SCHOOL MANAGERS' VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES: BASIS FOR DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN TO ENHANCE MANAGERS' SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine and analyze the manager's verbal communication skills and conflict resolution strategies of manager's basis for developing an action plan to enhance the manager's skills. It shows that one of the main gates of a management success is to convey people and to make the necessary decision to have an excellent conflict strategy resolution. There were a total of 40 respondents, 20 from elementary, and 20 from secondary used in the study. The study utilized a quantitative research design to describe the study in detail. To determine the level of school manager's verbal communication skills as perceived by elementary and secondary school teachers, frequency, percentage, and rank distribution were used. Likewise, to determine the extent of conflict resolution strategies used by school managers, mean and standard deviation were used. To determine the significant difference in manager's communication skills and the significant difference in the manager's conflict resolution strategies as perceived by the two groups of respondents, z-test was used. It found out that there is no significant difference between the two groups of respondents on the extent of conflict resolution strategies utilization in terms of problem-solving, compromising, and forcing. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn. The level of manager's verbal communication skills rated by the two sets of respondents elementary and secondary rated the items differently. While on the extent of conflict resolution strategies of managers used by secondary respondents rated the items and verbally interpreted as often. The results will be a big help in developing an action plan to enhance the skills of the manager. Based on the analysis and interpretation of data gathered on the two groups of respondents from the Division of Rizal, there is no significant difference on the level of manager's verbal communication skills, and on the extent of conflict resolution strategies of managers, therefore, the hypothesis is retained.

Keywords: School Managers, Educational Leadership, Communication Skills, Conflict Strategies Division of Rizal, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

School managers in the educational system or in any organization should focus on how to communicate properly to people. Thus, School Managers must communicate well to its internal and external stakeholders in the institution in order to reach the vision, mission, objectives and goals of the organization. However, conflict emerges due to traffic jams, barriers; miscommunication, and misinterpretation lead to problems increase. Thus, it proved by Matthews and Thakkar (2012) as to their study that in a global environment, the ability to communicate effectively can be a challenge. Even when both parties speak the same language there can still be

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misunderstandings due to ethic and cultural differences. On the study of Hsiao-ping Wu et al. (2015), it was found out on the enrolment of higher education in the United States through qualitative interviews that international students' experiences on the academic challenges include communication with professors, classmates, and staff. Thus, it only shows that we have to communicate properly so we can embrace the reality that conveying is a big responsibility role to minimize conflicts in the organization where we live in. On the Philippine setting, it indicated that based on the Department of Education D.O. 22, s. 2007 in compliance with Executive Order 523, which instituted to promote the use of alternative modes of dispute resolution, which includes mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. Thus, communication to this dispute is a must so that both parties involved in the conflict will be enlightened to any problem, compromise to whatever things to solve and force if needed to settle the issues. Indeed, the role of communication to School Managers in conducting meetings, encouraging teachers to perform well, conflict discussions, and solving any miscommunication in the organization is the researchers' motivation to indulge in this research.

OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to find out the level of school managers' verbal communication skills and the extent of conflict resolution strategies which served as basis towards developing an action plan to enhance managers' skills in the Schools Division of Rizal during the School Year 2017-2018. The following are the objectives of the study. (1). Identify the level of school managers' verbal communication skills as perceived by elementary and secondary school teachers in terms of conducting meetings, communicating instruction to teachers, and encouraging and motivating the teachers. (2) To analyze the extent of conflict resolution strategies of managers in terms of problem-solving, compromising, and forcing.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive-evaluative method of research. The researcher devised a questionnaire-checklist that contained three parts: Part I, included demographic information about the teacher, such as gender, age, position, and highest educational attainment. Part II, contained the checklist on the manager's verbal communication skills such as conducting meetings, communicating instruction to teachers, and encouraging and motivating the teachers. Part III, contained the checklist on the manager's conflict resolution strategies such as problem-solving, compromising, and forcing. The sources of data of this study were the teachers from two elementary schools and two secondary schools in the Division of Rizal. In each school, ten teachers were selected using a simple random sampling technique. On whole 40 teachers served as respondents of this study. The data gathering instrument used by the researchers includes the questionnaire /checklist as the main data gathering instrument. The instrument was assessed based on the content, coverage, relevance of each item, correctness of statement and suitability of the items. Instruments were given to the selected 40 teachers in the Schools Division Office-Division of Rizal. The questionnaire checklist had undergone correction, revision, and validation by experts. The results were used in developing an action plan to enhance the manager's skills. Mean scores with standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-.test statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the results of the study on the school manager's verbal communication skills and conflict management strategies.

1. **Level of School Managers' Verbal Communication skills as perceived by Elementary and Secondary school teachers from the Division of Rizal**

1.1. in terms of Conducting meetings

Table 1. Level of the Manager's Verbal Communication Skills in terms Conducting meetings as perceived by the Elementary Teachers

A. Conducting meeting	Mean	SD	VI
1. Conveys clear and concise ideas or information	3.40	3.16	VS
2. Explains ideas comprehensively	3.40		VS
3. Discusses the topic with persuasion	3.75		VS
4. Accepts critical feedbacks and suggestions and clearly analyze them	3.70		VS
5. Discusses issues calmly when challenged	3.65		VS
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.58		VS

Table 1 shows the level of managers verbal communication skills of conducting a meeting concerning" Conveys clear and concise ideas or information" and "Explains ideas comprehensively" the same weighted mean with 3.40 was obtained, while the item "Discusses the topic with persuasion" got the highest weighted mean of 3.75 among the items. Furthermore, "Accepts critical feedbacks and suggestions and clearly analyze them "got the second to the highest weighted mean of 3.70. The item "Discusses issues calmly when challenged" ranked third with d a weighted mean of 3.65. All the items fall in the verbal interpretation of Very satisfactory.

Table 2. Level of the Manager's Verbal Communication Skills in terms Conducting meetings as perceived by the Secondary Teachers

A. Conducting meeting	Mean	SD	VI
1. Conveys clear and concise ideas or information	3.45	3.13	VS
2. Explains ideas comprehensively	3.55		VS
3. Discusses the topic with persuasion	3.45		VS
4. Accepts critical feedbacks and suggestions and analyze them	3.30		VS
5. Discusses issues calmly when challenged	3.20		VS
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.39		VS

The two groups of teacher respondents have almost the same perception with their managerial way of conducting the meeting and communicating instruction to teachers. It only varies in the weighted mean of each category. Most of the perception of elementary school teachers rank higher both in conducting the meeting and communicating instruction to teachers compared with the perception of secondary teacher respondents but still all fall into "Very Satisfaction" verbal interpretation. Eisenberger (2012) suggest that communication between management and employees should be a key part of an organizations' strategic planning, and managers should receive training to maximize the potential of open communication in their organization. According to Maxwell (2010) the person's ability to create change and results in any organization be in a company, church, nonprofit, or even a family is directly tied to the ability to use the teachings.

1.2. in terms of Communicating instructions to teachers

Table 3. Level of the Manager's Verbal Communication Skills in terms of Communicating Instruction as perceived by the Elementary Teachers

B. Communicating instruction to teachers	WM	SD	VI
1. .Gives clear and concise instruction	3.75	3.14	VS
2. Simplifies the instruction	3.75		VS
3. Expounds details in giving instructions	3.45		VS
4. Paraphrases instructions accurately	3.60		VS
5. Adapts to the individuals with whom he/she is interacting	3.50		VS
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.61		VS

Table 3 shows that in terms of communicating instruction to teachers, both "Gives clear and concise instruction" and "Simplifies the instruction" rank first with the weighted mean of 3.75 and with the verbal interpretation of Very satisfactory. The item

"Paraphrases instructions accurately" rank second with the weighted mean of 3.60 Apparently, "Adapts to the individuals with whom he/she is interacting "has weighted mean of 3.50 which ranked third. And lastly, "Expounds details in giving instructions" rank fourth with 3.45 weighed mean. All the item in communicating instruction to teachers as perceived by the elementary teachers in Rizal has a verbal interpretation of Very Satisfactory.

Table 4. Level of the Manager's Verbal Communication Skills in terms of Communicating as perceived by the Secondary Teachers

B. Communicating instruction to teachers	WM	SD	VI
1. Gives clear and concise instruction	3.55	0.11	VS
2. Simplifies the instruction	3.55		VS
3. Expounds details in giving instructions	3.45		VS
4. Paraphrases instructions accurately	3.35		VS
5. Adapts to the individuals with whom he/she is interacting	3.30		VS
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.44		VS

In the communicating instruction to teachers as perceived by secondary teachers, the item "Gives clear and concise instruction" and "Simplifies the instruction" rank first with the weighted mean of 3.55 and with the standard deviation of 0.11. While "Expounds details in giving instructions" the rank second with a weighted mean of 3.45. "Paraphrases instructions accurately" rank third it has mean of 3.35. And lastly, with the weighted mean of 3.30 "Adapts to the individuals with whom he/she is interacting" rank fourth. All the perception of secondary teachers' respondents falls with the verbal interpretation of Very Satisfactory.

1.3 in terms of Encouraging and Motivating the Teachers as perceived by the Elementary and Secondary Teacher

Table 5. Level of the Manager's Verbal Communication Skills in terms of Encouraging and Motivating the Teachers as perceived by the Elementary Teachers

Manager's Verbal Communication Skills	Elementary		Respondents
Encouraging and motivating the teachers	WM	SD	VI
As a school manager, I...			
1. give positive praises to teachers.	3.65	0.08	O
2. use words of encouragement positively.	3.60		O
3. share inspirational thoughts among teachers.	3.50		O
4. uplift teachers' performance by giving positive comments.	3.55		O
5. show enthusiasm and dedication in inspiring teachers.	3.45		S
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.55	0.08	O

Table 5 presented the highest weighted mean of 3.65 and interpreted as outstanding while its lowest weighted mean 3.45, which is interpreted as satisfactory. Additionally, the general weighted mean is 3.55 interpreted as outstanding. These results extrapolate that the school managers in elementary level have positive verbal communication skills considering that encouraging and motivating the teachers is involved. It could mean that school manager respondents also believed that their teachers were effective and efficient communicators. As claimed by Yang (2017), previous researchers have found that employees exhibit their best performance and greatest creativity when they work on jobs that include high levels of autonomy, skill variety, feedback, and social support, which further facilitates their work engagement, as these traits foster employees' internal work motivation.

Table 6 presents the highest weighted mean of 3.60 which is interpreted as outstanding while its lowest weighted mean is 3.40 which is interpreted as satisfactory.

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Table 6. Level of the Manager's Verbal Communication Skills in terms of Encouraging and Motivating the Teachers as perceived by the Secondary Teachers

Manager's Verbal Communication Skills	Secondary		Respondents
Encouraging and motivating the teachers	WM	SD	VI
As a school manager, I…			
1. give positive praises to teachers	3.45	0.08	S
2. use words of encouragement positively	3.40		S
3. share inspirational thoughts among teachers	3.55		O
4. uplift teachers' performance by giving positive comments	3.60		O
5. show enthusiasm and dedication in inspiring teachers	3.55		O
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.51		O

Still, it implies that school managers in secondary respondents have positive manager's verbal communication as long as encouraging and motivating the teachers is concerned, for the result got the general weighted mean of 3.51 which verbally interpreted as outstanding. These findings indicate that school manager respondents were good in verbal communication.

2. The extent of Conflict Resolution strategies/skills of the Managers as perceived by the Elementary and Secondary Teacher from the Division of Rizal

2.1 in terms of Problem Solving

As presented in Table 7 concerning "Makes slight modifications in his goals to meet other people's needs" and "Adjusts his priorities to reach a resolution" has the lowest mean of 3.25 with a verbal interpretation of "Seldom". One of the most strategies/skills of the managers in terms of problem-solving "Tries to find some ways

or solution to the problem" has the highest mean of 3.75 with a verbal interpretation of "Always".

Table 7. The extent of conflict resolution strategies/skills of the managers in terms of Problem Solving as perceived by the Elementary Teacher

Items	M	SD	VI
1. Makes slight modifications in his goals to meet other people's needs	3.25		S
2. Adjusts his priorities to reach a resolution	3.25		S
3. Tries to find some ways or solution to the problem	3.75	0.23	A
4. Listens to others to find the best solution possible	3.65		A
5. Works efficiently to solve the problem immediately	3.60		A
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.50		A

The other aspects such as "Listens to others to find the best solution possible " has a mean of 3.65 with a verbal interpretation of "Always" and "works efficiently to solve the problem immediately" has a mean of 3.60 with a verbal interpretation of "Always." The data indicate that Elementary Teachers believed that Problem Solving used as one of the strategies/skills of Managers to have conflict resolution within the organization. It further connotes a standard deviation of 0.23 by the respondents. According to Crawford (2014), in his findings, the relationship between head teachers and teachers will be considered successful if it based on fair treatment and mutual trust. If there is a lack of justice, then this may lead to a weakness in confidence concerning the head teacher. It is essential that a teacher feels confident in the head teacher's ability, respects his abilities, and has an appreciation for his achievements.

As presented in Table 8 the item "Tries to find some ways or solution to the problem" has the highest mean of 3.55 with a verbal interpretation of "Always" and "Listens to others to find the best solution possible" has the lowest

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mean of 3.20 with a verbal interpretation of "Seldom".

Table 8 Extent of conflict resolution strategies/skills of the managers in terms of Problem Solving as perceived by the Secondary Teacher

Items	M	SD	VI
1. Makes slight modifications in his goals to meet other people's needs	3.30		SO
2. Adjusts his priorities to reach a resolution	3.50		A
3. Tries to find some ways or solution to the problem	3.55	0.23	A
4. Listens to others to find the best solution possible	3.20		SO
5. Works efficiently to solve the problem immediately	3.35		SO
Gen. Weighted Mean	3.38		SO

One of the most strategies/skills of the managers in terms of problem solving "Adjusts his priorities to reach a resolution" has the mean of 3.50 with a verbal interpretation of "Always". The other aspects such as "Makes slight modifications in his goals to meet other people's needs " has a mean of 3.30 with a verbal interpretation of "Seldom" and "works efficiently to solve the problem immediately" has a mean of 3.35 with a verbal interpretation of "Seldom". The data indicate that Secondary Teachers believed that Problem Solving used as one of the strategies/skills of Managers to have conflict resolution within the organization. This further connotes a standard deviation of 0.23 by the respondents. Conflict is a common social phenomenon which occurs in human society of which the school is part of it. In a secondary school system, the principal is the head of the institution. Principal and other managers while performing their duties, may find themselves stepping into the shoes of their subjects, which lead to conflict. Kenan (2013) conflicts are normal in any organization, because people have different opinions, while some individuals cannot accept other people different opinion which leads to conflict.

2.2 in terms of Compromising

Table 9. The extent of conflict resolution strategies/skills of the managers in terms of Compromising as perceived by the Elementary Teachers

Items	M	SD	VI
1. Cooperates and helps when someone else thinks they have a good idea	3.50	0.06	A
2. Proposes a middle ground when viewpoints are opposed	3.50		A
3. Looks for a mutually satisfactory solution	3.45		SO
4. Cooperates with others and accept ideas/opinions	3.45		SO
5. Meets other people half-way.	3.35		SO
Gen. Weighted Mean	**3.45**	**0.06**	**SO**

As presented in Table 9 concerning "Cooperates and helps when someone else thinks they have a good idea" and " Proposes a middle ground when viewpoints are opposed" has the highest mean of 3.50 with a verbal interpretation of "Always" and "Meets other people in halfway has the lowest mean of 3.35 with a verbal interpretation of Sometimes. The aspects of Compromising as one of the conflict resolution strategies/skills of Managers with the highest and lowest mean ratings as well as other aspects show an overall average of 3.45 with a verbal interpretation of Sometimes. The data indicate that Elementary Teachers believed that Compromising used as one of the strategies/skills of Managers to have conflict resolution within the organization. This further connotes a standard deviation of 0.06 by the respondents which means that they have a commonality in responding to the item given. Quinn et al. (2013) find that mediation strategies can lead to the formulation of successful short-term outcomes, especially when an intrusive strategy is chosen. Unfortunately, the same strategy has shown little ability towards resolutions in long-term stability.

Table 10. The extent of Conflict Resolution strategies/skills of the managers in terms of

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Compromising as perceived by the Secondary Teachers

Items	M	SD	VI
1. Cooperates and helps when someone else thinks they have a	3.50	0.06	A
2. good idea			
3. Proposes a middle ground when viewpoints are opposed	3.50		A
4. Looks for a mutually satisfactory solution	3.45		SO
5. Cooperates with others and accept ideas/opinions	3.45		SO
6. Meets other people half-way.	3.35		SO
Gen. Weighted Mean	**3.45**	**0.06**	**SO**

Table 10 shows the data concerning "Cooperates and helps when someone else thinks they have a good idea and Proposes a middle ground when viewpoints are opposed" has the highest mean of 3.50 with a verbal interpretation of "Always" and Meets other people in halfway" has the lowest mean of 3.35 with a verbal interpretation of "Sometimes." The aspect of Compromising as one of the conflict resolution strategies/skills of Managers with the highest and lowest mean ratings as well as other aspects show an overall average of 3.45 with a verbal interpretation of Sometimes. The data indicate that Secondary Teachers believed that Compromising is used as one of the strategies/skills of Managers to have conflict resolution within the organization. It further connotes a standard deviation of 0.06 by the respondents, which means that they have a commonality in responding to the item given. The findings validate the study of Owsiak (2014) as he explores the different forms of third-party conflict management strategies. The author has consolidated the concept of conflict management into five broad categories including verbal, mediation, legal, administrative and peace operations.

2.3 in terms of Forcing

As presented in Table 11 concerning "Stands on the agreement and decision made" and Always" and "Imposes authority with conviction" has the highest mean of 3.55 with a

verbal interpretation of "Always" and "Agrees early on rather than argue about a point" has the lowest mean of 3.35 with a verbal interpretation of "Sometimes." The aspects of Forcing as one of the conflict resolution strategies/skills of managers with the highest and lowest mean ratings as well as other aspects show an overall average of 3.30 with a verbal interpretation of "Sometimes."

Table 11. The extent of Conflict Resolution strategies/skills of the managers in terms of Forcing as perceived by the Elementary Teachers

Items	M	SD	VI
1. Stands on the agreement and decision made.	3.55	0.08	A
2. Agrees early on rather than argue about a point	3.35		SO
3. Put aside any controversial aspect of an issue.	3.45		SO
4. Imposes authority with conviction.	3.55		A
5. Implements rules and regulations forcibly and strictly.	3.45		SO
Gen. Weighted Mean	**3.30**	**0.08**	**SO**

The data indicate that Elementary Teachers believed that Forcing as one of the strategies/skills of managers to have conflict resolution within an organization. It further connotes a standard deviation of 0.08 by the respondents, which means that they have a commonality in responding to the item given. Rahim (2011), argues that organizational conflict management, to be effective, should take into consideration specific criteria such as organizational learning and effectiveness, needs of stakeholders, and ethics. Moreover, conflict management strategy should minimize affective conflicts at various levels, attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict, and select and use appropriate conflict management strategies. Likewise, Aritzeta et al. (2011), argues that team roles play a big part when it comes to which way a team member approaches a conflict. It is claimed that a team role related to control behavior is more likely to turn to a dominating conflict management approach. As a consequence, team roles that accept lesser

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control are connected to a more avoiding passive approach.

Table 12. The extent of Conflict Resolution strategies/skills of the managers in terms of Forcing as perceived by the Secondary Teachers

Items	M	SD	VI
1. Stands on the agreement and decision made.	3.50	0.14	A
2. Agrees early on rather than argue about a point	3.30		SO
3. Put aside any controversial aspect of an issue.	3.35		SO
4. Imposes authority with conviction.	3.15		SO
5. Implements rules and regulations forcibly and strictly.	3.20		SO
Gen. Weighted Mean	**3.47**	**0.14**	**SO**

As presented in Table 12 concerning "Stands on the agreement and decision made" has the highest mean of 3.50 with a verbal interpretation of "Always" and "Imposes authority with conviction" has the lowest mean of 3.15 with a verbal interpretation of "Sometimes." The aspects of Forcing as one of the conflict resolution strategies/skills of managers with the highest and lowest mean ratings as well as other aspects show an overall average of 3.47 with a verbal interpretation of "Sometimes." The data indicate that Secondary Teachers believed that Forcing was used as one of the strategies/skills of managers to have conflict resolution within an organization. It further connotes a standard deviation of 0.14 by the respondents, which means that they have a commonality in responding to the item given. Lazarus (2014) recommended that conflict in whatever level should not be ignored but should be effectively managed for better employees' productivity in the workplace. Workers at all level should be trained and given the right behavioral orientation on how to handle conflict.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

The output of this study is the developed Verbal Communication Skills Enhancement and Conflict Management Program (VCSE- CMP). It was an action plan that composed of objectives, time frame, topics/ activities, persons involved, and the expected outcome or key results for a seminar workshop. The main objective of the output was to tackles all the main topics with regards to verbal communication skills enhancement and conflict management program. It was a seminar-workshop for five (5) days for teachers and school head and which headed by SDO program Implementers. The output for each day in seminar-workshop will be expected from the participants to comply with creating a module for the VCSE- CMP.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The perception of all respondents on the verbal communication skills of School Managers in the Division of Rizal was significantly visible after assessing the respondent's perception.
2. Both Elementary and Secondary Teacher respondents equally consider the importance of conflict strategies resolution in all aspect for the success of the school system; thus, School Managers manifest these conflict resolution strategies in sustaining a good, transparent, ethical and accountable organization.
3. All aspects of the communication skills and conflict strategy resolutions of School Managers serve as very influential for the stakeholders to share governance in managing the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. The School Managers should maintain exhibiting good communication skills to stimulate their teachers' support in helping them attain the vision, mission, and goals of the school. They should continuously

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communicate their vision to all stakeholders for them to understand their respective roles as they get involved in school affairs.

2. The School Managers should continue to strengthen the organization by identifying conflict resolution among its internal and external stakeholders for them to exercise or prove managerial and leadership skills to solve problems in the organization.

3. To encourage more the stakeholders to perform well, the school managers should encourage, motivate, inspire, and praise them higher as a recognition of their contribution to the attainment of the school goals.

4. The output of the study, a proposed developed action plan, which is based scientifically on its findings, could be utilized in the Division of Rizal.

5. This study could be utilized as baseline data for future studies.

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P – ISSN 2651 - 7701 | E – ISSN 2651 – 771X | www.ioer-imrj.com
Proceeding of the International Conference on Business and Technology (ICBT) 09-10 May 2019, Batangas City, Philippines
GARCIA, D.F., *School Managers' Verbal Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution Strategies, pp.20 - 29*

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