



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AT SCHOOL IN PANDEMIC TIMES

GESTÃO DE CONFLITOS NA ESCOLA EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA

GESTIÓN DE CONFLICTOS EN LA ESCUELA EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA

Fernanda Garcia Montoya Ribeiro CORREIA¹
José Anderson SANTOS CRUZ²

ABSTRACT: The pandemic, caused by COVID-19, has generated numerous structural changes in schools across the country. In order to understand which actions related to the conflicts arising from these changes were taken by the management team of a private school in the city of São José dos Campos, São Paulo, this qualitative research had as its methodological procedure the field study and the systematic review of the data. The corpus of this research is based on the evaluations of 28 teachers from different segments of the school, concerning the effects of this management. Through this investigation, it was found that, despite the moderate action on the part of managers in matters of conflict, when there was action, it led teachers to acquire improvement, both personal and professional, as well as their pedagogical practices, in more than 91% of cases. It is considered that it is important that educational institutions consider structuring and training a team of professionals who think of strategies for the resolution of conflicts that may arise in the school environment, with the objective of promoting the motivation of teamwork and a more positively productive environment.

KEYWORDS: Structural changes. Interpersonal relationships. Leadership.

RESUMO: A pandemia, causada pela COVID-19, gerou inúmeras mudanças de ordem estrutural nas escolas de todo o país. Com o objetivo de compreender quais ações relacionadas aos conflitos decorrentes destas mudanças foram realizadas pela equipe gestora de uma escola particular da cidade de São José dos Campos, interior de São Paulo, esta pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa teve como procedimento metodológico o estudo de campo e a revisão sistemática dos dados. O corpus desta pesquisa baseou-se nas avaliações de 28 professores dos diversos segmentos da escola, concernentes aos efeitos desta gestão. Por meio desta investigação, verificou-se que, apesar da atuação moderada por parte dos gestores nas questões de conflito, quando houve, levou os professores a adquirirem aperfeiçoamento, tanto de ordem pessoal, quanto profissional, bem como de suas práticas pedagógicas em mais de 91% dos casos. Considera-se importante que as instituições de ensino cogitem estruturar e

¹ Continuing Education Program in Economics and Business Management (PECEGE) (ESALQ/USP MBAs), Piracicaba – SP – Brazil. Student of specialization of the MBA course in School Management. Department of Science and Technology. Professor and coordinator of the Lato Sensu Graduate Program of the City College, São José dos Campos - SP. Master's student of the Professional Master's degree in Education, University of Taubaté - UNITAU. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4929-9678>. E-mail: femontoyacorreia@gmail.com

² Continuing Education Program in Economics and Business Management (PECEGE) (ESALQ/USP MBAs), Piracicaba – SP – Brazil. Associate Professor. PhD in School Education (FCLAr/UNESP). Ibero-American Education Editor - Bauru - SP - Brazil. Publisher. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5223-8078>. E-mail: andersoncruz.unesp@gmail.com



capacitar uma equipe de profissionais que pensem em estratégias para a resolução dos conflitos que possam vir a surgir no âmbito escolar, com o objetivo de promover a motivação do trabalho em equipe e um ambiente mais positivamente produtivo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Mudanças estruturais. Relações interpessoais. Liderança.*

RESUMEN: *La pandemia, causada por el COVID-19, ha generado numerosos cambios estructurales en las escuelas de todo el país. Con el objetivo de comprender qué acciones relacionadas con los conflictos derivados de estos cambios fueron realizadas por el equipo directivo de una escuela pública de la ciudad de São José dos Campos, interior de São Paulo, esta investigación de enfoque cualitativo tuvo como procedimiento metodológico el estudio de campo y la revisión sistemática de datos. El corpus de esta investigación se basa en las evaluaciones de 28 docentes de diferentes segmentos de la escuela, sobre los efectos de esta gestión. A través de esta investigación, se encontró que, a pesar del desempeño moderado por parte de los directivos en temas de conflicto, cuando hubo acción, llevó a los docentes a adquirir mejoría, tanto personal como profesional, así como sus prácticas pedagógicas, en más del 91% de los casos. Se considera importante que las instituciones educativas consideren estructurar y formar un equipo de profesionales que piensen en estrategias para la resolución de conflictos que puedan surgir en el ámbito escolar, con el objetivo de promover la motivación del trabajo en equipo y un ambiente más productivo y positivo.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Cambios estructurales. Relaciones interpersonales. Liderazgo.*

Introduction

In early 2020, the world faced a pandemic scenario caused by COVID-19. We were impacted in our daily lives by a series of emergency and restrictive measures, which involved, from the isolation of cases confirmed by the disease, to the prohibition of the movement of people on the streets of some cities that recorded higher rates of infected by the disease. Part of the public agencies responsible for health, especially at the municipal and state levels, guided the population to make use of homemade masks, constantly sanitize their hands and remain, as much as possible, at home. Such government authorities anticipated some measures for people to maintain social distancing, through travel restrictions, the closing of trades considered non-essential, closing public spaces of coexistence, control in public transport and even through the closure of schools and universities. These measures have been and, many of them, necessary for preserving people's health and, consequently, saving lives.

According to Schaefer *et al.* (2020), this anticipation of health actions in relation to the guidelines of the Federal Government was mainly due to two factors: the denial of the current





President of the Republic in treating the disease with due seriousness and the strong Brazilian federalism that allows governors to control the political agenda very much.

According to Aquino *et al.* (2020), the World Health Organization [WHO] declared a Public Health Emergency of International Importance on January 30, 2020 and March 11 of the same year, that is, less than two months later, it declared a state of pandemic. Social isolation, resulting from the pandemic, has brought to our society new challenges in several areas: in the economic area, in the health area, in the political area, among others, including in the area of education. According to Pasini *et al.* (2020), one of the first services to feel the effects of the changes was school education, originally offered in the face-to-face modality.

Teachers faced the need to relearn how to plan in the face of the new reality of reformulating their practices and methodologies, considering the distance, time, available resources and emotional burden involved in the context. For this, they had to overcome old habits of school culture from several previous generations (RUSCHEL *et al.*, 2020).

The resistance to changes that is intended to be implemented in companies, in addition to interpersonal relationships, also constitutes a great focus of conflict (BERG, 2012). Internal organizational changes require adaptation of the employees involved in the processes, so when we are caught up with a unique situation like this that was imposed on us by the pandemic, it is extremely important that there be in organizations and, especially in schools, an action of the management team, with as much assertiveness as possible and that leads the whole team to adjust to this new reality.

Therefore, it was observed the relationship experienced between teaching professionals and managers of a private school community, in the city of São José dos Campos, in the interior of São Paulo, who experienced moments of conflict during the 2020 school year, since all these emergency actions involving the school were carried out overnight and, thus, teachers, managers, students and families had to reorganize so that in a few days, the first remote activities were already happening and the damage to the students' education was minimized.

In view of this situation, an important question arose: How did the performance of the management team of this school influence the resolution of the conflicts that occurred with teachers due to the changes resulting from the pandemic?

In an attempt to obtain answers to this question, this study sought to establish a correlation between the performance of the management team of the researched educational institution and the results perceived by the teachers, regarding the solution of conflicts that occurred due to the pandemic.





Material and methods

This research was based on the theoretical references addressed in the training classes of the specialization course in School Management of the University of São Paulo [USP], of the Luiz de Queiroz School of Agriculture [ESALQ], whose themes addressed the problem of conflict management in organizations.

Among the most used works are: Berg (2012), McShane and Glinow (2013) and Pickering (2002), which deal clearly and thoroughly on the use of techniques, which aim to transform conflicts into positive results for organizations. In addition to the literary works, we used a systematic review, thus, scientific articles were selected that addressed the central theme of the research, obtained mainly through the electronic library: "Scientific Electronic Library Online [Scielo]", with a limitation of a period of no more than five years of publication, from 2017 to 2021.

The search for scientific articles was performed using the descriptor "Conflict *and* school" and 14 scientific articles were found, 2 of which were selected. Next, the descriptor "Management of conflicts and education" was used and 2 articles were found, 1 of which were selected. Following the search, we used the descriptor "Gare conflict and education", being found 10 articles and 2 selected. Finally, the descriptor "Pandemic and education" was used, 20 articles were found and 8 were selected for analysis. The main criterion used for the choice of the articles that were selected was that there was mention of an approach to the theme of school conflict management in the content of the abstract of the article.

According to the classification of Gerhardt and Silveira (2009), this research was conducted qualitatively, as it sought a detailed understanding of the structural changes that occurred in school in 2020. Regarding the purposes, it was characterized as descriptive-explanatory, because it exposed the results observed by the teachers regarding the performance of the management team, in relation to the conflicts that occurred, resulting from the changes generated by the pandemic.

Data collection was through a field search, performed through a questionnaire, applied on a *Google Forms* platform and supported by an individual consent form, sent by e-mail, duly authorized by the school board.

The researched school is located in the city of São José dos Campos, in the countryside of the State of São Paulo, is from the private sector and is a Christian confessional, whose main characteristics can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1 - Main Characteristics of the Researched School

Segment	Total Classes	Total students in the segment	Total teachers in the segment	Teachers in more than one segment
Early Childhood Education	3	34	6	6
Elementary School	23	575	28	6
Middle school	5	136	17	-
Total	31	745	51	6*

Source: Original search data

*Note: Total teachers working in Early Childhood Education and Elementary School simultaneously

The questionnaire was elaborated with four blocks of questions, with 6 closed grid questions, the first being multiple choice question and the last 5 single answer questions. The blocks of questions were subdivided as follows: 1. Description of the teaching area; 2. Teachers' perception of the performance of the management team in relation to the administration of the change process; 3. Research on the types of conflicts experienced by teachers; 4. Teachers' perception of the role of the management team in the management of conflicts, and in block 3, where the types of conflicts experienced are questioned, it was observed the need to establish the definition of conflict, according to McShane and Glinow (2013), so that the participants could respond with maximum clarity and assertiveness. The questions were presented as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Questionnaire applied to teachers of the school surveyed

Question 1	Multiple choice alternative
Identify, the actions that you consider to have been effectively performed by the management team in relation to the change process that occurred in 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define for the teaching staff, in detail the changes that should occur. • Listen to people who were directly involved in the process of change. • Promote meetings with all employees involved in the change process. • Train the team for the designated task(s).

Table 2. Questionnaire applied to teachers at the school surveyed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly and regularly monitor the processes of Changes. • Collect the expected results.
Questions 2 to 6	Single response alternatives
In 2020, with regard to your work at school and the changes that occurred after the pandemic, would you say that you experienced some kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never. • Sometimes. • Often.

of conflict? * Conflict: divergent or incompatible opinions, which do not necessarily imply hostility, although hostility may be part of the situation.

In your case, what would you say was the most frequent type of conflict that occurred in the 2020 school year?

- Personal: Conflict within, personal and internal values. It is related to the way the individual behaves in situations.
- Interpersonal: It occurs between individuals who relate in some way, whether by force of work, or in private life.
- Organizational: Changes and new adjustments to new realities, organizational restructuring, limited resources of space, money, time and employees, clash between goals and objectives.

At some point, was there a need for an intervenor designated by the management team, that is, an impartial person, to help you in solving your conflict(s)?

- Never.
- Sometimes.
- Most of the time.

In your case, considering the interventions performed, indicate which conflict resolution characteristic you consider to have been more prevalent.

- Negotiation: The parties to the conflict talk until an agreement is reached.
- Mediation: The parties expose their views and an interlocutor assists until they make a decision or reach an agreement.
- Arbitration: When an external individual hears the parties and makes the final decision of the terms of the agreement.

Would you say that, among the conflicting situations you experienced in 2020 at school, those that were mediated through someone's help had a positive result, that is, resulted in some kind of personal, interpersonal or organizational improvement?

- Never.
- Not many times.
- Most of the time.
- Always.

Source: Original search data

The research sample was intentionally chosen and performed with teachers from all segments of the school, according to Table 3 below.



Table 3 - Teachers participating in the survey by segment

Educational segment	Total teachers of the institution	Total teachers' respondents	% of respondents of the total number of teachers in the segment	% of total respondents
Early Childhood Education	6	4	66,6	14,3
Elementary School	28	13	46,4	46,5
Middle school	17	6	35,3	21,4
Several	6	5	83,4	17,8
Total	57	28	-	100

Source: Original search data

All teachers from the school surveyed, from Early Childhood Education, Elementary School and High School, were invited to participate in the research, which took place between April 26 and May 3, 2021. Of the 41 teachers able to participate, in the first moment, 03 professionals were approached to test the questionnaires, who served as a pilot only to improve the data collection script and were not included in the results. Of the invited teachers, 28 answered the questionnaire, with the restriction of the research being the number of participants.

The 13 teachers were asked not to participate in the research, the reason why they decided not to participate. Among other reasons, the main one mentioned by teachers was the lack of availability of time due to overwork.

Regarding data processing, the research was characterized by content analysis, which, according to Gerhardt and Silveira (2009), aims to obtain indicators that allow the inference of knowledge, through techniques of analysis of communications, through systematic and objective knowledge and that describe the contents of the messages, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The analysis of the content of this research was performed according to criteria established by Vergara (2015), that is, commencing the results obtained in the field research with the theories that supported the investigation, formulating conclusions and, finally, producing the research report.





Results and discussion

Pandemic, structural changes and conflicts

From the first information released by the WHO about the numerous cases of pneumonia that occurred in Wuhan city, China, on December 31, 2019 to March 11, 2020, when the world encountered a pandemic situation (COVID-19), it took just over two months, so that, then, all individuals were affected in their daily lives by the numerous emergency and necessary transformations that occurred (PAHO, 2021).

Faced with this deeply challenging situation, several sectors of our society, including education professionals, were forced to comply with a social isolation for the health security of students, family members and employees.

At first, with great uncertainties, managers faced the need to restructure, on an emergency basis, the processes by which teaching was being carried out. Schools and universities were closed and for some time, many were left without classes, albeit remotely, reaching approximately 90% of students worldwide (UNESCO, 2020).

As the days passed and no possibility of resuming classes in the previous way was envisioned, remote education, which had previously been established on an emergency basis, came to be considered in the medium and long term. Teachers were adapting to the use of digital communication and information technologies that were increasingly part of the teaching and learning processes.

COVID-19 revealed both new possibilities and some weaknesses already existing in the school universe, especially with regard to vulnerable education systems, established even before the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020).

There is no doubt that this whole health crisis has greatly affected the educational system of our country, because it brought with it the need for ruptures and profound structural changes, without, for this, pedagogical teams having reasonable time to plan. Thus, this research stopped to investigate the result of the management carried out on conflicts that were established in the school, in the light of the impressions of the faculty during the year 2020.





Understanding conflict

When we seek an etymological definition about conflict, we find that conflict originates from the *Latin conflictus* of the verb *conflictare*, which turns out to be a shock, a clash, combat or struggle. We also see, in some scientific writings, that the conflict was seen for a long time as a pejorative factor in the organizational environment, because, most of the time, it ended up impairing the harmony of the team and compromising the productivity of the organization (MCSHANE; GLINOW, 2013).

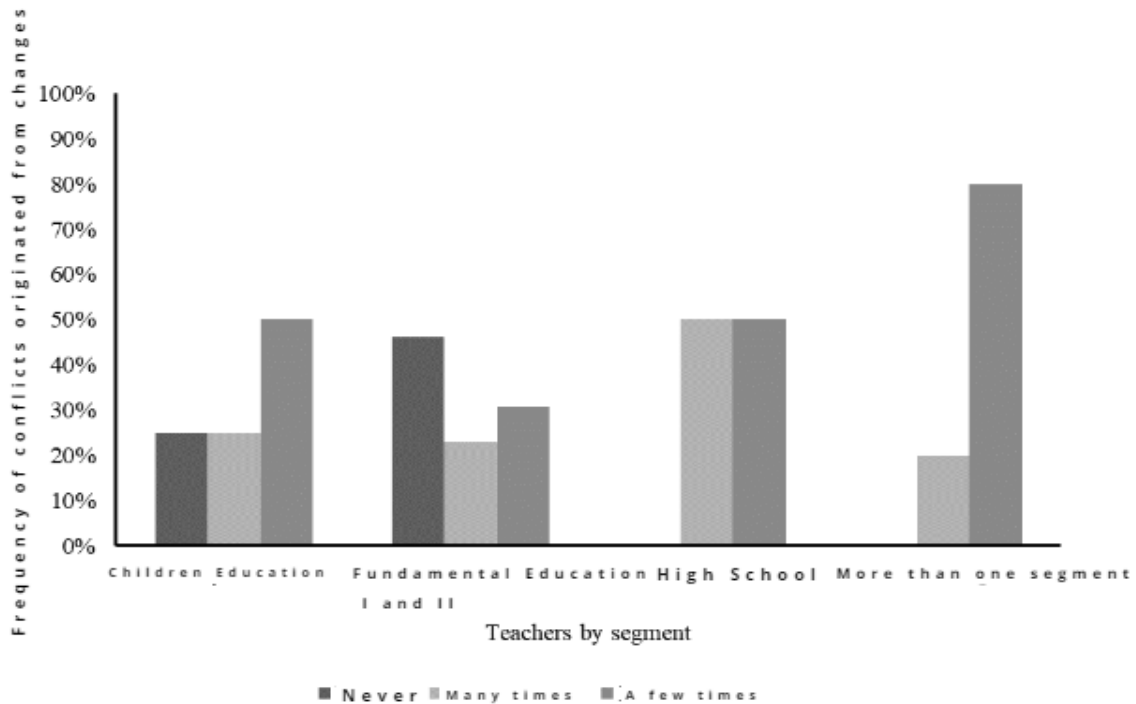
There is no escape from the fact that conflicts will eventually arise, as they are part of human relations (CHRISPINO, 2007). Where there are people, consequently, there will be conflict, because people are unique and have different points of view. Opinions clash and conflicts come to the fore at the most diverse levels of organizations.

According to Berg (2012, p. 127), many may be the factors that trigger conflicts in organizations, such as insecurity in new and challenging situations, when they require changes of the known and dominated, for the insertion of the new and incognito, which the individual does not yet have the ability to perform. Another factor that can generate conflict is discomfort and tension at the beginning of the change process, because even if the employee has been trained, it may take some time to get used to the new task. Often, psychological blockage can also be conflicting and cause deep demotivation.

Based on the questionnaire of the survey conducted, teachers were asked if, in 2020, they experienced some type of conflict, as a consequence of the changes that occurred at school. It was found that: 75% of early childhood education teachers, 54% of elementary school, 100% of high school and 100% of teachers working in more than one segment, i.e., the vast majority, varying the frequency of each response, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Frequency of conflicts experienced by teachers in 2020, by segment



Source: Original search results

During many years of publications on conflict management in organizations, there was consensus that conflicts were always negative and should be avoided as much as possible. For André (2020), there is a type of thought idealized by the parties involved that conflict is something harmful.

For the author, currently, this conception is considered erroneous, since situations of conflict in organizations can boost thinking, cause significant changes in the way we learn things, can lead societies to develop through different points of view and help in choosing more efficient solutions in any type of situation.

There are, according to MacShane and Glinow (2013), positive results in relation to organizational conflicts, such as: improvement in decision-making, favoring debate, driving people to better evaluate alternatives, managing productive reasoning and improving creativity, making employees more adaptable and generating greater harmony between teams.

What can positively or negatively impact the work routine, as well as the results obtained, is the treatment that occurs, both by the parties involved, as well as by the managers, in the administration and management of these conflicts.



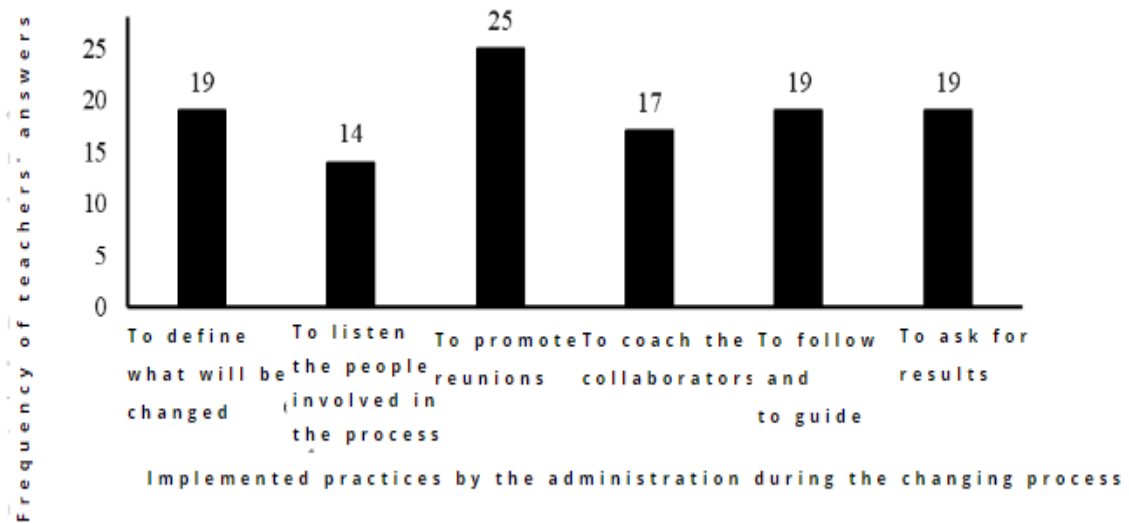
Berg (2012), suggests some steps that can be taken to minimize the negative impacts of changes in institutions: plan changes well, engage leaders and key people in the process, promote meetings whenever necessary, train employees for the tasks they should perform, monitor and guide employees throughout the process and collect the expected results.

The level of assertiveness of the school management team was investigated in relation to the administration of the changes that occurred during the pandemic, asking the teachers about what actions they observed that the management team had performed during the implementation of these changes. Among the answers obtained, it was found that the most performed action by the management team was to promote meetings with the teachers. The action less pointed out by the teachers was to listen to the people involved in the process of change.

In view of these notes observed in the research, it was noted that there was an opposition of intentions made by the school management, because it is assumed that the meetings should, among other things, serve to promote dialogue and give voice to teachers. Ferreira e Silva (2021) points out that, during the political measures adopted in the pandemic, teachers could not give their opinions and were not even heard. In this process, in which structural changes have directly affected the teaching, it would be essential that those who are at the forefront of education could feel that their voice has value and their notes have been considered judiciously regarding decision-making. The frequency of the notes made by the teachers in the survey questionnaire can be observed in Figure 2.



Figure 2 - Teachers' perception of the measures taken by managers in relation to structural changes in 2020



Source: Original search results

Conflict types

There are numerous publications that seek to categorize the types of conflict that occur within organizations. For McShane and Glinow (2013), there are two types of conflict: constructive, which is when people focus on solving the problem and relationship conflict, which is one where people focus on each other's attitudes and who originated the problem.

For Pickering (2002) there are three types of conflict: internal conflict, which is the difference between what the person says and what the person does; the interpersonal, which is what arises between individuals and; the conflict within a group, which is what occurs in organizations, for example.

This research was based on the three types of conflict categorized by Berg (2012), namely: personal, interpersonal and organizational conflicts.





Personal conflicts

Personal conflict is one that can lead the individual to certain states of stress and friction (BARBOSA; LENCASTRE, 2019), because it is something internal of the thoughts and attitudes of each person with one's own. It sets the disparity between what you think and what you do or what you say. Often, the individual knows that he must, out of necessity or responsibility, act in a certain way, but his internal conflicts do not allow him to do the right thing.

Interpersonal conflicts

When one or both parties involved in the conflict realize the situation of incompatibility of statements or actions in which they are involved, the conflict process begins (McShane and Glinow, 2013) Generally, these perceptions are related to the field of emotions, so they directly affect the behavior of one party in relation to the other.

Organizational conflicts

In addition to interpersonal conflicts, another major source of conflict is "structural changes", which include both changes in functions and positions, as well as changes in which new technologies are introduced and changes in the processes of work production (BERG, 2012). For the author, conflicts often arise as a result of external dynamics, which imply changes necessary for the maintenance of the very existence of organizations. These changes in organizational restructuring can occur, for example, by new government policies, the emergence of new competitors, changing customer habits, globalization, regional and global crises, the need for the use of new technologies, new laws, etc.

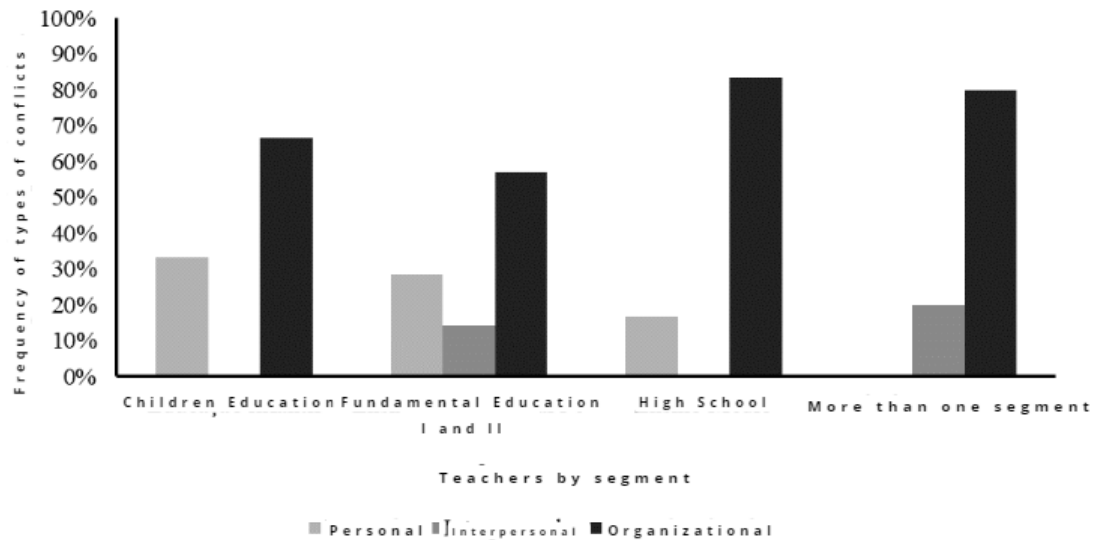
With the advent of the pandemic in 2020 and, due to the technological changes that occurred at school for remote teaching to be implemented and students' learning to be guaranteed, the teachers surveyed pointed out that most of the conflicts experienced by them were organizational. Of the teachers who stated that they experienced conflicts in 2020, those who stated that they had interpersonal conflicts were: 14% of elementary school and 20% of teachers who teach in more than one segment. Those who stated that they had personal conflicts were: 33% of Early Childhood Education, 29% of elementary school, no respondent of high





school teachers and 20% of teachers who teach in more than one segment, according to Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Types of conflict experienced by teachers of each school follow-up



Source: Original search results

Interaction of the management team in conflicts

Managing conflicts, according to Berg (2012), is the action that consists of leading both parties to a satisfactory outcome, through the choice of the most appropriate strategies, considering and respecting all arguments.

Therefore, with regard to the school context, conflict management, assisted by the management team, has the function of leading the subjects involved in the process, reaching a level of improvement of both personal and professional order, as well as optimizing school practices.

When analyzing the role of school management in times of pandemic, Freire (2021) describes it as a strategic activity, as it demands efforts aimed at ensuring the learning of all students. It also highlights three important relational axes, which should be considered in relation to the work of the school in times of crises and changes: 1. From school with the family; 2. From school with students; 3. School management with teachers. This last axis configures object of this search.



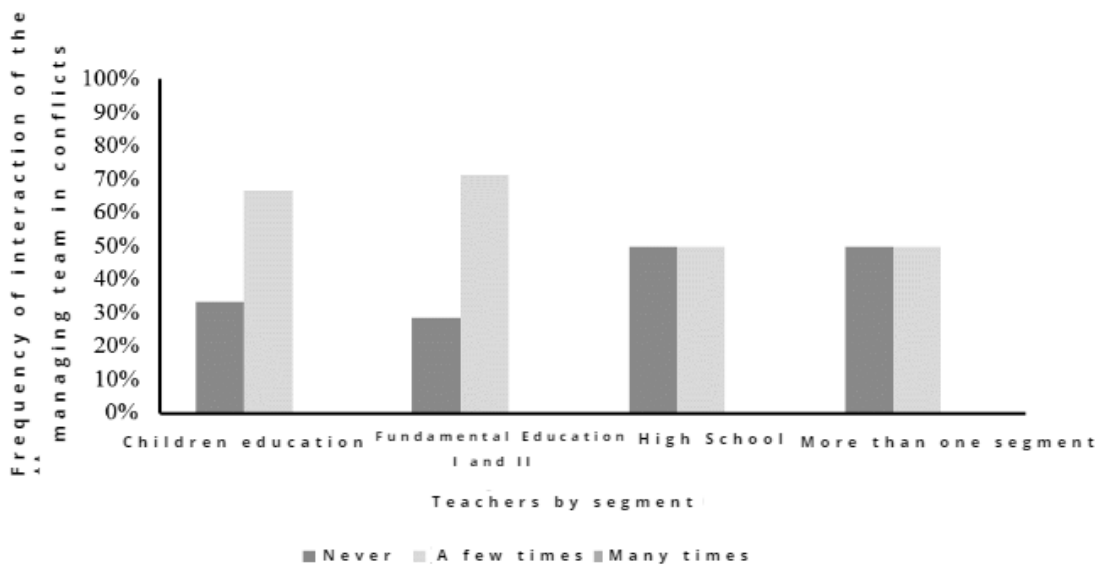


We observed in the previous item that more than 71% of the total conflicts that occurred in 2020 at school, as pointed out by the teachers who participated in this research, were organizational, resulting from structural changes that occurred due to the need for social isolation, imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was also verified that none of the respondents reported having counted "many times" with the intervention of a third party, to help them manage their conflicts. This demonstrated moderate performance of managers, at a crucial moment for the implementation of the necessary structural changes and so that remote education could be replacing classroom classes, while social isolation lasted.

This signaling configures a first point towards the formulation of hypotheses related to management practices that occurred in 2020 at school. It can be verified that, in most of the conflicts that occurred, there was little or no performance of school management, according to Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Frequency of the intervention of the management team in the conflicts of teachers



Source: Original search results





Management team's approach to conflicts that have occurred

There are numerous publications, both of scientific articles and literary works, which present conflict resolution strategies and, the vast majority, focus on conflict resolution by the people directly involved in the problem themselves.

This research aimed to focus on the resolution of conflicts involving a third neutral individual, able to assist the conflicting parties when the problem reaches a stage in which it is no longer possible to solve without help, or even, when there is a conscious view on the part of managers, who understand how important it is to manage organizational conflicts in a systematized way, before they come to compromise the results of the organization.

Assis and Straub (2020) point out that conflicts can significantly or significantly influence both the performance of activities and the emotional stability of employees in organizations, because there is a displacement of energy that should be used in the fulfillment of tasks, to be used in the resolution of conflicts. This generates a direct impact on the efficiency of companies and, therefore, managers play a fundamental role in the management of conflicts, and should use strategies that are the most appropriate for each situation, establishing a healthy environment conducive to productive discussion.

Both from a legal point of view and from the point of view of people administration or psychology, these strategies have been addressed abundantly. In a classification of the level of decision-making power of the parties involved in resolving conflicts, in relation to the level of decision-making power of a third individual designated for the same purposes, Montes and Puig (2015), point out five tools as the most commonly used in organizations. In this classification, we observe that the greatest concentration of power of the parties occurs when the conflict is resolved through negotiation, followed by mediation, conciliation, arbitration and, finally, judgment, when the highest concentration of power is in the hands of the third individual.

In this research, berg's definition (2012) was used to elaborate the fifth question of the questionnaire applied in data collection, which classifies conflict resolution by third parties into three types: negotiation, mediation and arbitration. In these three situations, the intervenor may be external or even from within the organization itself, but it is essential that the conflicting parties recognize their competence to perform the task.

The negotiation consists of placing a representative of each party involved in the problem face to face, so that they can resolve their differences and reach a kind of consensual, conscious and intentional agreement. In this case, representatives should be fully aware of the



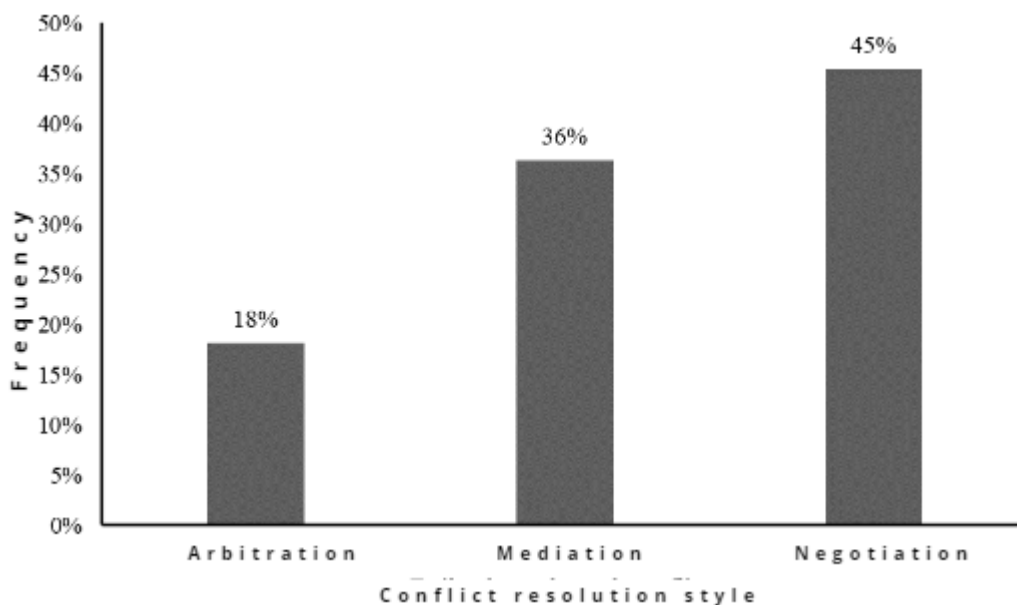
limit of authority assigned to them by those represented so that they can thus perform their functions as negotiators and/or mediators of conflicts.

Sometimes the negotiations are not successful and the agreements do not move towards a satisfactory solution for both sides. When this occurs, the conflicting may seek the help of a mediator, who should treat the problem impartially, actively advising, mediating and suggesting possible solutions. The final word will be from the dissenting parties.

When the external individual, neutral in relation to the problems being agreed, also has the power to judge the facts and give the final decision on the terms of the agreement, the type of conflict resolution becomes that of arbitration.

The answers obtained through a questionnaire of the research conducted indicated that the most used conflict resolution method in the school surveyed, that is, in 45% of the times, was that of negotiation, followed by mediation, indicated in 36% of the answers. Finally, the research indicated that arbitration was used by the management team in 18% of the cases of conflicts experienced by the teachers participating in the research, as shown in Figure 5, as shown in the Following.

Figure 5 - Frequency of conflict resolution styles used by the management team



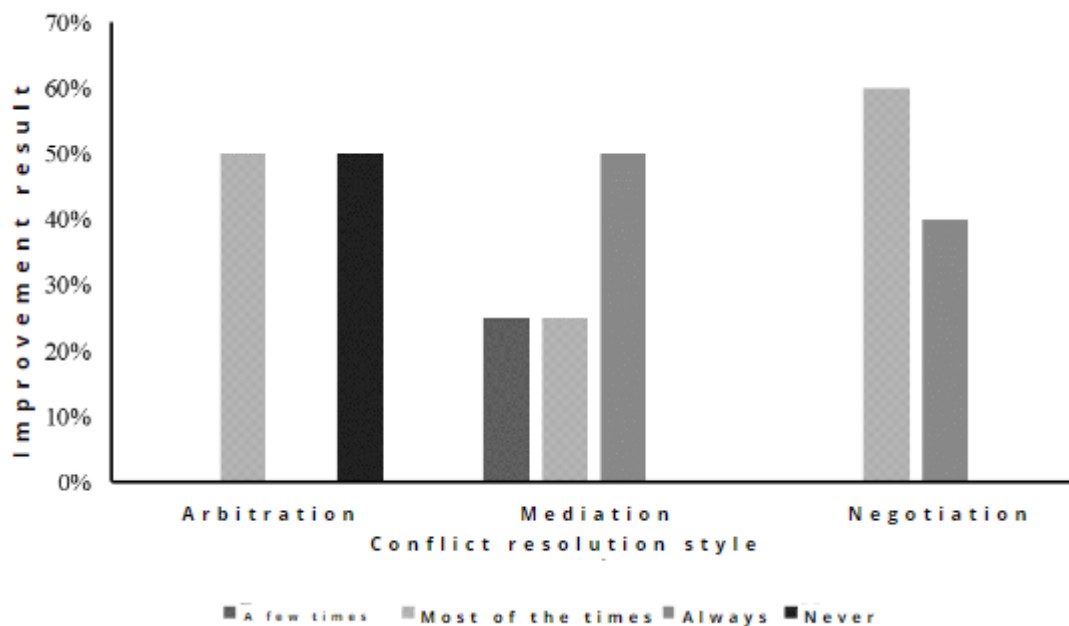
Source: Original search results

Reflections of the management team's performance in conflicts

We observed from the answers of the applied questionnaire that 91.7% of the teachers who were assisted by the management team in relation to their conflicts considered that they had some kind of improvement at the end of the process. Only 8.3%, stated that they never observed positive results resulting from the performance of the management team.

The research analyzed the correlation between the methods of conflict resolution that were employed in the various situations and the opinion of the teachers interviewed regarding the results observed by them. The following was verified: when the management team opted for negotiation, 40% always obtained satisfactory results and, 60%, most of the time. When the management team opted for mediation, 50% always obtained positive results, 25% obtained most of the time and the other 25%, few times. In the case of arbitration, 50% obtained positive results most of the time and 50% never obtained positive results. As shown in Figure 6, below.

Figure 6 - Improvement results pointed out by teachers in relation to the performance of the management team in conflict resolution



Source: Original search results

A study published in *the journal People and Culture of Berkeley*, University of California University of California [UC BERKELEY] (2021) pointed to some results that could be or were obtained through effective conflict management. According to the publication, we



can mention: obtaining the cooperation of team members; improved performance and productivity; reducing stress and preserving integrity; rapid resolution of the various problems; improved relationships; increased creativity; increased self-esteem of the team.

For these and several other results favorable to school practice to be achieved, it is of paramount importance to know how to recognize the type of conflict that exists and which method is the most effective in each case. The chosen strategy will define the success or failure of conflict management, and therefore it is important that the theory can serve as a tool for the leaders of organizations to have a clear and safe, science-based direction.

In schools, there is a need to improve practices related to conflict management, in a systematized way, in the light of what academic productions dealing with the theme related to conflict management suggest to us. According to Diniz-Pereira and Lacerda (2009), research in teaching practice is something that needs to happen in schools.

Assisi and Straub (2020) emphasize that the impact that the conflict will have on organizations will depend directly on the treatment that the management team will employ in the search for solutions to the conflicts that will occur, such as improving communication between leaders and their leaders and between the team in general. That is, the greater the importance given to the issue of organizational conflicts, through democratic and participatory management, the better and more efficient the results obtained will be.

Conclusion

COVID-19 brought with it numerous challenges for the teaching team surveyed, as it imposed a series of changes that impacted the teaching and making and required a restructuring of school practices. From the field research conducted, it was possible to verify that the vast majority of the teachers questioned experienced some type of conflict in the school year 2020 and, among those mentioned in the research, organizational conflict was the most frequent.

Although there was a great need for a diligent performance of the school management researched in the divergences that occurred, the teachers indicated that they counted "few times", or that "never" counted on the intervention of their managers in relation to the resolution of conflicts, however, in the opinion of the majority who received help from the management team, the results were positive.

There was no consensus among the opinion of these teachers regarding the preventive actions carried out by the management team, with a view to reducing the negative impacts of



the changes that occurred. Half of the participants stated that they were not heard during the change process, although they often attended meetings.

This study can serve as a basis for a restructuring of the management processes of the researched educational institution, through a careful analysis and the initiative of the practice of scientific knowledge evidenced by it. This will be possible if there is a search of its managers for the participation of all actors involved in the teaching and learning processes, especially with regard to decision-making that may directly impact their teaching.

It is important to highlight the need to establish a consistent and systematized action, concerning the management of organizational conflicts, as well as more efficient communication, through constant dialogue and democratic participation of all school agents, so that the objectives outlined can be achieved in order to maintain the motivation and cohesion of the team.

It was possible to conclude that the performance of the management team of the researched school, with regard to the management of conflicts that occurred due to structural changes arising from the pandemic situation, even if discreet, was positively impacting to obtain the results of improvement indicated by the teachers interviewed.

Finally, it was observed the need for a restructuring of the conflict management processes to improve the efficiency of management.

ACNOWLEDGEMENTS: I thank Professor Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz for the excellent orientation, to my beloved husband Anderson Correia, for the constant encouragement and to my dear teaching colleagues and managers, who contributed to the realization of this research.

REFERENCES

ANDRÉ, E. B. **Conflitos entre docentes e familiares nas escolas públicas do ensino secundário de Cabinda:** Do conhecimento à criação de um modelo de gestão. 2020. Tese (Doutorado em Didática e Organização Escolar) – Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, Espanha, 2020. Available: <https://idus.us.es/handle/11441/107293>. Access: 25 Nov. 2021.

AQUINO, E. M. L. *et al.* Medidas de distanciamento social no controle da pandemia de COVID-19: Potenciais impactos e desafios no Brasil. **Ciência & Saúde Coletiva**, v. 25, n. 1, p. 2423-2446, 2020. Available: <https://www.scielosp.org/pdf/csc/v25s1/1413-8123-csc-25-s1-2423.pdf>. Access: 11 July 2021.





ASSIS, A. F.; STRAUB, A. Gestão de conflitos: a oportunidade de aprendizagem através da exploração de divergências. **Revista FAE**, v. 19, n. 2, p. 220-231, 2020. Available: <https://revistafae.fae.edu/revistafae/article/view/106>. Access: 19 Nov. 2021.

BARBOSA, A.; LENCASTRE, M. Identificando cenários de conflitos na engenharia de requisitos visando aplicação da comunicação não violenta. *In: WORKSHOP EM ENGENHARIA DE REQUISITOS*, 22., 2019, Recife. **Anais[...]**. Rio de Janeiro: Editora PUC-rio, 2019.

BERG, E. A. **Administração de conflitos**: Abordagens práticas para o dia a dia. 2. ed. Curitiba, PR: Juruá Editora, 2012.

UC BERKELEY. Berkeley University of California. **People & Culture: Managing Conflict**, 2021. Available: <https://hr.berkeley.edu/hr-network/central-guide-managing-hr/managing-hr/interaction/conflict>. Access: 05 June 2021.

CHRISPINO, A. Gestão do conflito escolar: Da classificação dos conflitos aos modelos de mediação. **Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação**, v. 15, n. 54, p. 11-28, mar. 2007. Available: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ensaio/a/TytpKNQ94yYRNYmhqBXTwxP/abstract/?lang=pt>. Access: 19 May 2021.

DINIZ-PEREIRA, J. E.; LACERDA, M. P. Possíveis significados da pesquisa na prática Docente: Ideias para fomentar o debate. **Educação e Sociedade**, v. 30, n. 109, p. 1229-1242, dez. 2009. Available: <https://www.scielo.br/j/es/a/BDXLYcvqspgtTYpZNwMKMJk/?format=html&lang=pt>. Access: 11 Oct. 2021.

FERREIRA, D. B.; SILVA, S. C. A pandemia do Covid-19 e o silenciar de uma voz: Quem lembrou de ouvir os professores(as)? *In: SEMANA INTERNACIONAL DE PEDAGOGIA*, 7., 2020, Maceió. **Anais [...]**. Maceió: UFAL, 2021.

FREIRE, J. G. O ensino remoto e o papel da gestão escolar em tempos de pandemia. *In: SEMANA INTERNACIONAL DE PEDAGOGIA*, 7., 2020, Maceió. **Anais [...]**. Maceió: UFAL, 2021.

GERHARDT, T. E.; SILVEIRA, D. F. **Métodos de pesquisa**. 1. ed. Porto Alegre: Editora UFRGS, 2009.

MCSHANE, S. L.; GLINOW, M. A. V. **Comportamento organizacional**. 1. ed. Porto Alegre: AMGH Editora Ltda., 2013.

MONTES, D. L.; PUIG, I. D. P. R. F. Gestión de conflictos en las organizaciones: Un enfoque psicosocial integrador. **Seguridad y Salud em el Trabajo**, v. 81, n. 1, p. 26-33, 2015. Available: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8026987>. Access: 11 Oct. 2021.



OPAS. Organização Pan-Americana de Saúde. **Histórico da pandemia de COVID-19**, 2021. Available: <https://www.paho.org/pt/covid19/historico-da-pandemia-covid-19>. Access: 30 May 2021.

PASINI, C. G. D. *et al.* **A educação híbrida em tempos de pandemia**: Algumas considerações. Santa Maria, RS: Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, 2020. Available: <https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/820/2020/06/Textos-para-Discussao-09-Educacao-Hibrida-em-Tempos-de-Pandemia.pdf>. Access: 05 Apr. 2021.

PICKERING, P. **Como administrar conflitos profissionais**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Editora Market Books do Brasil, 2002.

RUSCHEL, G. E. S. *et al.* **Ensino remoto no contexto de uma instituição privada. Observatório Socioeconômico da COVID-19**. Santa Maria, RS: Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, 2020. Available: <https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/820/2020/10/Textos-para-Discussao-18-Ensino-Remoto-em-uma-instituicao-particular.pdf>. Access: 30 May 2021.

SCHAEFER, B. M. *et al.* Ações governamentais contra o novo coronavírus: Evidências dos estados brasileiros. **Revista de Administração Pública**, v. 54, n. 5, p. 1429-1445, set./out. 2020. Available: <https://www.scielo.br/j/rap/a/XMSSSJLTpx3PFDj8dmsRZ8t/abstract/?lang=pt>. Access: 05 Oct. 2021.

UNESCO. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. **Education in a post-COVID world**: Nine ideas for public action. Unesco, jun. 2020. Available: <https://en.unesco.org/news/education-post-covid-world-nine-ideas-public-action>. Access 05 Apr. 2021.

VERGARA, S. C. **Métodos de pesquisa em administração**. 6. ed. São Paulo: Editora Atlas, 2015.

How to refer to this article

CORREIA, F. G. M. R.; SANTOS CRUZ, J. A. Conflict management at school in pandemic times. **Revista @mbienteeducação**, São Paulo, v. 15, n. 00, e022012, 2022. e-ISSN: 1982-8632. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26843/ae.v15i00.1162>

Submitted: 19/02/2022

Approved: 28/03/2022

Revisions required: 06/05/2022

Published: 01/06/2022

Processing and publication by the Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.

Correction, formatting, standardization and translation

