

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WITHIN TRANSYLVANIA COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

MACRA-OȘORHEAN MARIA-DANIELA<sup>1,\*</sup>,  
MORAR ALEXANDRU<sup>2</sup>, SUCIU GEORGE<sup>3</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** The conflict has always been an inevitable progress and it existed since our earliest times whenever there was a desire to lead a group or even an empire. For this theme we took into account the fact that the term “conflict” has a negative connotation and it is often associated with concepts such as anger, aggressivity, opposition, although conflict doesn't necessarily need to be referred to as a negative experience. We must acknowledge the fact that if we experience conflicts in our lives, it means we are sincere, we express our visions, opinions, thoughts and feelings, and that, in this way, we can evolve and develop as humans. The objectives of the research within the international school Transylvania College Cluj-Napoca were to analyse the types of conflicts and what caused them within the organisation, the people who offered support to solve these conflicts and the number of conflicts each teacher had. For the research we used a survey where 37 teachers (males and females) replied to several questions in a google form at the end of the 2018 - 2019 academic year and where the responders had difficulties the researchers offered additional explanations by email or verbally. The study concluded that conflicts are not created because of the difference in objectives, but from the difference in how the parties involved want to achieve these objectives and the most common of the conflicts was definitely when people didn't express clearly what they wanted or gave unclear instructions. Furthermore, a clear communication reduces the differences in perception and the probability of a conflict.

**Keywords:** *conflict, objectives, management, leader.*

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Babeș-Bolyai, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

<sup>2</sup> “Transylvania College” International School, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

<sup>3</sup> Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty Of Economics And Business Administration, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

\*Corresponding Author: [miamacraosorhean@yahoo.com](mailto:miamacraosorhean@yahoo.com)

**REZUMAT. *Managementul conflictelor în cadrul Școlii Internaționale Transylvania College.*** Conflictul este un proces organizațional inerent, acesta a existat și există din cele mai vechi timpuri din dorința de a conduce, de a fi liderul unui grup sau al unui imperiu. În abordarea acestei teme am pornit de la premisa că termenul de conflict are o puternică conotație negativă, evocând cuvinte ca opoziție, mânie, agresivitate, acesta însă nu trebuie să fie neapărat înțeles ca fiind o experiență negativă deoarece acest concept dacă apare în viața noastră înseamnă că suntem oameni sinceri, care ne exprimăm opiniile și viziunile, cu ajutorul lui putem evolua și să ne îmbunătățim educația zilnic. Obiectivele cercetării din cadrul Școlii Internaționale Transylvania College Cluj-Napoca sunt de a depista cauzele și tipul de conflicte, persoanele din cadrul organizației care au oferit suport în rezolvarea conflictelor și numărul de conflicte avute de fiecare cadru didactic. Metoda anchetei a fost folosită în cadrul cercetării, unde un număr de 37 de cadre didactice gen masculin și feminin au răspuns la finalul anului școlar 2018-2019 unui chestionar în mod privat cu ajutorul platformei on-line google forms, iar unde au fost întâmpinate dificultăți s-au oferit explicații suplimentare prin email sau verbal. Studiul a concluzionat că, adesea, conflictele nu pornesc de la diferențe în privința obiectivelor sau scopurilor, ci de la modalitățile de atingere a acestora iar cauza cea mai des evidențiată la răspunsurile primite este neexprimarea clară și completă a uneia dintre părți. De asemenea comunicarea precisă reduce diferențele perceptuale și scade în acest mod probabilitatea de apariție a conflictului.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *conflict, obiectiv, management, lider.*

## **Introduction**

Conflict has always been an inevitable progress in an organisation as Richard H.Hall stated (Manolescu, 2001). Wherever there were people, there were also ideas, values, different styles and standards that can create conflict , therefore there are more things that can cause it, not just one, things like objectives, aims, manners and habits, personalities, competition, aggressivity and many others. According to Armstrong (2007), conflict is a dynamic process in which contradictions, attitudes and manners are continuously changing and influencing each other. Stratton (1999) says that the term conflict is used to describe various situations:

- a conflictual state (resource crisis);
- an emoțional individual state (hostility, frustration, agitation, unease or anxiety);
- a cognitive state (acknowledgement of the conflict situation);
- a behavioral state (from passive resilience to declared aggressive resilience without neglecting any secrecy or pettiness, etc.).

Nowaday conflict is seen as something negative within every organisation but this concept should be considered also as a positive thing because it creates situations that lead to evolution or development and organisations that have conflicts are healthy and functional organizations. The recent interactive approach considers conflicts as a necessary thing that shouldn't be avoided. Conflict is encouraged because a peaceful, cooperative and lenient group or team risks to become static and unresponsive and won't react to change, innovation and development (Deaş, 2012).

According to Leigh Thompson the perception of conflicts is described as follows: the real conflict (when the conflict exists and people perceive it as such), the latent conflict (when the conflict exist but people don't acknowledge it), the false conflict (there isn't any real conflict but people feel there is one) or the inexistent conflict (the conflict doesn't exist and people don't perceive it) (Petelean, 2006).

## **Objectives**

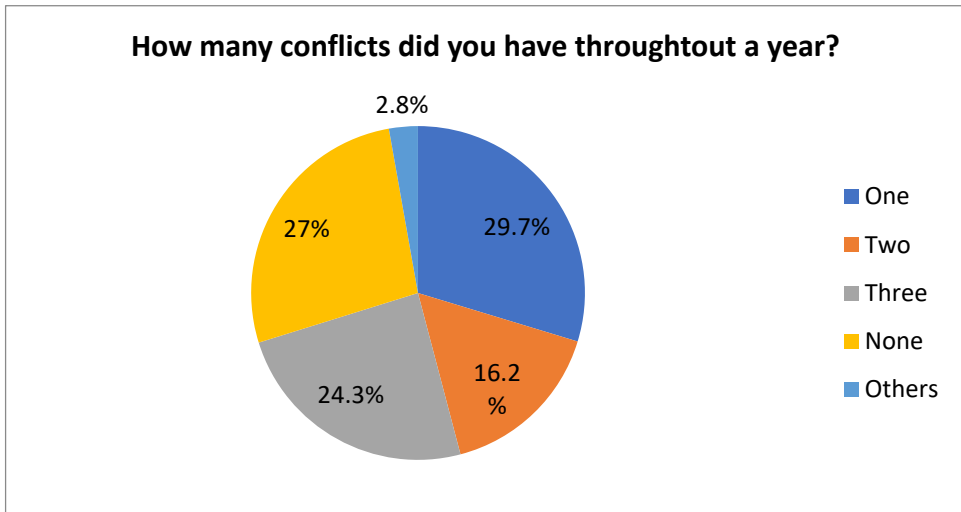
The main objective of this research is to find the types of conflicts and the main causes that lead to these conflicts within International School Transylvania College. We will also look at the people who offered support to solve the conflicts within this organisation and the number of such conflicts for a teacher.

## **Materials and methods**

According to Dragnea (2002) the research methodology for the management field is very vast but, for the present paper, the survey has been chosen as the main research methodology with the direct application of a survey. The survey form (see the Annex) created by the authors for the purpose of this research paper's objectives was sent using google forms to every teacher from the institution and, where the responders had difficulties, the researchers offered additional explanations by email or verbally. The survey was conducted within "Transylvania College" in Cluj-Napoca during 03.04.2019 – 31.05.2019. The responders, females and males were teachers for elementary, secondary and high school education. In total, 37 survey forms were filed in by 10 elementary school teachers, 17 secondary school teachers and 10 high school teachers and all participants have given their consent to take part in this survey. The responders teaching experience varies between 1 and 26 years of experience , therefore beginners teachers up to senior teachers.

## Results

The results were interpreted in percentages for every question. If we analyse the first two questions that refer to the number of conflicts each teacher had and how often these conflicts occur we noticed that the number of conflicts or conflictual situations is an average one: for the first question *"How many conflicts did you have throughout a year"* (see chart 1), the responses were that 29.7% have had 1 conflict during that year and 24.3% said they had 3 conflicts which lead to the idea that teachers have experienced conflicts within this organisation. For the 2nd question regarding the frequency of these conflicts, 59.5% replied with "sometimes" and 10% of the responders considered they had conflicts "often".



**Fig. 1.** No of the conflictual situations

Questions 3, 5 and 10 show that there is a high degree of communication and support between colleagues in a department but in the meantime there is plenty of dissent between the same colleagues or colleagues from other departments.

From question number 3 referring to the existence of conflicts and where people find out about these we discovered that there is a good communication between teachers when it comes to finding out about a certain conflict, 40 % of them find out about conflicts from fellow teachers, 45.7% from their department colleagues, 8.6% from their students and the rest of the responders find out about conflicts from their students or their chief of department.

With question number 5 *"Who do you disagree with most?"* authors wanted to find out about the existing relationships within the school and 44.4 % of the teachers said they most disagree with other colleagues from the other departments of the school while approximately a third of them, (27.8%) get into conflicts with colleagues from the same department. It is worth mentioning that 19.4 % of the respondents mentioned that there are conflicts between teachers and their superiors. We also found teachers who don't disagree with anyone or they only get into conflicts with students or the auxiliary staff.

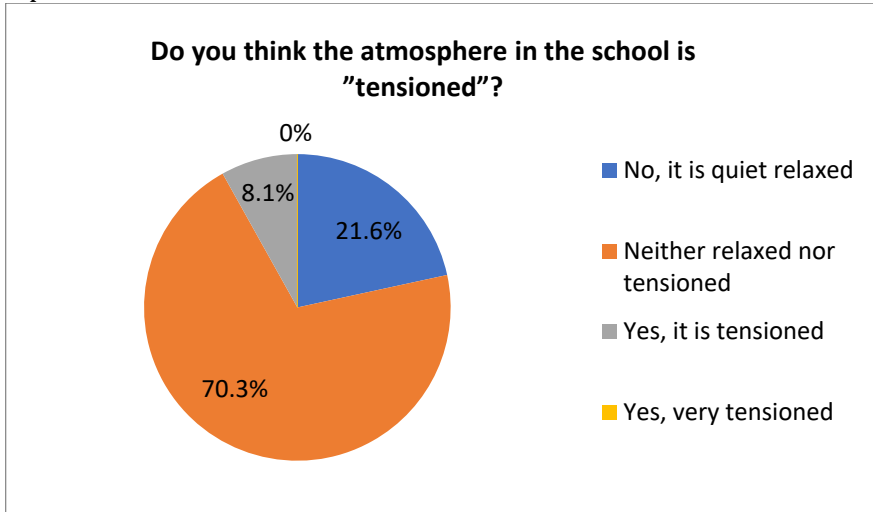
The key to this survey was question no 10 *"Who helped you most to solve a conflict?"* because we wanted to find out who teachers trust when it comes to solving a conflict. From the analysis we found out that usually conflicts are solved hierarchically at the same level – 52.8%, and the school's psychologist has a significant role in solving these situations according to 25 % of the respondents while there is evidence of a small percentage of situations where the members of the school's management solve the conflicts - about 8,3%.

Question no 6 *"Between who and who most conflicts occur?"* got us important results referring to the types of conflicts in this institution. When analysing the answers we found out that conflicts occur between different participants within the school, meaning students, parents teachers, school's management, the school's psychologist and the auxiliary staff. However, most conflicts appear between students - students, teachers- students, parents-teachers, school's management - parents and the school's psychologist and parents. We can conclude that the most conflictual people are the parents in relation with any other category while the teachers tend to have conflicts both with students and parents. Interpersonal conflicts because of the difference between personalities, interests and abilities are the most highlighted ones.

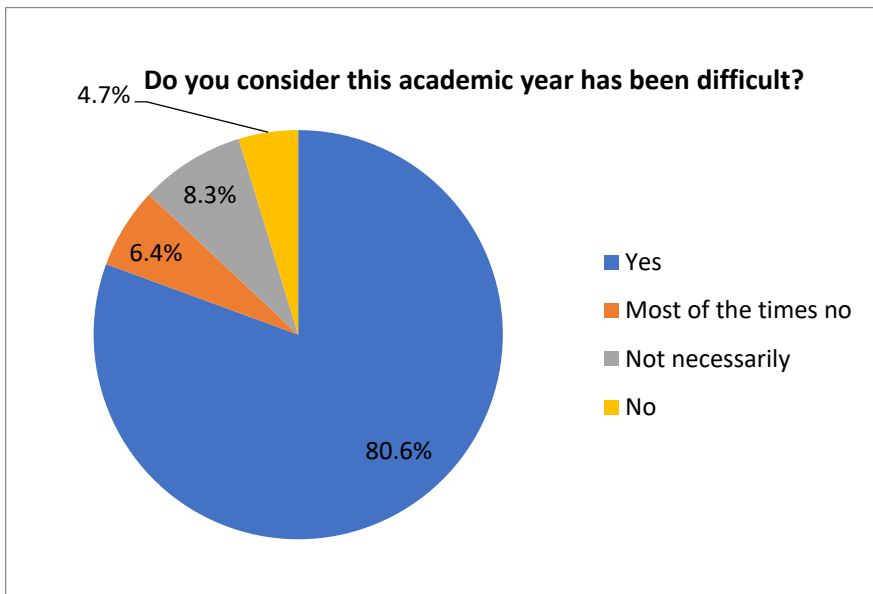
Question no 7 *"What was the cause of the last conflict you had in school ?"* and 8 *"Why do you think there are conflicts in your school ?"* refer to the causes that determined the last conflict the responders had and what causes in general conflicts in the institution. Different visions and misinterpretation are some of the issues that usually cause conflicts. There is a connexion here between teachers of different nationalities who teach different lines of study (Romanian and English). Inevitably, when someone doesn't express themselves clearly or the message is misinterpreted, there's a 50 % chance the situation will lead to a conflict.

Question no. 9 *"From your observations how do conflicts solve in your school?"* and 11 *"How is the relationship between the parties after a conflict has ended?"* shows us that in this institution conflicts are usually solved when both parties meet halfway for 51% of them while for 16% of the teachers a superior is needed to solve the conflict and the rest of the responders replied that the conflict usually ends either when one of the parties gives in or the conflict solves itself. However, after the conflict crisis ends, people still remain resentful so there 's no real solution to solve the conflict.

What we can observe from questions no. 4 "Do you think the atmosphere in the school is "tensioned"?" (see chart 2) and 12 "Do you consider this academic year has been difficult?" (see chart 3) is that there is no connection between the atmosphere in the school and the work related stress.



**Fig. 2.** The atmosphere in the school



**Fig. 3.** How stress is felt

80.6 % of the responders considered that the past academic year was stressful from the work point of view but 70.3 % felt that the atmosphere in the school was neither relaxed nor stressful, meaning they considered it appropriate for working.

## **Conclusions**

Within every organisation the ones who create conflicts know what they want and where they want to get but there are situations where the parties involved in the conflict don't have clear objectives and they don't know which way they want to get.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning the fact that, many times, conflicts are not created because of the difference in objectives, but because of the difference in how the parties involved want to achieve these objectives.

From the analysis of the results above we can conclude that conflicts exist in this institution. From the point of view of the parties involved the type of these conflicts is intergroup. If we take in consideration the effects generated by the conflicts we observe that these are predominantly dysfunctional.

The majority of the participants to the research survey said that they can express their opinion, visions, emotions, but the solutions found did not help them to fully solve the conflicts. If we refer to the degree of intensity and duration of the conflicts in this institution the analysis revealed that the conflicts are mixed, spontaneous and acute. If we analysed the conflicts hierarchically we observed that the horizontal type of conflicts between colleagues prevailed.

The most common cause of the conflicts was definitely when people didn't express clearly what they wanted or gave unclear instructions.

By using positive communication and listening empathically one can establish a common path for discussions, interest and sharing common values. Furthermore, a clear communication reduces the differences in perception and the probability of a conflict.

## REFERENCES

1. Armstrong, M., (2007). *Cum să fii un manager și mai bun*. București: Meteor press.
2. Deaș, M., (2012, Noiembrie 22). *Rolul Liderului in Solutionarea Problemelor*.  
Retrieved from Scribd: <https://www.scribd.com/document/114114450/Rolul-Liderului-in-Solutionare-Problemelor>.
3. Dragnea, A., (2002). *Teoria educației fizice și sportului*. București: FEST
4. Manolescu, A., (2001). *Managementul Resurselor Umane*. București: Editura Economica.
5. Petelean, A., (2006). *Managementul Conflictelor*. București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică R.A.
6. Straton, R., (1999). *Rezolvarea conflictelor și negocierea*. București: Rentrop



## Annexes

### SURVEY

The survey form was completed only by participants who previously agreed to it and the confidentiality of the answers was kept according to the legal procedures.

Please read the following questions and choose the answer that best fits your belief.

You can use only one answer for each question.

1. How many conflicts did you have throughout a year ?
  - a. One
  - b. Two
  - c. Three
  - d. None
  - e. Others .....
2. How often conflicts happen in your school ?
  - a. Very often
  - b. Often
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Rarely
  - e. Very rarely
3. Do you know of any conflict in your school ? If you do, where did you find out about it ?
  - a. yes, from the students
  - b. yes, from the colleagues in my department
  - c. yes, from other colleagues
  - d. yes, from the chief of department
4. Do you think the atmosphere in the school is "tensioned" ?
  - a. No, it is quite relaxed
  - b. Neither relaxed nor tensioned
  - c. Yes, it is tensioned
  - d. Yes, very tensioned
5. Who do you mostly disagree with mostly ?
  - a. Colleagues
  - b. Department colleagues
  - c. Superiors
  - d. Subordinates
  - e. Auxiliary staff
  - f. Others .....
6. Considering the list below, between who and who you think most conflicts occur ?
  - a. Students - .....
  - b. Teachers - .....
  - c. Parents - .....
  - d. The school's management - .....
  - e. The school's psychologist - .....
  - f. The Auxiliary staff r - .....

7. What was the cause of the last conflict you had in school ?
  - a. Incomplete information to do a certain task
  - b. Unclear instructions of a party involved
  - c. Inappropriate tone
  - d. Confusion of attributions
  - e. External factors
  - f. Different personal visions
  - g. Others .....
8. Why do you think there are conflicts in your school ?
  - a. Incomplete information to do a certain task
  - b. Unclear instructions of a party involved
  - c. Inappropriate tone
  - d. Efforts are not appreciated by superiors
  - e. Overload of tasks given by superiors
  - f. Envy
  - g. Subjectivity of colleagues
9. From your observations how do conflicts solve in your school ?
  - a. With the intervention of the management
  - b. They solve automatically
  - c. One of the parties involved gives in
  - d. With the intervention of the chief of department
  - e. Both parties involved meet halfway
  - f. I don't know
10. Who helped you most to solve a conflict ?
  - a. Members of the school management
  - b. Colleagues
  - c. The chief of department
  - d. The school's psychologist
  - e. Other .....
11. How is the relationship between the parties after a conflict has ended ?
  - a. The same as before, the conflict is forgotten
  - b. The relationship keeps going but there is unexpressed discontentment
  - c. On the first occasion there will be another conflict
  - d. The relationship turns cold
  - e. Nu știu
12. Do you consider this academic year has been difficult?
  - a. Yes
  - b. Most of the times no
  - c. Not necessarily
  - d. NoNo of years of experience :  
Sex: