Effective Strategies for Human Resource Management in Educational Organizations. Conflict Management Case Studies

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to outline human resource management strategies in educational institutions and investigate the implications of the systemic approach. The methodology is the combination of primary and secondary research. Primary research is quantitative and refers to a case study on conflict management in an educational organization between the Director and his subordinates. The method of collecting data was the on-site observation from the position of deputy director, since it is an experiential experience. Secondary research is based on content analysis from different case studies, draws data from modern literature, leads to critical analysis of human resource management strategy theories and examines their effectiveness. Conflict in an educational organization is influenced by both structural and personal factors. According to modern theories of management education, conflicts in an educational organization can be both positive and negative and can positively contribute to activating people for greater effort and efficient operation. This research argues that a comprehensive analysis of the environment and complex systems can contribute to the understanding of contemporary issues. It is based on the principles of systemic theory and suggests the imperative need of knowledge of conflict management by education executives. There are bibliographic gaps in the recording and analysis of case studies, dealing with the management and resolution of conflicts between education staff and subordinates.*

Keywords: *system approach, human resources management, conflict management, structural and personal factors, effective communication.*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of education in society is indisputable (Katsaros, 2008). However, research on the strategic management and labor issues of the human resources of the sector (such as conflict management, which is relevant to this work) does not analyze specific groups of employees, such as teachers (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). In addition, the bibliography shows a lack of research on teachers, which is covered by generalizations of old governance models in the public sector (Brinj, 2008).

Education organizations are defined as open systems and emphasis on human and material resources (Katsaros, 2008). Teacher management is defined as the "coordination" of various factors, such as man, technology, materials (Bush 1986, cited in Katsaros, 2008). The systemic, holistic

approach handles the education industry as a set of open systems that are influenced by their environment. Changes in open systems in the industry are related and influence the characteristics of teachers (Buuri, 2008).

The aim of this study is to investigate the implications of the systemic approach to conflict management in the education sector (managers-teachers-students) as well as the methodology in the existing literature, as well as the questions posed for further research and approaches in the strategic management of human resources and conflict management. Also, it is appropriate to highlight the theoretical and practical conclusions of the above in the educational sector as a set of open systems that interact and accept changes. Equally important is the recording, analysis and management of case studies of conflicts between managers, teachers, administrators and students, as well as

the need for targeted intervention and training programs. The research objectives are:

• The systemic approach and the factors influencing the performance of human resources management practices and conflict management in the education sector (managers - educators - students)
• Exploring the appropriateness of the approaches, the existing trends in the bibliography of human resources and conflict management strategy, as well as the problems presented at a theoretical and practical level. The convergence of theories is a call for interdisciplinary research.
• Recording the lack of training of training staff in conflict management with appropriate interventional methods

Changes in orientation, management and structure in the education sector (Kowalczyk & Jakubczak, 2014) create a complex environment consisting of various systems undergoing change. It is argued that systemic theory, the overall analysis of the environment and complex systems (Von Bertalanffy, 1950 Luhmann 1997 & Bouris 2008), can contribute to the understanding of contemporary themes. Theories that approach the analysis of a sector as a static environment are not sufficient for a broader analysis of systems and understanding of contemporary phenomena in the management of the education system and consequently in the management of issues related to the teaching staff and that is where the originality of current research. In particular, the holistic and systemic - strategic - human resources management in education with a focus on conflict management is highlighted based on the principles of system theory. The questions raised in this research are:

1. The systemic approach and the factors influencing the performance of human resources management practices and conflict management in the education sector (managers - teachers - pupils)
2. What theories from the existing literature are more appropriate to strategic human resources management and conflict management?
3. What are the theoretical and practical conclusions of the above in the education sector as a set of open systems, interacting and accepting changes, and what questions are being asked for further research?
4. How important is the recording, analysis and management of case studies of conflicts between managers, teachers, administrators, students, and the need for targeted intervention and training programs in this sector?

2   METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research is to highlight the importance of human resource management methods and the value of conflict prevention often created within educational institutions. It also emphasizes the important role that teachers' managers have in the management of conflict. The method of data collection is based on the combination of primary and secondary research. The primary survey, conducted through participatory observation, refers to the case study of the Public Vocational Training Institute of Karditsa and specifically to conflict management and conflict management, which took place in the particular educational organization between the Director and an administrative officer and in which a conflict the rest of the staff were involved. Secondary research is based on the analysis of the contents of strategic human resources management theories and conflicts between managers, educational-administrative staff, and students and examines their effectiveness. The sample of the survey was the staff at that time at the Public Vocational Training Institute of Karditsa, and was the director and the two deputy directors, who were deputy directors for the first time as a training officer in their professional career, as well as four administrative officials, one of whom served for ten consecutive years in the service, while for the other three employees it would have been their first year of service in the training unit concerned, after having carried out.

History of case study of primary research

At the Public Vocational Training Institute (V.T.I) of Karditsa, a new Director with high enough qualifications was placed in the school year 2013 after crisis. This year, teachers were transferred to administrative positions, with the result that V.T.I acquired permanent staff. In previous years it operated with a large number of seconded teachers in relation to the requirements of the school and a permanent administrative officer. The opening hours of V.T.I are from 11:00 a.m to 19:00 p.m. By virtue of an exception and with the agreement of the Directors, the Permanent Administrator was only on a permanent basis on a full-time basis. Due to the large number of employees working alternately in the morning and afternoon zones, there was no question. With the arrival of permanent staff, which was clearly less than in previous years, the employee continued to work only in the early hours, which caused, as was natural, the reaction of her colleagues and the Director, who in an intense style demanded the employee self-evident, taking the answer that he was unable to follow the scheduled for all hours because of family obligations and that for so many years there was no problem. At the same time, the reactions of the other employees were becoming more and more intense, citing also the personal reasons why they were unable to come to work in the afternoon zone and started to delay at the time of going to work and respectively to leave earlier than the scheduled hours. They replied to the Director's remarks accusing him of favoring the employee. The Director put the employee in charge of the consequences by requiring to followthe stipulations, which not only happened, but the employee also requested a multi-day permit, which was not accepted and not approved by the Director. In the following days, and while the situation was already escalated, the Director, in an authoritarian and absolute tone, announced a new framework for the operation of V.T.I. without allowing room for the situation to calm down without any discussion and without consulting the staff. The results were as follows:

• The creation of a negative climate in the school and the formation of informal groups of colleagues, who claimed that they themselves have family reasons, and therefore required a change of hours
• The exclusion of the specific employee

•   Dissolution of interpersonal relations and daily, repeated conflicts between colleagues and the Director
•   Targeting the Director
•   Reduced performance at work and refusal to cooperate.

Case studies of secondary research and results
At the level of interdisciplinary research, the broader aim of these studies is to identify different mechanisms applied to conflict resolution in educational institutions. The subject of the Ramani and Zhumin (2010) study is the perceptions of school leaders, board representatives, teachers and pupils about school conflicts and their impact on public secondary schools in Nairobi. The results showed that conflicts when not properly addressed lead to negative results for groups of students, school managers and teachers. It is concluded that effective communication is needed to analyze conflicts in public schools and to identify their causes. The findings showed that the causes of conflict in public secondary schools are varied. Therefore, solving different forms of conflict requires specific strategies, which are often unique. The study by Tshuma et al. (2016) sought to investigate the causes of conflict in secondary schools in Guanta Province, Zimbabwe through a questionnaire. The results show that conflicts occur between teachers in the same department, teachers of different departments, teachers and school managers, and among teachers, parents and students. The study found that the conflict took place, both because of structural and personal factors. The main structural reasons were resource allocation, bad working conditions and the administrative style used by the leadership. The main personal conflicting factors are: differences in personalities, poor dissemination of information and favoritism at work by leadership. The study recommended that the heads of schools and departments should be equipped with conflict resolution skills to identify possible causes of conflict and then manage conflicts in schools.

Critical Generalization of Results of Primary and Secondary Research
Interpersonal relationships may be complex. For managers of educational organizations, conflict management behaviors may become even more complex when asked to take on the roles of their boss, boyfriend and counselor, bearing in mind that the school or the training organization, has its own set of needs and is made up of individual personalities. Thus, the leadership of an organization requires judgment and discretion. Conflicts between manager and educators can often be more easily resolved than daily conflicts and contradictions in the performance of the educational project. It is important that all the human resources of the educational institutions are trained and that happens for the positive conflict resolution for the development of organizations. School leaders need to be aware that their attitudes and behaviors can change over time and should constantly try for best practices, realizing that interpersonal relationships are of paramount importance regardless of inexperience or seniority. All directors must have a common goal; to do what is best for school, teachers and their students and to try to gain respect for others in their daily lives and in their interpersonal relationships.

With regard to strategic human resources management, there is insufficient knowledge of the factors and therefore the systems that affect the performance of human resource management practices. For this reason, principles of system theory are used and emphasis is placed on conflict management within an environment of changes and interactions. Systemic theory deserves attention for the strategic management of human resources in the education sector in order to tackle conflicts in the teaching staff. There is, however, a lack of literature on research in educational institutions on the strategic management of human resources in the sense of holistic approach and complexity.
Concerning conflict management, the effective school function requires its management to be in line with the modern scientific thinking of the Administration of Education. School management can be defined as the continuous and dynamic process of planning, organizing, managing and controlling all productive resources involved in the educational effort so that decisions, actions and knowledge products to be effective.

3   RESULTS - DISCUSSION

Nowadays, it is particularly important that the modern educational organization can manage the conflicts and their effects and not just resolve them. The conclusions from the primary research are as follows:
•   Conflict management does not simply involve accepting certain techniques to resolve or reduce a conflict. It also means adopting an effective strategy on the part of an organization to mitigate the negative consequences of conflicts and to be more prominent as part of the learning cycle, creative conflicts.
•   In the field of work it is not easy to talk about aggression, at least in the sense that we give it to other aspects of life.
•   There are also cases where we have behaviors at the workplace that seem not only unpardonable but also unreasonable, such as: violation of the rules which takes the form of conscious energy or inertia aimed at damaging or destroying the working environment.
•   The findings from the secondary research, which have been verified and agreed with this research, are as follows:
•   According to Rahim, conflicts usually occur when individuals or groups realize that they have mutually exclusive targets and values. This means that the parties understand that they cannot achieve goals that do not go hand in hand with each other and the result is that each party tries to support its goal against the other 's (Rahim, 1993).
•   Fraser and Hertzel's research showed that school, as well as all social organizations, are creating conflicts between teachers, pupils and parents. These conflicts create a problem in the everyday life of the educational organization and the educational work of teachers . It is important for the manager, as well as for the staff and students, to have social skills in addition to academic knowledge, which help to solve problematic behaviors in a harmonious manner and debate without the intervention of third parties (Fraser and Hertzel, 1990).

• According to Johdi and Apitree and what has been reported in this research, the conflict in an educational organization is influenced by both structural and personal factors (Johdi & Apitree, 2012). Structural factors include poor working conditions, management, discipline, different situations and resource allocation. Also Deetz and Stevenson in their research report three hypotheses, showing that the conflict may be positive. Their view is that conflict management serves as a more positive learning process to avoid conflicts. Characteristically, the conflict is natural, necessary and most conflicts are based on real differences (Deetz and Stevenson 1986).

• There is no doubt that there is a significant need in schools for integrated conflict resolution programs (Crawford, Bodine, 1996). These programs promote a safe school environment that allows optimal personal development and learning. By participating in a comprehensive conflict resolution program, students learn skills that maximize the possibilities for achieving personal goals and success at school. The chapter on student conflict resolution programs highlights the importance of such programs and suggests the need to create comparable conflict resolution intervention programs for managers and educational-administrative staff respectively. Conflict resolution programs have various names including conflict resolution training, peace education, peacekeeping, violence prevention or violence reduction, etc. Conflict solving models have common goals because they seek to create opportunities for students and all members of the educational community: to know that conflict is a natural part of life and can be resolved peacefully, to realize their own unique responses to conflicts, to collide and understand the diversity with which others can respond, learn and apply the principles of conflict resolution and the skills of peaceful solving problem processes, empowering them to be individually and cooperatively responsible for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the responsibility of integrating them into their everyday lives.

By combining the findings of primary and secondary research, we conclude that today's leaders of an educational organization need to know that coping with their everyday problems is based on experience and on the knowledge and abilities of the entire human potential working in the organization. Conflict can also be positive and have positive consequences. Moreoverconflict management should serve as a more positive training process to avoid conflict. It is more necessary than ever to train education staff for this process, and to set up appropriate intervention programs. The systemic - holistic approach, which examines an educational organization as an open system that is constantly influenced by the external and internal environment, is a credible approach to strategic human resources management and thus to conflict management among members of an educational organization.

4   CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

To summarize the above, we conclude that the role of the administration regarding conflict resolution is vital for the effective organization of school management.

1. Considering the importance of conflict management, Olembo et al. (1992) report that school leadership should have the necessary skills, values and knowledge for the responsible and professional management of schools such as:
• Adequate response to the bureaucratic part of the Administration and implementation of the laws
• Creative conflict resolution and stimulation of the trust of the existing ones
• Development of communication strategies (e.g. active listening) in interpersonal relationships with all staff members
• Activation of techniques for active participation of the members of the organization through the exchange of views, thoughts, emotions, reflections and experiences
• Growing empathy, emotional intelligence and negotiation techniques
• Exploiting the strengths of the organization, awareness of weaknesses, creating opportunities and avoiding risks
• Adopt a democratic and collaborative management style to achieve the organization's goals
• Creating innovative actions and opening up the educational organization to society
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should also seek to educate all stakeholders on how best to resolve conflicts. This can be achieved through targeted training of education staff, awareness of administrative staff working in educational institutions (e.g. Primary and Secondary Education Directorates, DIEK, etc.), as well as raising awareness among teachers, and also pupils as to the negative impact of conflicts. All educational organizations should embrace the conflict resolution dialogue. This can be strengthened by building strong relationships between the Director and his / her subordinates, as well as teachers and students to such an extent that everyone can talk about issues that affect them. Teachers should discuss the rules of schools instead of imposing them. Guidance and counseling is the best way to control the spread of bad inner emotions.
3. At the same time, the leader must encourage his subordinates to take initiatives in identifying and solving problems. It is essential to create and maintain a dynamic working environment in which employees work effectively to achieve the goals of the team and the organization. Social education and training around conflict management is a social need.
4. On the occasion of the implementation of conflict intervention and conflict resolution programs, targeted conflict resolution programs could be developed to apply to educational organizations and would involve director-staff relations and relationships between colleagues. They will be equivalent to conflict intervention and conflict resolution programs applied to students, such as conflict resolution training, peace education, mediation, and so on. Conflict resolution models will have common goals so that all members of the organization know:
• the conflict resolution principles and the skills of peaceful problem-solving processes
• be individually and cooperatively responsible for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the responsibility of integrating them into their daily lives

- that conflict is a natural part of life

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