

Conflict Management in Tertiary Educational Institutions in Zimbabwe: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT The modern university or large college is characterised by diversified internal and external constituencies which differ in terms of goals, values and strategies of having things done. This makes it an arena of power and conflict or an organised anarchy. This paper argues that conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in any university /college since it is the nature of universities to breed conflict. Admittedly conflict is often unpleasant but one should not overlook its creative potential. When conflict occurs, leaders in tertiary education have at their disposal a number of conflict management strategies to employ so as to restore normalcy to their institutions. Since no one particular strategy can claim to offer solutions to all conflict situations, this paper advocates the use of multiple strategies in conflict management. These include but are not limited to the win-lose, win-win and contingency approach to conflict management. However, in practice, managers in higher education tend to achieve more organizational effectiveness by blending elements of each strategy in conflict resolution depending on the circumstances surrounding each situation. This paper seeks to explore conflict management strategies as well as challenges that leaders in institutions of higher education face in trying to manage conflict.