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Commentary

The 3cs- CULTURE- CONFLICT- CHANGE, Educational Organizations Downfall If Unaddressed: A Reflective Paper

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Abstract

This reflective paper argues that culture, conflict, and change (the "3Cs") shape educational organizations' success. It offers examples and leadership practices to diagnose issues and steer constructive transformation.

Keywords:
Culture; Conflict; Change

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Introduction

Any educational organization, having its main goal as success should only envision the 3Cs, culture, conflict and change working harmoniously and managed effectively; without such there could be educational organizational collapse, losses, downfall, or failure [1], [2], [3], [4], [5].

The culture within the organization is linked to the success or failure of any educational organization; significantly seen in the employee's motivational stance to the sustained efficiency and performance for continued focused success [2], [5], [6]. Culture has to be embedded within educational organizations for employees and management to act in accordance to core values for maintaining organizational success [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. If the culture is positive, it means that the objective of the organization is accepted, practiced, supported by all stakeholders with especially the immediate employees highly motivated and empowered to consistently achieve success [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6].

Conflicts result most times because of differences in personalities, management types and styles, interest, unsatisfaction, mis-interruption of communicated messages and more [7], [8], [9]. Conflicts are likely to happen when there are differences among individuals' ability to agree on norms, ideals, beliefs, values or change [8], [10]. As such, even within educational organizations, people have different views and therefore conflicts are likely to arise; when different employees work and converse together, so at some point in time, conflict resolution will be necessary [7], [8], [9]. If conflicts are resolved easily and readily as issues arise, this proves to be more beneficial for school systems to grow harmoniously; positive resolution to conflicts, with mediation or negotiation, effective communication, compromise and or collaboration, supports such actions towards a resolution or agreement [7], [8], [11], [12].

Change can be a good thing when everyone wants the change. With change likely to occur educational organizations need actions and activities that will improve procedure, processes, systems and structure for greater functioning capacity [6], [7], [8], [9]. Change has never been intended to create blocks within school systems, nor confrontation or ineptitude, but it does because for many persons, it is difficult to accept change as being a normal part of life and reality [6], [7], [8], [9]. Change within school systems must be considered with different factors such as perception; change initiation, and communication to effectively guide the implementation and sustain change [3], [13], [14], [15]. Change should therefore be carefully executed to ensure success through buy-in and active participation from stakeholders, monitoring and measuring the effectiveness to determine the risk and challenges associated [6], [9], [16].

Positional Stance

A positive purposeful and productive educational organization appears to be one that has effective cultural precedence, conflicts resolved and change implemented effectively. The 3Cs culture, conflict and change appear to be strongly linked to the success or failure of an effective and efficient capacity and growth in the education systems and structure being provided or the lack thereof [1], [2], [3], [6], [16].

Culture within organizations is one that enables success because it is displayed in the shared beliefs, values, attitudes, experiences, expectations, philosophy, and practices of the employees [1], [2], [3], [6], [16]. Culture is aligned to the success or failure within school organizations; positioning to maintain and support the sustained efficiency and performance for continued focused success is therefore surrounded by sustained motivation [1], [2], [5], [5], [6], [9]. Culture has to be engraved in the attitude and actions of employees within school systems and structure with leadership responding deliberately to fulfilling the core values for success [1], [2], [3], [4], [6], [9]. If the culture is positive, it means that the values, philosophy along with a strong strategic plan is responsive to practice; that is supported by employees being highly motivated and empowered to maintain success [1], [2], [3], [4], [6], [9].

Conflicts are an incompatible opposition of an interactive process, which creates disagreement, or mental struggle about a process, issue, activity and or task [7], [8], [17]. Conflicts are likely to happen because employers and employees' personalities differ and an individual's ability to agree on norms, ideals, beliefs, values or change will also differ [7], [8], [10], [17]. This could lead to destructive patterns in communication, and non-acceptance of a resolution or disagreement(s) [7], [8], [12], [17]. Within school organizations, conflicts that arise will need solution(s) but if a solution is not forthcoming because of personal views or closed point (s) of view (s) surrounding the issues of conflict this can

be devastating [7], [8], [11], [12]. Without acceptance of people and their views, even if effective communication is utilized, with interactive processes of negotiation and mediation, a strong positive resolution or agreement cannot be implemented [7], [8], [11], [12]. Individuals must want to resolve a conflict and within such supportive means, enabled through the method of applying skills related to communication, negotiation and mediation, a strong positive resolution or agreement is always possible [7], [8], [11], [12].

Change is inevitable but is only successful based on the organization's approach and effectiveness to provide positive outcomes for organizational success [6], [16]. Change takes time and with new developments in school organizations there must be strong support for the change to be effective and remain sustained for success [3], [13], [14]. Change comes through transformation and those being impacted by it must consider different factors like perceptions; change initiation, communication and actions to guide the process, towards sustained change [13], [15]. Nonetheless, change can only be successful if the plans executed by educational organizations are seen as beneficial and leading to the continued building of a strong positive school systems' capacity [3], [6], [9], [14]. All stakeholders should be fully engaged and receive sufficient knowledge on the change which will allow the new change action to be enacted efficiently and effectively [3], [6], [9], [14]. Implementing change is realized and sustained when school administrators support teachers simply by listening and then supporting quality professional development, utilizing the best talents, empowering and enabling new leadership development and gaining buy-in [1], [3], [6], [9], [13], [14]. School administrators who focus on strong collaboration and effective judgment of purpose, elicit feedback to enable positive school reform and improved outcomes; these are the thriving successful educational systems [1], [3], [6], [9], [13], [14].

Pointedly the 3Cs, culture, conflict and change must be actively managed to secure or prevent failures or the downfalls of educational organizations. If the 3Cs, culture, conflict and change if not effectively addressed or managed within school systems this could lead to chaos and closure being inevitable. Therefore, the purpose driven educational organization's capacity is important to the success or failure it ascribes to [2], [5], [6].

Culture: Fix it or Fail

School organizations that work on their culture consciously and intentionally are apparently the best to secure success. Without the assertive attention to culture that is focused on the right values, attitudes, expectations, philosophy, and practices to inform the actions of employees, organizations stand to have a downfall [1], [2], [3], [6], [16]. Having a positive organizational culture will consciously and intentionally improve evaluation for the future [4], [5], [18].

Cultural positioning and dependent operations therefore require that messages are communicated effectively among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve organizational goals [2], [4], [5], [18]. Although a leader will at some point need to use an authoritative direction on some matters, it is a still an effective communication, with strong leadership abilities, skills and styles that are important to ensure the right level of control, consideration, support, direction, and recognition, when used appropriately [2], [5].

Culture within school organizations should also be directly aligned to fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization; through a blend of sound management, strong governance, and a persistent rededication to assessing and achieving results this should be the main construct of building and maintaining good school management and leadership capacity [2], [4], [5]. Culture can therefore be closely monitored through the applied operational or strategic plan aligned to the management activities for school organizations, and as such, all organizations should be guided by goals, core values of diversity, innovation, and sustainability, continuously improve and reposition if necessary, to maintain a strong organizational capacity within schools [2], [4], [5].

An educational organization's culture can be strengthened and supported by any leadership skills that bring about success [2], [5]. Group empowerment session, workshops, team-building exercises, seminars on communication at all levels should be constantly worked on, to strengthen school norms, values and morale, which will lead to trust and honesty, strong integrity and success [4], [5], [18]. Motivation, ethical behaviour and ensuring policies and procedures are implemented and practiced will

be strengthened when the organizational culture is aimed at ensuring success at every level [4], [5], [18]. Appraisals, encouragement and empowerment given for employees to use for creativity and innovation will motivate employees to success and will allow for ethical decision-making, positive opportunities, and improved evaluations or sustained success in the future [4], [18].

An embraced culture of the school's procedures, processes, and programmes should therefore ensure that the organization is supported by school administrators who have the best leadership skills, aimed at bringing about and or is always focused on organizational success [2], [6], [9]. School administrators within this context of culture are leaders who therefore utilize power effectively, because it can produce positive influence, effectiveness, greater efficiency, and stronger motivation of the employees, leading to even greater success for school systems [1], [2], [3], [6], [16].

Culture must be managed with excellent leadership skills and styles and these skills should be explored and utilized with consideration aimed at building the best work culture, with support, direction, and recognition, be used appropriately, even from among stakeholders [2], [4], [5], [18], [19]. School administrators are at the highest tier of leadership and as such it is paramount that they use authority correctly but when it is allowed to be shared by other leaders in training, it also gains and strengthens the organizations growth prospects and achievements [1], [2], [3], [6], [16]. School administrators who are positive leaders are those who ensure positive work cultures exist, capitalize on good management and governance to ensure success, periodically review assessment targets with strategic directions, continuously articulate and show commitment to the mission, vision, and core values of the organization [1], [2], [3], [6], [9], [16].

The culture of the educational organizational setting or workplace sets the tone for being empowered through affiliation, but even combined with authority, it causes employees to become more results-driven and focused on attaining success, building confidence and competence, leadership skills become greater improved, commitment and work ethics sustained [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. Educational organizations that focus on motivation can foster relationships that gain strong affiliation and the interaction and partnerships gained, will lead to a combination of effective working characteristics that gain success [1], [2], [3], [6], [16]. This affiliation type of motivation produces cordiality, and regard for people is possessed as objective, causing teamwork to be enhanced, relationships to be more meaningful and achievement of goals realized [1], [2], [3], [5], [6].

Conflict: Fix it or Fail

Conflicts unresolved can lead to poor work performance and job satisfaction, hindering success, but more so the educational organizations' mission and vision, diversity, culture and goals being affected [7], [9].

The primary goals of conflict resolution are preventing escalation of the conflict, disarming any problem of violence erupting, safeguarding safety, encouraging peaceful discussions on differences, but most importantly, reaching the best solution possible regarding the issue or conflicting situation [7], [10], [12]. When a resolution is reached it should be an agreed position for all interested parties involved [7]. It therefore appears that conflicts are best resolved when the persons affected are integral in finding the solution. Conflict resolution is therefore focused on attaining a peaceful solution to a disagreement or problem using the best course of action through negotiation [7], [12]. Gaining a strong positive resolution to conflicts can be achieved when good mediation or negotiation is used with effective communication, compromise and collaboration, to prevent destructive patterns, and non-acceptance of a resolution or agreement [2], [7], [8], [9].

An assignment completed for a Master of Educational Leadership degree, led to the development of a Personalized Theory developed for Conflict Resolution coined the Triple D3 Effect- D1-Dissect, D2 Determine, D3-Decision, the Conflict: In creating a theory to conflict resolution, one must first be willing to positively address the situation that is presented.

D1-Dissect the Conflict- Try to determine if either party sees what the issue, crisis, area of conflict is about. One achieves this by Asking: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How? This will allow for the parties involved to both openly speak about their point(s) of view, which then allows for probing of the problem to be articulated to gain the facts. Repeating the different parts of the issues should be done for

ensuring accuracy. Dissecting the conflict is important for clearly identifying and then analyzing the problem. This will enable the facts of the surrounding issues of the conflict to become transparent and comprehended well.

D2-Determine whether the conflict is new or old or combined incidents. This is done by reviewing the relationships of the parties involved, asking when the problem first started, or what really happened for this conflict to happen in the present. This will further clarify the situation now in conflict; the situation at present could have been triggered from unresolved issues. A review will bring focus on the problem and not the person(s) involved. If the conflict is an old unresolved issue this could in fact be making the situation more intense. If it is new, then this can be easily defined and a solution reached. However, if an old conflict unresolved is added to a new one, then a greater challenge exists with potentially more difficulty for resolutions being arrived at. Additional time will be needed to dissect and then determine the real issues of the old and new conflict and or if the old conflict escalated the new conflict. At that point in time there will be need to look beyond the conflicting situation and focus for determining a real, perceived or potential problem based on how intense the situation is must be defined or described.

D3-Decision Made to Apply a Solution - Positively address the need to compromise and collaborate by starting with both parties calmly communicating their feelings. Patience must be exhibited as communicating will allow for this compromise and collaboration between the parties to mutually resolve the conflict. These expressed feelings by either party must be managed by asking both parties to commit in an open discussion not about the person but about the problem. Once this discussion has started, each party should be given equal and sufficient time to speak, which will eliminate biasness. Active listening is very important to this process, and should be directed through a calm, introspective, reflective discourse. Allow each party to first see the need to accept that there is a conflict and once this is known then Move ahead and have both parties work out the best possible solution agreed to or the solution being accepted. This is the point at which emphasis can be made again for the need to compromise and or collaboration. Most importantly, is the arrival at and acceptance of an agreement on the primary or most effective solution made together of implementation.

Researched approaches like mediation, negotiation, and life /social and personal skills are important to dealing with conflicts [20].

The application of mediation skills is important to conflict resolution and should be applied to conflict challenges within school systems [12], [20]. Based on research, control of conflict situations can be addressed using mediation to greatly achieve de-escalation of conflicts which could lead to violence [12], [20]. Mediation as an approach to managing conflicts allows for individual and or group solutions within referenced challenges with high conflict capacity and has been effective based on research [12], [20].

On the other hand, negotiation also being an approach utilized to manage conflict requires the training skills of a third party with very good communication skills and understanding [12], [20]. If adapted by leaders in organizations and other institutions this approach can be used in solving conflicts as it involves being able to comprehend the issues, feelings, needs and desires expressed on either side [12], [20]. Both conflicting sides are led into working together by finding the best solution, because in the negotiation the leader manages to empower the conflicting sides to not be concerned about winning, but rather focuses their attention to cooperating in making the best solution work to resolve the conflict [12], [20].

Additionally, one's application of life skills learned can assist in managing conflict resolution before it escalates into violence. Personal self-esteem/ self-management/self-control, anger management, coping skills with decision-making, and problem -solving all allow for a higher level of maturity that can be utilized as effective skills when dealing with conflict [12], [20]. Although violence is not addressed directly with individuals' learning life skills, it can prevent negative feelings from reaching to conflicts [12], [20]. When these skills along with social skills such as interpersonal and social interactions, respectful, honest, cooperative, and good communication are used in managing conflicts, good sense prevails in finding the best solutions to conflicts, even within educational organizations [12], [20].

Conflicts are likely to happen when there are differences among people. Gaining a good solution to resolving conflicts is the only goal to achieve a resolution.

Change: Fix it or Fail

Change can be successful when the organization's approach and effectiveness to any change involve all stakeholders and provide positive outcomes for organizational success [6], [16]. Change will be successful if there is transformation evidenced for those who will be impacted; however, the need to ensure that several factors such as perceptions; change initiation, communication guide the process towards implementing and sustaining the change is very important [13], [15]. School systems, programmes or the entire educational organization will require change at any level, and at some point, but this change should not take place or should not be implemented before there has been system evaluations completed to support the strategic direction with feedback; as stakeholders should give feedback and support, to ensure the change is successful [6], [16]. Organizations need to be aware of this and periodically seek meaningful insight to understand that change has to take place in a responsive manner and be resolved to prevent any organization's unsustainability and haphazardness [6], [16].

Stakeholders must be involved in organizational change, delivery systems and growth. One major way is for example, a bi-annual review meeting, involving all stakeholders, usually structured so stakeholders will understand policy, procedure, and or interest in the possible need for change, especially when the change directly affects them [1], [14], [21], [22]. Additionally, the purpose of engaging stakeholders is not just to enable policy effectiveness, but it is also to lead to community mobilisation and awareness, fostering collaboration, trust and continually building the organization's capacity [3], [23].

Understanding stakeholders and ensuring they are present to address the different perspectives they may have, related to or regarding all plans and activities, is a critical activity, and another way to have stakeholders engaged [1], [14], [21], [22]. Having leadership including senior managers giving guidance, direction and sharing evidence of success for the proposed change in a strategic improvement plan, can be another way to assist with engagement of stakeholders [1], [3,14], [21], [22]. Therefore, school administrators should be making the engagement of stakeholders a key part of the review of improvement plan, which will build relationships and gain active involvement; further indicating to stakeholders that they are important to the success of the organization [3], [14], [22], [23]. Change must therefore be aligned to the vision and mission so that the actions that are important towards sustained improvements for effective change processes being supported by the stakeholders to effect change successfully [13], [15], [24].

Change will not likely occur if there is resistance. This resistance towards change is usually from actions that block the change initiative and process because the change may be perceived as threatening [13], [15]. Educational organizations must therefore be aware that resistance is likely to occur when there is lack of communication, participation, and flexibility to the best change support and practice [13], [15]. When there is non-involvement of employees and other stakeholders, the vision of the organization is challenged with the focus towards improvement not readily accepted for the required change [13], [15], [24]. Participation in change is vital for success and critical to preventing resistance to change; communicating the change will further allow stakeholders to recognize their role in the design for the change needed [13], [15], [25]. Additionally, by ensuring that information and understanding thereof is carefully communicated is to have articulated at all levels and disseminated timely for buy-in of stakeholder engagement [1], [3].

Conclusion

The 3Cs, culture-conflict- change, need to be continually assessed if effective integrated success is to be sustained. The power that lies in the 3Cs, culture, conflict, change, is therefore combined phenomenal leadership strengths that enable the integration of these 3Cs. When effective school administration gives support during change initiatives, this is positive empowerment which allows employees not only to gain new skills; this ensures that the implemented change stays consistent and focuses on effective facilitation of change that will in turn influence positively other employees slow to accept the change or wanting to hinder the change [13], [15], [25].

The educational organizations that constantly work towards positive school culture are aligned to organizations embracing stakeholders through change management activities and managing conflicts as they arise [22], [23], [26]. All stakeholders require sufficient knowledge on the change and once communication is effectively delivered, will allow the new change action to become consistent and

effective, further supported with receptive collaboration and teamwork for building a stronger positive school culture [1], [3], [21], [22], [23], [26]. The 3Cs, culture, conflict and change should therefore be well guided by administration and as leaders they must understand that the 3Cs should be in constant view to readily adjust situations of instability linked to the culture, and or conflict and or the need for change [13], [15], [25]. A positive purposeful and productive school organization is therefore one that must have its culture, conflict and change processes managed effectively, by working consciously and intentionally on these 3Cs, culture, conflict, and change.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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