, and lack of interaction caused by different individual's value which make clashes in perceptions and attitude. Principal face the conflict using collaboration strategy to find the best solution through discussion, accomodating strategy to analyze condition which the conflict occurred, and forcing strategy which has win-lose when conflict should resolve with. Finaly, author suggested some recommendation of this study.*

***Keywords****: School conflict, Conflict Management Strategies*

**INTRODUCTION**

A school comprises of various individuals that look to accomplish specific tasks through collaboration to reach school missions. Each individual contribute to school growth and has diverse unique characteristic, such as their own needs, capabilities, experiences, motivations, knowledges, and values. Then individuals should interact with others with specific missions. Conflict may occur inside it, because each individual respond to other with different perceptions.

Conflict among humans is natural where at least two individuals might be as one for some point of participation (Rahim, 2001). Conflict is a process of interaction and outcome of individual behavior reactions to the circumstances. Conflict caused by contrasts or contradictions in attitudes, perception, needs, values, tasks, and policies, etc (Kantek and Gezer, 2009; Rahim, 2000, 2001; Rahim et al., 1992; Shih and Susanto, 2010; Tjosvold and Hui, 2001). The percentage of conflicts that arise will be greater when there is a disagreement regarding the goals and mission of the school and misunderstanding in a large context (Mullins, 2007; Tjosvold and Su Fang, 2004). Conflicts will arise in all communities that have a variety of individuals and affect the performance of the organization, because conflicts live in organizations that are inevitable and may arise from students, principals, teachers, and administrative staff. Especially, Teacher professional development in education and training focuses on individual competence and specialization of expertise. So if the teacher interact with the school element, it is possible that internal conflicts will occur (Somech, 2008).

Based on the explanation above, it will be difficult to find schools without conflict. Principal should spending time to solve that conflict with some creativity, solution, inovation, and make sure that school is going better and conflict are solved well (Bagshaw et al., 2007; Tekos and Iordanidis, 2011).

Conflict in organizations is a phenomenon that must be avoided because its negative effects (Fayol, 1949; Taylor, 1911; Weber, 1947). In other hand, conflict is a positive indicator of organizational which leads to better decision making, evolution, and effectiveness. It is very imposible to eliminate conflicts within the organization, but can be managed with proper management, because conflict in schools is seen as a mutual problem that requires consideration and solution (Rahim, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2000), then conflict have positive effects such as more creative and innovative ideas and school's element may actually improved through how they face the conflict (Tjosvold, 2008; Trudel and Reio Jr, 2011). But the negative effect may become critical. Because it will affect to counterproductive behavior such as reduced communication, stress, absence etc. It can harm work relations, and have an impact on the educational process which reduces the level of motivation and performance of teachers and all individual in school, thus ultimately affects students (Rahim, 2001; Balay, 2006).

Regardless of the positive or negative effects of conflicts, there are numerous types of conflict management strategy and creative conflict management which can help schools to achieve its aims and goals. Latest reseach focused on conflict management strategies found that the effective management of conflicts in organizations can increases organizational creativity and productivity (Everard et al., 2004; Balay, 2006; Henkin and Holliman, 2009; Kapusuzoglu, 2010; Saiti, 2015).

The sources of conflicts often have common characteristics and are likely to be interrelated although they may be too varied to be manageable (Rahim, 2010), but Saiti (2015) based on latest literature summarized the root of conflict as follows (1) problem in communication that lead to disruptive effects on the communication process and conflict may occur, (2) Role ambiguity which lack of clarity in the role and the job requirements then the employee faces an unfamiliar working environment and this may lead to an unexpected pattern of behavior, (3) goal conflict which

attainment of goals by one social entity, or entities, prevents the possible attainment of goals by others then there is a greater potential for conflict, (4) Conflict in interest that lead to conflict such as lack of resources or finance, and (5) difference in value, because school comprises of various individuals and characteristic such as values, interest, and so on (Rahim, 2010; Saiti, 2015).

Situation in school can be unpredictable, school principal should understand the roots of any conflict. Hold some negative effect of conflict and obtain positive outcome should be taken by principal to make schools runs better even any conflict occured. Based on latest research, Saiti (2015) identified five approach of conflict management strategies as follows (1) Avoidance approach, which promotes the delay of a situation and avoids any discussion of the problem with the parties involved, (2) Compromise approach, which the opposing parties maintain their differences while they are obliged to find a solution that is equally acceptable to both parties, (3) Collaboration approach, which involve discussion of the problem to find best solution through communication, (4) Competing/ forcing approach, which one entity uses force to solve the conflict among the parties who involved, (5) Accomodation approach, which determines the situation of the conflict and analyses the nature of and the conditions in which the conflict occurred. Shih and Susanto (2010) found that "win-win" solution is the best strategy to change the conflict into a productive process that satisfies all interest, minimize the disruptive effects and maximize the prospects for development and evolution of the school. School leaders share the view that they are more likely to use the strategy of compromise to resolve conflicts (Toziou, 2012). In high-intensity school conflicts an avoidance strategy correlated positively with effectiveness (Saiti, 2015).

Aims of this study is to explore conflict in islamic elementary school located in Nurul Fikri Islamic Elementary School Sidoarjo East Java and analyze how principal face the conflict by using conflict management strategy. This findings can use to inform and add source of conflict in school and how to solve it, especially in islamic elementary schools.

## METHOD

Research in this study uses a qualitative approach to describe conflict and conflict management strategies in school located in Nurul Fikri Islamic Elementary school in Sidoarjo East Java. Principal, teacher, and school staff is subject of this study. Data gathered by observation and interviews. Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/ verivication is analysis for this study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Conflict in Nurul Fikri Islamic Elementary School

Based on observation and interviews, conflict in Nurul Fikri Islamic Elementary School are.

**Conflict in communication**. Conflicts in the communication arise because there is no understanding of the same or different viewpoints during the communication process. The conflicts caused by communication are misunderstandings of teachers and staff in understanding a discussion regarding specific policies delivered by the principals. A small-scale communication conflict is the occurrence of debate between teachers on issues in school and making the interaction of fellow teachers unwell. Another conflict is the indirect communication which use to carrying out the daily tasks, such as the use of social media in conducting communication, so that sometimes it will pose a different perception because it is not spoken of directly and make some missunderstanding each other. All the conflict above caused by lack of communication which lead to the conflict as Rahim (2010) and Saiti (2015) said if problem in communication will lead to disruptive effects on the communication process and conflict may occur.

**Unmatch beetwen job description and qualification**. Conflicts arising from discrepancies between job description and qualification are delays in carrying out tasks, because teachers or staff have difficulty working on tasks. This happened primarily by new teachers or staff while doing their task. They feel less familiar with the tasks faced. It is crucial to be responded because it will result in poor performance and will affect the achievement of the school. This findings support Rahim (2010) and Saiti (2015) result, if role ambiguity which lack of clarity in the role and the job requirements then the employee faces an unfamiliar working environment and this may lead to an unexpected pattern of behavior and conflict may occur.

**Goal conflict**. School goals is a very important aspect that leads all elements of the school to do according to the planning which has been made to achieve a specifict goal. Conflict occurred in this school is one of the school units makes a program that does not match the school's mission. This conflict caused by ambiguity in planning to make school's programs. When school's planning does not go well include specifict task to do to reach specifict mission, conflict will occur cause teacher and staf referring to job description to lead their behavior to reach goals. Another conflict is school's goal are not achieved well, this is caused by goal seems to be hard to reach, poor planning and school goal are not detail formulated. This findings support Rahim (2010) and Saiti (2015) result, if goal conflict which attainment of goals by one social entity, or entities, prevents the possible attainment of goals by others then there is a greater potential for conflict.

**Limited source**. Limited resources will lead a conflicts, cause every human in school need source to guarante his work, financial is most important conflict occurred in this school. When the salary of the teacher or staff is insufficient, it will cause problems such as poor performance, decreased motivation, and bad interaction with schools. Another conflict caused by source is learning process not going well because source of learning are not prepared well. All of this will affects achievement of the school. This findings match with Rahim (2010) and Saiti (2015) if conflict in interest that lead to conflict such as lack of resources or finance.

**Difference in value.** School comprises of various individuals and characteristic such as values, interest, experience, motivation, and so on. Then all of them in one community with specifict school mission and this differences usually lead to conflict. Conflict in this school is staff personality which lead a bad interaction each other, this happened cause human personality usually unacceptable with others, such as people who like to do something in detail but slow and people who like to do something as fastest as they can. This conflict will affect to daily task. Cause every human in school should collaborate each other to chase a school mission. This findings support Rahim (2010) and Saiti (2015) if each organization comprises of various individuals with various qualities, assessments, interests, etc. These distinctions can produce conflict, for example, dispositions, recognitions and qualities that not just restrain the advancement of positive communications among association individuals yet in addition lead to clashes and in this manner become a significant obstruction that keeps an association from accomplishing its goals.

**Conflict managemen strategies.**
The Principal plays an important role to resolving conflicts in schools. Based on observation and interviews, conflict management strategies which used by principal as follows.

**Collaboration strategy.** In collaboration, the two parties involved define a common goal and cooperate in achieving a goal. Because they are confident in achieving a goal that has been established, then through discussion, some conflict may resolved. Principal use this strategy to solve conflict in communication, which principal sit together with the people involved and make a discussion how to get best deal to solve their conflict. This strategy support Saiti (2015) about collaboration approach, which involve discussion of the problem to find best solution through

communication. Collaboration same as win-win strategy (Shih and Susanto, 2010) and school leaders share the view that they are more likely to use the strategy of compromise to resolve conflicts (Toziou, 2012).

**Accomodating strategy**. Principal use accomodating strategy when face conflict in different value, cause school comprises of various individuals and characteristic and lead to conflict. The principal seeks to accommodate problems, and gives others the opportunity to win. In this strategy, the main problem that occurs is actually not resolved clearly, but it is accomodated by principal, then principal analyze the condicition which lead a conflict, and find the best solution. This strategy also used when face conflict in communication. This findings support Saiti (2015) in accomodation approach, which determines the situation of the conflict and analyses the nature of and the conditions in which the conflict occurred.

**Forcing strategy (win-lose).** This strategy used by principal when face conflict caused by human interactioan in school that lead a bad performance. The affected party will be warned, if it is still doing more, it will be dealt firmly by the principal, because if the problem does not get concentration, it will be large and damage the organizational images. In this strategy involves high sefl or organizational aspect and low for others. This finding match with Saiti (2015) about forcing strategy which one entity uses force to solve the conflict among the parties who involved.

## CONCLUSION

Conflict in Nurul Fikri Islamic Elementary school are (1) conflict in communication which lead missunderstanding, (2) Unmatch beetwen job description and qualification which make staff unfamiliar with their jobs dan feel difficult, (3) Goal Conflict which lead implementation does not match with school's mission, (4) Limited Source which lead to the bad performance, and (5) conflict caused by different in value which lead a bad interaction and collaboration with others. Principal solved that problem use collaboration strategy, accomodating and forcing strategy.

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