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## A Review Study of Conflict Resolution Ability in Educational Context: A Critical Analysis

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### **Abstract:**

*Everyone has to confront conflict at some point in their lives. Conflict is a common psychological phenomenon. If a person is able to resolve these conflicts, he or she makes an appropriate adjustment to his or her surroundings. Stress, anxiety, and depression may arise from unresolved conflicts. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on conflict resolution ability, aimed at identifying research gaps and pertinent concepts related to this topic. Moreover, this literature review brings together previous and current research on conflict resolution ability and strategies in educational settings, the findings revealed that constructively conflict resolution abilities is essential for achieving educational goal, psychological factors have a significant impact on the conflict resolution ability and SEL curricula, peer mediation programs, restorative practices, peace education are helpful in enhancing conflict resolution ability of an individual.*

**Keywords:** Conflict, Conflict Resolution Ability, SEL Curricula.

### **Introduction:**

The phenomenon of conflict is psychological. Every person must deal with conflict at some point in their lives. An individual must resolve such conflicts in order to live in peace. A person will be able to adapt to their surroundings, if they can handle these conflicts with ease, if not, they will have to deal with anxiety, tension, dissatisfaction and depression. The ability of that individual to resolve conflicts affects how conflicts are resolved. The ability to resolve conflicts is becoming more widely acknowledged as an essential ability in educational settings, as it promotes safer learning environments and the social-emotional growth of students. In educational environment, conflicts are frequent. If conflicts are not settled down, they could turn into bullying and violence, which will hinder learning. Records from around the world show that action is needed. According to UNESCO

(2023), "one out of every three learners is bullied at school every month" across the world, and a significant number of students witness or engage in physical conflicts." Promoting conflict resolution abilities, attitudes and practices enables students to effectively handle and overcome conflicts. Educational stakeholders are increasingly implementing conflict resolution training and curricula at all levels of education, from early childhood to university. This review critically examines the literature on conflict resolution in educational settings.

#### **Key Questions Include:**

1. What is the concept of Conflict Resolution Ability?
2. Which type of studies undertaken in the field of Conflict Resolution Ability?
3. What approaches are used to teach or foster conflict resolution abilities in educational settings?
4. How effective are these conflict resolution abilities, in improving student behaviors, relationships and academic outcomes?
5. What is the research gap?

#### **Research Methodology:**

Secondary data from various databases, including Google Scholar, Research Gate, Research Articles, Shodhganga etc. are used in this study. To ascertain the current state of knowledge in this field, a comprehensive review of the body of existing literature has been conducted.

#### **Review of Literature:**

- **Gnawali Achyut (2016)** examined "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Conflict Management with Reference to Higher Education Sector." The focus of this study was to study emotional intelligence and to find out the relation between emotional intelligence and conflict management. The main findings of this study were that the EI had a positive impact on conflict management and there was a low positive correlation between social awareness and conflict resolution. Moreover, there was a moderate and positive correlation between relationship management and conflict management.
- **Shanka, et al. (2017)** studied "Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies between Teachers and School Leaders in Primary Schools in Ethiopia." The objective of this study was to examine strategies used by teachers and school leaders to resolve conflicts in school. The finding revealed that building leadership skills, adhering to rules and regulations, accepting change, prudently allocating resources, participating in decision-making, offering opportunities for training and comprehending individual differences and roles were all major conflict management strategies. In case of a dispute, techniques include discussions, punishing, forcing, compromising, avoidance and ignorance.
- **Dewi and Saputra (2019)** studied "The Role of the Head of School in Conflict Management

in the Industrial 4.0 Revolution.” The objective of this study was to examine the role of the school head in conflict management. The findings of this study showed that the role of the principal as a leader should be to provide direction and take decisions to solve conflicts. The principal should implement conflict resolution so that conflict in the school becomes an opportunity to advance the school.

- **Abdurrahman (2020)** conducted “Examining Principal’s Conflict Management Styles: A Study of Turkish Administrators.” The main objective of this study was to determine the most commonly used conflict management style among principals and to determine whether these styles differ by school type, professional experience and gender. The major finding of this study was that the most commonly used conflict management styles were integrating and compromising styles used by principles. Moreover, there was no difference in conflict management styles according to gender, school type, seniority in school administration or seniority as an educator.
- **Khan Shabnam, et al. (2020)** examined “Conflict management styles concerning administrative experience of principals at higher secondary school level.” The main objective of this study was to administer the conflict management style of principle. The major finding of this research was that most of the principals were using compromising style as a conflict management style and a collaborating style was also used by them.
- **Larasati & Raharja (2020)** studied “Conflict Management in Improving Schools Effectiveness.” The main objective of this study was to explore and examine the application of conflict management in increasing a school’s effectiveness. The major findings of this study were that using conflict management techniques in schools enhances student relations and boost the institution's efficacy, enabling it to accomplish desired objectives more precisely and successfully.
- **Valente et al. (2020)** researched “School Conflicts: Causes and Management Strategies in Classroom Relationships.” The main objective of this study is to reveal the causes and management of conflicts in school. According to the study, it's essential to confront and manage conflicts with the ability to build cooperative relationships, find integrative solutions, and manage them appropriately and constructively. In a classroom setting, harmony and appreciation should coexist, and conflict should not adversely affect the process of teaching and learning.
- **Jordan, P. J. et al. (2021)** examined “The significance of managing emotions during team problem-solving, particularly through emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies.” The main objective of this study was to analyze how well emotional intelligence can be used to forecast a person's performance in a conflict resolution style. The major

finding of this study was that the emotional indicators have been positively correlated with team performance but negatively correlated with conflict resolution techniques.

- **Valente et al. (2022)** studied “Teachers Emotion Regulation: Implications for Classroom Conflict Management.” The main aim of this study was to examine the relationship between conflict management strategies used by teachers in the classroom and teacher's emotion regulation ability. The findings revealed that teachers with a higher ability to control emotion use primarily integrating and compromising strategies.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

#### **Conflict-**

Conflict is a psychology phenomenon. Conflicts are classified into following three parts –

1. **Approach-Approach Conflict** - In this situation, a person has two things or two paths in front of him and he wants to get both, but he can choose only one of them.
2. **Approach- Avoidance Conflict**- In this situation person has to decide between these two things that are simultaneously ripped and appealing.
3. **Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict**- In this situation, a person is forced to choose between two things which they truly hate.

**“Conflict arises when an individual is faced with forces in his environment that act in opposition to his own interest and desires.”**

**-Crow and Crow**

#### **Conflict Resolution Ability:**

Every individual has an inherent power to resolve their conflicts, which is called the person's conflict resolution ability. Proper conflict resolution skills and abilities can protect students from harmful effects and contribute to proper development of a person. There are several factors that can cause mental conflicts, like biological causes, emotional causes, social causes and economic causes. It is very vital for a person to come out from this conflict situation. Children are the future of any nation, they also face several types of conflicts in their school and college life. It is very vital for the students that their conflicts be solved at the right time so that they can grow properly and contribute to the nation's development. A person resolves these conflicts according to their conflict resolution ability. Proper conflict resolution ability can protect students from harmful behavior and contribute to their proper development.

#### **Strategies of Conflict Resolution in Educational Settings:**

Studies distinguish three main implementation strategies for conflict skills in educational settings-

- **Direct skills instruction:** Formal lessons on conflict resolution processes (e.g. role-plays, cooperative learning exercises). For instance, social emotional learning curricula often

include conflict scenarios to teach perspective-taking and problem solving.

- **Peer mediation programs:** Training selected students as mediators who facilitate resolution of peers' disputes under adult supervision. This approach originated in the 1970s. Peer mediation programs are designed to empower students with conflict resolution skills and promote a pleasant educational environment by having trained students assist classmates in peacefully resolving disputes.
- **Embedded curricula and schoolwide models:** Conflict resolution concepts infused across subjects (e.g. discussing conflict in history or literature classes) or applied as part of the school's discipline policy. Restorative justice practices are included here.

Across these formats, reviews consistently report positive impacts. One large review note is that conflict resolution education and related skill programs generally have positive effects on student behavior. Outcomes include decreased physical aggression and bullying, improved classroom climate and better academic achievement. The ability to resolve conflicts constructively draws on multiple theories of learning, development and social interaction. At the individual level, cognitive-behavioral theory underpins many curricula programs that teach students to recognize misperceptions and biased thoughts and to practice new interpersonal skills (social-cognitive approach). For example, developing problem-solving and perspective-taking is often linked to Piagetian or Kohlbergian notions of moral reasoning: as children grow, they can advance from rigid to flexible conflict strategies.

### **Critical Analysis:**

This section evaluates prevailing approaches and models of conflict resolution education, summarizing evidence, noting strengths and weaknesses and identifying challenges. There are four main strategies: Direct instruction curricula, Peer mediation, Restorative practices and Integrative peace education.

- **Direct Instruction and SEL Curricula:** Many programs deliver conflict-resolution content through structured lessons and SEL modules. There is strong evidence that skill-based programs, such as SEL curricula, reduce aggressive behaviour and help in enhancing conflict resolution ability of an individual.
- **Peer Mediation Programs:** It trains student leaders to help classmates in resolving peer disputes or conflicts. Peer mediation also correlates with improvements in communication, self-confidence and reduced perceptions of unfairness. It engages students actively in conflict resolution. However, skeptics note that peer mediation only addresses conflicts where both parties voluntarily seek help, it may not reach victims of bullying who avoid confrontation. Also, the quality of outcomes heavily depends on mediator training and support. Overall, evidence suggests peer mediation is a valuable model, but one piece of a broader strategy, not

a panacea.

- **Restorative Practices:** Restorative justice in schools goes beyond teaching individuals to a whole-school philosophy of fixing relationships. Our review of recent literature indicates strong promise for restorative practices. A systematic review found that adopting restorative practices significantly reduces disciplinary referrals and suspensions, as well as interpersonal conflict incidents. Students studying in restorative schools feel safer and more supported. Restorative practices shift the focus from punishment to dialogue, conflict incidents become opportunities for communal learning rather than mere breaches to be sanctioned. Critically, studies highlighted that restorative approaches also reduce racial and cultural disparities in discipline by addressing the biases of “zero-tolerance” policies. On the downside, restorative practices often require major training for staff and buy-in from families. The approach challenges traditional authority models, so there can be resistance from administrators accustomed to punitive discipline. Also, many restorative practices evaluations are relatively new or small-scale; more longitudinal and cross-cultural research is needed. Nonetheless, the emerging consensus is that restorative programs not only curb violence but also build students’ relational skills in ways that traditional methods do not.
- **Peace Education and Curriculum Integration:** Some schools adopt broader peace education, integrating conflict resolution skills with civics, history and global issues. For example, exploring historical conflicts and dialogue in social studies can teach negotiation skills indirectly. Advocates argue this prepares students for diverse societies and global citizenship. UNESCO and peace advocacy groups support such integration, recommending that curricula develop empathy, rights awareness and justice ideals. Empirical evaluations are fewer and results harder to quantify, but preliminary data suggest that when schools make peace a theme across subjects, students show greater tolerance and cultural understanding. The challenge is that without explicit conflict training, outcomes rely on teacher interpretation and student engagement.

### Implementation and Research Gaps:

Many facts revealed from this literature review, some studies focused upon the concept, principles, sources of conflict resolution ability and some studies focused upon relationship of conflict resolution ability of an individual with other psychological factors. The literature review contained many gaps regarding sample size, population and methods for evaluating these variables that influence conflict resolution ability. Evidence is also geographically skewed. Therefore, further comprehensive, large-scale research on conflict resolution ability is required in this field. This literature review synthesizes previous and contemporary studies done on conflict resolution skills/abilities. Despite positive findings, critiques of the field highlight several weaknesses. Many

evaluations rely on short-term self-report outcomes rather than long-term behavior. Large-scale, longitudinal data on student conflict competence are lacking. This gap hinders understanding of how conflict resolution ability performs in diverse educational systems. In addition, there is often a misalignment between program developers' goals and school priorities. Schools under resource constraints or test-performance pressure may implement only superficial conflict programs. When Conflict resolution education is treated as optional 'add-on' rather than core to the mission, its impact is limited. Finally, some critics argue that focusing on individual skills can inadvertently ignore structural issues (like inequitable school discipline policies) that generate conflict. In essence, the most effective models appear to be those that combine skill-building with system-level change (e.g. restorative justice reform of policies). Based on previous literature reviews, it has been reviled that a person's ability for conflict resolution plays a significant role in their life and a variety of psychological factors influence this conflict resolution ability.

### **Conclusion:**

Conflict resolution ability is vital for a pleasant learning environment. Peer mediation, restorative practices, SEL curricula and peace education curriculum have all been successfully implemented in schools across all educational levels from primary to higher level. Cognitive-behavioural, developmental and organizational conflict models provide theoretical viewpoints that help explain how and why these programs work. In practice, no single model dominates; rather, the emerging best practice is a whole-school approach. For example, a school might teach conflict skills in class, offer peer mediation and adopt restorative discipline policies, all aligned by shared values. Critical evaluation indicates that the most effective implementations are comprehensive, continuous and culturally acceptable. Schools should invest in teacher training while involving students and families as partners. Policymakers are encouraged to include conflict resolution practices into teacher training standards and curriculum guidelines. For researchers, important directions include longitudinal studies tracking student's conflict competence over years, comparative studies across culture and process evaluations to identify which program elements drive change. Importantly, future work should link conflict resolution training to ultimate outcomes of education, such as academic achievement and well-being, to fully justify its institutional support. In a nutshell, fostering conflict resolution abilities is both a means to a safer, more positive educational environment and a goal in itself for educating responsible citizens. Educators fulfil a fundamental democratic mission by preparing students with the attitudes and skills necessary to engage constructively with disagreement. Continuous critical analysis and an evidence-based refinement of conflict resolution abilities will be essential for achieving this goal.

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