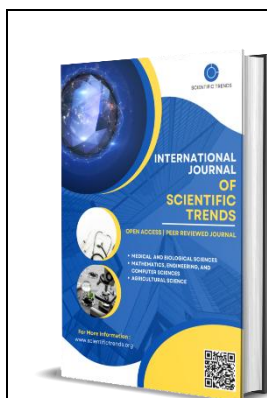


# Typology of Conflicts in The Educational Environment: A Psychological Analysis

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## Abstract

Conflicts in the educational environment is an inevitable phenomenon resulting from the interactions among participants in the educational process, including students, teachers, parents, and administrative staff. Such conflicts can negatively impact the psychological climate within the collective and students' academic performance. This article aims to systematize types of conflicts in the educational environment, identify their key psychological characteristics, and propose approaches for their diagnosis and effective resolution.

**Keywords:** Conflict, conflict classification, conflict diagnostics, education.

## Introduction

Conflicts, as defined by A. Y. Antsupov and A. I. Shipilov, is a contradiction between participants in interaction caused by discrepancies in their goals, interests, or views (18). Considering conflicts in the context of the educational environment, V. V. Rubtsov notes that they are often caused by clashes of organizational factors, interpersonal relationships, and differences in value orientations (14). According to L. A. Petrovskaya, conflicts may also manifest as the result of mismatches between the expectations and actual behavior of participants in the educational process (11).

Taking into account the specific features of the educational process, conflicts can be classified into the following types based on their psychological characteristics:

1. **Organizational Conflicts.** Organizational conflicts are often linked to branches in management structure and a lack of clear rules of interaction. According to A. Y. Antsupov and A. I. Shipilov, these conflicts exhibit a high degree of dependence on social and structural factors, such as hierarchy, reward systems, and task distribution (18).

2. **Group Conflicts.** Group conflicts involve confrontations between groups, which may arise due to objective reasons (differences in resources or tasks) or subjective reasons (stereotypes, biases). L. S. Vygotsky emphasized that group conflicts are often exacerbated by intergroup comparisons, fostering a sense of superiority in one group over another (17). According to R. B. Kettell, group conflicts are accompanied by an increase in group identity and a decrease in individual responsibility. This is expressed in phenomena such as "groupthink," where members align with the group's opinion even when it contradicts their personal beliefs (7).

**3. Interpersonal Conflicts.** Interpersonal conflicts arise from mismatches in views, interests, or values between individuals. According to A. A. Bodalev, such conflicts are characterized by the emotional involvement of the parties and can quickly escalate into open confrontation due to a lack of communication skills (3). C. Rogers noted that a key psychological characteristic of interpersonal conflicts is the emotional reaction of the parties, often expressed through negative emotions such as anger, resentment, or disappointment (12). D. Myers highlighted the significance of nonverbal components in the development of interpersonal conflicts, such as body language, voice intonation, and facial expressions, which can either intensify or help resolve the conflict (10).

**4. Intrapersonal Conflicts.** Intrapersonal conflicts affect an individual's inner world, creating psychological tension and a sense of internal discord. According to K. Lewin, intrapersonal conflict arises from the clash of opposing motivations, leading to a state of cognitive dissonance (8). S. L. Rubinstein identified a key characteristic of intrapersonal conflicts — their cyclical nature, in which unresolved internal contradictions periodically resurface in a person's consciousness, creating emotional tension and dissatisfaction (13).

**5. Value Conflicts.** Value conflicts involve a deep personal engagement as they concern fundamental beliefs and life orientations. According to G. M. Andreeva, these conflicts are among the most challenging to resolve, as the parties view their values as integral to their identity, making compromise psychologically difficult (1). S. Hofstede emphasized the cultural context of value conflicts, noting that differences in national and ethnic values can intensify their severity, particularly in multicultural educational environments (6).

Based on the above mentioned types of conflicts, specific psychological characteristics can be identified. Considering these characteristics allows for the development of targeted strategies for conflict prevention and resolution, contributing to an improved psychological climate in the educational environment:

- **Emotional tension.** Conflicts are accompanied by strong emotions such as anger, resentment, and disappointment.
- **Stereotyping and bias.** Group conflicts are often exacerbated by stereotypes and biased attitudes.
- **Authority dynamics.** Unequal power distribution in conflicts between teachers, administrators, and students amplifies feelings of injustice.
- **Communication barriers.** A lack of effective interaction between parties leads to misunderstandings and conflict escalation.
- **Conflict latency.** Some conflicts remain hidden until external circumstances provoke their escalation (typical for organizational conflicts).
- **Cognitive resistance.** In value conflicts, participants may reject any information that contradicts their beliefs.
- **Group pressure.** In group conflicts, there is often an effect of internal cohesion within the group and heightened antagonism toward the opposing group.
- **Cyclicity of intrapersonal conflicts.** Contradictions within an individual, such as mismatches between expectations and reality, can reoccur, causing chronic stress and frustration.

**Effective conflict management** begins with timely diagnostics. Various authors suggest diagnostic methods based on psychological analysis, observation, and the use of test instruments:

1. **Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.** According to K. Thomas and R. Kilmann, conflict behavior styles can be diagnosed using five strategies: competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance, and accommodation (16). This tool helps determine the dominant interaction style among participants and select an appropriate conflict resolution strategy.

2. **Moreno's Sociometry.** J. L. Moreno proposed the sociometry method to identify hidden conflicts within groups by analyzing interpersonal preferences and relationships (9). This approach is especially useful in school settings for diagnosing conflicts between students.

3. **Observation and Interviews.** L. S. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of observing participants' behavior and conducting interviews to gain a deeper understanding of their motivations and emotional states (17).

4. **Questionnaires and Surveys.** G. M. Andreeva noted that questionnaires can systematize data on the causes and dynamics of conflicts (1). For instance, surveys can be designed to assess participants' satisfaction with the educational process.

Conflict resolution methods vary depending on their type, participants, and context. Various researchers propose approaches based on communicative, mediative, and cognitive techniques.

1. **Mediation** involves the involvement of a neutral third party who helps conflict participants find a mutually acceptable solution. The primary focus is on establishing trust between the parties and seeking compromise. R. Fisher and W. Ury argue that mediation is effective in reducing emotional tension and helping parties focus on shared interests (4). This method is particularly useful for interpersonal and group conflicts in the educational environment.

2. **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy** aims to identify and change irrational beliefs that increase tension. For example, participants may realize that their expectations of others are unrealistic or excessive. A. Beck argued that this approach helps reduce anxiety levels and promotes a more rational perception of the situation, which is crucial for dealing with intrapersonal conflicts (2).

3. **Schulz von Thun's Communication Training.** This training is based on the "Four Sides of Communication" model, which helps participants understand that every message contains factual, relational, self-revealing, and appealing aspects. Participants learn to recognize and adjust the aspects of their messages that may cause misunderstandings, develop skills in active listening, empathy, and "I-statements" to reduce communication tension, and resolve conflict situations through conscious and constructive communication (15). Group practice and role-playing exercises help reinforce these skills for practical applications.

4. **Carl Rogers' Dialogue Method** focuses on creating a trusting atmosphere where participants can freely express their thoughts and feelings. Key aspects include empathic listening, where the listener focuses on understanding the other party's experiences, and non-judgmental acceptance, excluding criticism and pressure (12). This approach helps reduce emotional tension, improve

mutual understanding, and find mutually acceptable solutions, making it particularly effective in conflict situations that require deep personal involvement.

5. **Psychological Support** is aimed at creating conditions where conflict participants can cope with emotional tension and feel secure. It includes providing a space for expressing experiences, supporting the recognition and management of emotions, and fostering confidence in resolving the issue. E. Fromm emphasized that such support creates an atmosphere of safety and acceptance, which is particularly important for overcoming stress and restoring productive interaction (5). This method is effective for intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts where the emotional component plays a key role.

## Conclusion

Conflicts in the educational environment are a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, determined by the diversity of participants and their interactions. Each type of conflict — organizational, group, intrapersonal, interpersonal, or value-based — has unique psychological characteristics that influence its dynamics and resolution methods. Emotional tension, bias, communication barriers, and authority dynamics play key roles in exacerbating conflicts and must be considered when developing diagnostic and resolution methods.

The use of scientific approaches, such as the Thomas-Kilmann method, Moreno's sociometry, and questionnaires, enables effective identification of the causes of conflicts and analysis of their features. Resolution methods, including mediation, cognitive-behavioral therapy, Rogers' dialogue method, and Schulz von Thun's communication training, are aimed at developing communication skills, reducing emotional tension, and finding compromises. Psychological support also plays an important role in managing the emotional component of conflicts, helping participants restore trust and productive interaction.

Thus, diagnosing and resolving conflicts require a comprehensive approach that combines scientific methods with individual work with participants. Taking into account the unique characteristics of each type of conflict and creating conditions for constructive interaction contribute not only to reducing conflict but also to improving the psychological climate in the educational environment. This, in turn, promotes the personal growth of all participants in the educational process and enhances its effectiveness.

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