

The Role of Administration in Management of Organizational Conflicts: A Study of Sri Lankan National Universities

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Organizational conflicts occurs in-between people or in-between groups. These may be identified as inter-personal conflicts and inter-group conflicts. According to the past literature, the organizational structure, communication, personal variables, and limited resources are some causes of conflicts. Group conflicts may result in increasing as well as decreasing of group performances. It may also further result in the change of behaviors of employees such as delay in performances, resigning from work place, disagreements on policy decisions, un-cooperativeness, disrespectful behaviour, gossiping etc. Researches reveal that conflict management can be identified as the use of resolution (problem solving, expansion of resources, avoidance etc.) and stimulation (communication, bringing in outsiders, restructuring the organization) techniques, to achieve the desired level of settlement of conflict. The managers in organizations perform 10 different managerial roles according to the theory of Mintzberg in 1960s. These are categorized into three main groups as interpersonal, informational and decisional roles. Sri Lankan government university system serves as a major contributor to the higher education. The academic and administrative staff handles the managerial positions. The main objective of this study is to develop a conceptual framework mainly focusing on how the university administrators perform above roles while managing organizational conflicts. There was only a limited number of researches conducted in relation to the role of administration in managing organizational conflicts. Organizational conflicts can be seen in every department, faculties, units, sections in Sri Lankan universities and can be experienced among and in-between administrators, academic staff, supporting staff and students. The students unions and staff unions were the most visible teams identified as creating conflicts. As revealed in the study, there are several causes for occurring organizational conflicts in Sri Lankan state universities namely; leadership style, limited resources, organizational structure, policies, professional differences, centralization, attitudes, organizational culture etc. In the

proposed conceptual framework, organizational conflict is identified as an independent variable whereas the conflict management and socio-economic characters are identified as intervene variables. The role of administrators is identified as dependent variable in order to facilitate the investigation of how university administrators manage organizational conflicts while performing managerial roles.

Key words: *Conflict Management; Managerial roles; Organizational Conflicts; University administration.*