

**ERD 2022**  
**Education, Reflection, Development**

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES**

Cuc Maria Claudia (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Educational Sciences Department, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, talos.claudia@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

The article "Strategies for conflict management and problem solving" is based on the size of the application, on the art of strategies focused by the teaching staff, the instructive, educational and advisory activity in the management of conflict situations and in the development of resolution skills, taking into account the particularities of age, of preadolescents, by means of counselling methods, techniques and instruments regarding the adaptation and effective social integration of the educable, the development of the learning mechanism and the practice of some skills regarding the maintenance of physical, mental, emotional and social health well-being in order to ensure a state of good. The study also follows the way in which the teachers focus on the emotional regulation strategies focused on the antecedents of adolescents, thus advising them in the management of the control of situations and contexts with a dysfunctional emotional charge, which lead to undesirable effects on the process of self-knowledge and personal development, but they can also become risk factors for the deterioration of the quality of individual life and the quality of social relationships regardless of social rules, roles and assumed responsibilities. The study also aims to connect the learner's ability to develop these strategies and the way in which, at the level of the educational environment and social life, they promote prosocial behaviour.

2672-815X © 2023 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Attitude towards the problem, conflict management strategies, problem solving, preadolescent, problem-solving skills, teaching staff

## **1. Introduction**

From the perspective of social, cultural, economic but also technological changes, a reconstruction of the paths and forms of teacher training is necessary not only from the perspective of learning contents, of the opportunities that new communication and information technologies have brought in recent years, but also from the perspective of the solutions found for the management of crisis situations existing in the educational environment but also in everyday life. This perspective aims at a responsibility at the level of the decision-makers, in the area of training and development of the counseling skills of the educable, which will ensure a creative and current way, from the most effective perspective of the ways to improve communication and accountability in the act of communication and interpersonal relations of the educable, but also from the perspective of identifying existing problematic situations and avoiding risky behaviors through responsible decisions, and the optimal resolution of problematic situations and conflicts in the educational environment.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The study follows the process of developing strategies for conflict management and problem solving, a necessary perspective in the instructive educational process and counselling of the educable, so that preadolescents are familiar with the dynamics of everyday life, with the rules, principles of integration and social adaptation, with the complex process of social responsibility and social involvement from an early age. From this point of view, through specific counselling activities, they will be facilitated in the development of self-knowledge skills and realistic self-evaluation of emotional behavioural self-regulation mechanisms, fundamental acquisitions in the process of self-knowledge and personal development of pre-adolescents for the best possible integration and social adaptation. At the same time, the aim was to familiarize the learners with the attitudinal consequences of the challenges of dysfunctional social situations or with the consequences of a social situation to cause dysfunctional behaviour and affect that behaviour becoming deviant from objective reality because a negative social conflict situation on the behaviour of preadolescents "has the effect or intention of changing the way another person behaves, feels or thinks about something" (Zimbardo & Leippe, 2022, p. 82) generating a state of conflictual human communication and interrelationship.

## **3. Research Questions**

For the Z generation, in the whole complex mechanism of self-knowledge and personal development, the pre-adolescent stage represents a moment of social identity challenges from this point of view. The objectives of instructional, educational and counselling activities need to aim at the formation of learning and social experiences that facilitate, , positive and pro-social causes and to give direction to efforts aimed at improving the quality of life" (Zimbardo & Leippe, 2022, p. 581), but also the formation of some skills initiates and maintains optimal functionality from the point of view of physical, mental, emotional and social health in order to ensure a state of well-being (Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Ionescu, 2020).

Considering the dynamics of these educational changes, but also the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the research proposed to follow the question:

To what extent does the development of conflict management and problem-solving strategies influence the maintenance of positive relationships, but also the increase in the quality of preadolescents' communication and interrelation acts?

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The study focused on the way in which the sample of subjects within the school organization, both at the institutional level, of the school group, but also at the personal level, contributes to conflict management strategies and solving the problems of preadolescents through a connection to the demands of social life modern, facilitating appropriate solutions for integration and adaptation of learners to the socio-cultural context. This means the clear rethinking and redefinition, the coherence of continuous training programs aimed at this professional dimension, a much more effective connection of educational partnerships to community life, the redefinition of curriculum contents adapted to the reality of social life, of strategies and requires training in the field of educational counselling and of the personal development of teaching staff, in order to build a functional counselling consumption process between the educator and the learner based on expertise, capacity for professional autonomy, the capacity for professional self-reflection, responsibility and confidentiality, mutual respect and unconditional acceptance.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In the accelerated dynamics of the pandemic context, an important role in counseling classes but also in instructional and educational activities is the development of strategies to make preadolescent-adult communication more efficient, in order for the learner to use a responsible language through which he can communicate positive feelings, his needs and interests to be able to express emotional states and identify methods of improving the emotional state in order to maintain positive relationships and manage conflicting states (Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

The purpose of the research was the analysis of the educational strategies implemented in the didactic approach that contributed to conflict management and problem solving of preadolescents in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

##### **5.1. Research objectives**

- i. Studying the measure in which the teaching staff applies in the instructional-educational activity to develop the development of communication and interpersonal relations of primary school students.
- ii. Evidencing the possible advanced solutions by teaching staff to make the application of conflict management strategies more efficient and to solve problems in the teaching process.

The study focuses on the pedagogical diagnosis on the approach of conflict management strategies and problem solving to develop the communication and interpersonal skills of the learners in order to

solve the behavioural problems of pre-adolescents but also in order to improve the learning conditions, the active involvement of the learners in the instructional approach.

## **5.2. Research hypothesis**

The systematic and rational application of techniques and strategies for conflict management and problem solving within the instructional and educational activities for preadolescents contributes to the development of result skills, but also to the development of assertive attitudes and behaviors in order to manage conflict situations.

The research aimed at the simple random sampling technique in order to choose the sample of subjects, which was made up of teaching staff from 6 pre-university education institutions together with the related structures of the institutions, which have a diverse school population from a cultural, ethnic and social. The sample of subjects was made up of 120 teaching staff, both full-time and substitute teachers in the pre-university education system, and the indicators that were followed were: initial training, continuous training, seniority in the education system, teaching degree obtained, the existing seniority in the institution where it operates, but also particularities of the school organization, the urban or rural environment in which the institution is located, partnerships made at the community level and with specialized institutions, the disadvantaged environment, etc. the working methods and tools followed the research objectives and also supported the sustainability of the declarative research: the questionnaire-based survey method and the interview as an interactive research method, which in the possibility of the time that the respondents offered or managed the solutions specified by secondary school subjects applied in the educational process in order to develop conflict management and problem-solving strategies in learners, but also to maintain positive relationships through the use of techniques such as active listening or the use of open questions for the clarification of content messages by the involved parties conflictual or dual. the solutions offered by the respondents were influenced by the high or low level of sincerity of the answers, by the degree of responsibility and correctness. Also, in the analysis, processing and interpretation of the ascertainment research data, a fundamental role was also represented by the research method of curriculum documents and other school documents in order to correlate the data provided in the documents with the solutions given by the respondents.

## **6. Findings**

The results and interpretation of the research data which aimed to highlight the phenomenon at the level of the school institution on an evolutionary-diachronic line, but also on a linear direction, tracking the correlation between the development of social skills and the way in which they influence the academic performance of the learners, also bearing in mind that insufficient development of social skills and desirable social attitudes leads to school failure, implicitly to low academic performance, to insufficient self-knowledge and self-regulation of the learner, which leads to passive and aggressive behaviours of the learner, to a perceived low motivation and self-efficacy, implicitly to a pathogenic lifestyle. in the pedagogical study, the involvement of teaching staff in counselling the educable and in the process of developing conflict management and problem-solving strategies among students was

considered from this point of view, the research objectives were correlated with the proposed research hypothesis, which led to the fluency, coherence, and the validity of the psycho-pedagogical intervention undertaken. The pedagogical study also took into account the problems that teachers faced during the pandemic period, the solutions they found in order to develop strategies for conflict management and problem solving, but also the way in which they achieved the transition stage from online activity to face-to-face didactic activity and the solutions they found for the efficiency of these problems related to the lack of communication and interpersonal relationship skills, the lack of emotional and behavioural self-regulation mechanisms of students in diverse situations, of the strategies applied to the risk behaviours of the learners, to the inefficient skills and abilities of communication and assertive behaviour, but also to the lack of a positive attitude towards problems and the inefficiency of the development of resolution skills, thus contributing to the increase in the quality of the lifestyle, and to the development a healthy lifestyle of the educable. From this point of view, a percentage of 74% of the subjects interviewed affirmed that they are involved in the process of advising students and are concerned in the approach of the instructive and educational activity in the development of learners in the fundamental aspects of self-knowledge and the construction of realistic self-evaluation skills of own potential (Băban, 2011; Cuc, 2013, 2014, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Ionescu, 2020). Following this aspect, the interviewed subjects affirmed that due to the dynamics of positive daily events or not they are concerned with the development in the students of the class of some ways and strategies of adaptation and flexibility, which would allow them to acquire and practice resolution skills, but also to be aware of a certain pattern of approaching the resolution process and solving problems. Among the solutions proposed by the teachers is the decision-making model, which is practiced together with the students, so that they reach the level where they are able to generate alternatives, implement effective solutions and develop self-evaluation skills of the effects of the implemented solutions on short, medium and long term, so that "the student learns to perceive the result as an effect and the solution process as a continuous solution process" (Petrovai, 2011, p. 125). Also, in the context of the pandemic, but also post a percentage of 82% of the subjects considered that the development of educational interventions aimed at preventing the conflict situation, resolving the conflict, and reducing their effects are also solutions for managing interpersonal conflict. Thus, in counselling they positioned themselves on personal values versus social values, on personal interests and needs that often lead to the causes of interpersonal conflict based on the individual's different compliance with norms, values, interests, resources, or inappropriate behaviours generated in the school environment or in the community. Educable were also familiar with the typology of conflicts, with the notion of involved parties and their consequences, but also with the concept of the problem, what is its specificity, the degree of its definition and how the educable can face the pressure of the group at a certain type of problem and to resolve the conflict. The respondents emphasized the formative values of conflict resolution methods used in pedagogical interventions, starting from the development of students' skills to negotiate, to build a behaviour based on the principles of negotiation and mediation, to familiarize themselves with the concept of the diversity of the problems generated of conflict situations, and thus, 67% of those interviewed in educational activities develop active listening capacities and assertive expression in order to increase the efficiency of the act of communication in interpersonal relationships, being prerequisites for the strategies with which students are familiar:

arbitration, mediation, agreement, reconciliation, conflict transformation, diplomacy, conflict management, etc., so that learners become familiar with the real needs and interests but also with the positions that each party has in a conflict situation, being able to discern from an emotional, practical and social, part the involved that they seek to solve, but also the anchor that is made between the problem and the solution (Stoica-Constantin, 2018). Another solution that 78% of the interviewees apply in the classroom in the intervention programs is the emotional resilience program, which aims to improve the fundamentals of developing in students the skills of realistic self-evaluation of their own capabilities and characteristics and to develop emotional self-regulation mechanisms and behavioural in various educational or social situations. From this point of view, the staff involved in the development of these intervention programs have in mind the construction of a foundation linked to self-image and self-esteem, the intended consequences of positive or negative self-image, the development of the ability to self-assess one's own skills, as sources it gives knowledge and academic evolution, the development of self-control and self-regulation mechanisms, the understanding and concern of the educable for the personal and group well-being, which led to the development of complex emotions: admiration, optimism, gratitude, hope, altruism, compassion, etc., involved in the mechanisms of developing emotional and social skills, in empathic communication, empathic understanding of colleagues, in the empathic exploration of interpersonal relationships, in empathic resonance with the other and why not in the development of the attitude of mutual empathy at the group level. the teaching staff emphasized that these fundamental elements find their effectiveness in the results of the process of communication and interpersonal relations of the learners, in conflict management and problem solving, generating the necessary energy for resolving conflicts and ensuring a state of well-being at the level of the group of learners, contributing at the same time to the connection and synergy of the group, showing a positive impact of the skills developed in the educable in the complex process of human relations and communication (Băban, 2011; Bharrwaney, 2020). A solution generated by the respondents is the diversification of strategies for combating conflict situations and solving problems among learners, so that 63% of the respondents share with us that they use in the classroom: imitating models from the student's social environment, using social learning and role play, use emotional regulation strategies, practice modelling behaviours and positive reinforcements, are concerned with the development of a secure attachment among learners, use training programs aimed at improving the educator-learner, child-parent relationship, also diversify behavioural modification strategies and positive reinforcement programs. Another solution given by the respondents is related to the strategies approached in conflict management and problem solving, from this point of view the respondents affirm that we learn professionally only by sharing experience and expertise in class, thus building communities of practice, which interact professionally with the aim of to learn to practice increasingly elaborate strategies and thus develop their professional competences, thus becoming "learning organizations" (Senge, 2016), develop together and grow together in this organizational process of learning and combating the state conflictual through the personal mastery of each teacher and its encouragement in students and we engage commitment in its practice, through an organizational vision shared by the community, management, teaching staff, parents and students all building teams that learn, that generate new mental models and behavioural (Senge, 2016).

## 7. Conclusion

The development of emotional and behavioural self-regulation strategies for the learner, but also the construction of intervention programs focused on the development of active listening capacities and assertive expression in various communication contexts is a continuous process that requires involvement, learning, practice, and self-monitoring contributing to the generation of a state well, but also to the effective adaptation of the learner to the educational and social environment. The school, as a "learning organization" (Senge, 2016), represents the environment and the effective social laboratory for the development of social skills and attitudes, but also the change of attitude through behaviour. Familiarizing the educable thus to be able to make an x-ray of social life through a systemic and in-depth knowledge, to diminish the errors and limits in the knowledge of the other, not to be taken over by the surrealism of the "Morgana girl" in the false and illusory human knowledge. Thus, developing a style of intellectual work, the independence and cognitive autonomy of the educable, adherence to prosocial principles, practicing the personal reflection of the educable, etc. it will support them to redefine the phrase "how we think in everyday life"(Boncu & Holman, 2019), but also how we behave in everyday life.

## References

- Băban, A. (Ed.). (2011). Consiliere educațională. *Ghid metodologic pentru orele de dirigenție și consiliere* [Educational counseling. Methodological guide for leadership and counseling classes]. ASCR.
- Bharrwaney, G. (2020). Reziliența emoțională. *Învăță cum să devii capabil și să-ți atingi potențialul maxim* [Emotional resilience. Learn how to become capable and reach your full potential]. Polirom.
- Boncu, Ș., & Holman, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Cum gândim în viața de zi cu zi* [How we think in everyday life]. Polirom.
- Cuc, M. C. (2013). Ways to Streamline Didactic Communication. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 92, 225–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.664>
- Cuc, M. C. (2014). Development of a Communication System for Capitalizing Cultural Diversity. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 143, 63-67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.358>
- Cuc, M. C. (2019a). The Relationship Between Self-Esteem And Academic Success. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS*, LXIII, 36-43. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.06.6>
- Cuc, M. C. (2019b). Particularities of Regulatory Mechanisms In Gymnasium Students. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS*, LXIII, 44-54. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.06.7>
- Cuc, M. C. (2019c). The Well-Being – A Fundamental Indicator In Didactic Activity. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS*, LXIII, 55-65. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.06.8>
- Cuc, M. C. (2020a). Particularities of Communication and Interpersonal Relationship in Gymnasium Students. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS*, LXXXV, 176-185. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.18>
- Cuc, M. C. (2020b). Parental Migration – A Fundamental Factor In The Development Of School Children. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS*, LXXXV, 186-196. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.19>

- Cuc, M. C. (2020c). Narrative Identity – A Fundamental Concept In The Development Of The Self. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS, LXXXV*, 685-693. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.71>
- Ionescu, D. (2020). Analiză și dezvoltare personală. *Psihologia autodeterminării* [Analysis and personal development. The psychology of self-determination]. Polirom.
- Petrovai, D. (2011). Rezolvarea de probleme [Solving problems]. In Băban, A. (Ed.), *Consiliere educațională. Ghid metodologic pentru orele de dirigenție și consiliere* [Educational counseling. Methodological guide for leadership and counseling classes] (pp. 197-213). ASCR.
- Senge, P. (2016). Școli care învață. *A cincea disciplină aplicată în educație* [Schools that learn. The fifth applied discipline in education]. Trei.
- Stoica-Constantin, A. (2018). Conflictul interpersonal. *Prevenirea, rezolvare și diminuarea efectelor* [Interpersonal conflict. Prevention, resolution and mitigation]. Polirom.
- Zimbardo, P., & Leippe, M. R. (2022). *Psihologia influenței sociale și a schimbării de atitudine* [The psychology of social influence and attitude change]. Trei.