



RESEARCH PAPER

Relationship between Conflict Management Styles of Teachers and Organizational Environment of Universities

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ABSTRACT

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The study was carried out to investigate the relationship between conflict management styles of teachers and organizational environment at universities level. A quantitative research method and correlation research design was used. Teachers of public sector universities of Lahore were the population of the study. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed for selecting the sample. 208 male and 358 female teachers were selected randomly which were 30% of the total population. A five-point Likert type scale developed by Adkins (2011) was used to measure conflict management styles. Organizational environment was measured on a five-point Likert type scale developed by Khan (2011). It was identified that conflict management styles had significant relationship with organizational environment.

Introduction

Conflict is unavoidable in all living organisms; it is a natural and social occurrence among humans wherever and when they are. Conflict evolves as a natural phenomenon in humans lives to a certain level (Ahmad, 2015). The basic causes of conflict are the lack of honesty and oblique expectation Adrian-Taylor, Noels, and Tischler (2007). In organizations conflict could be described as "the life of the organization," because perception of the conflict management style has been change from negative to positive that leads to creativity and productivity. Due to this reason, managers devote on average about 20% of their time in resolving conflicts (De Dreu, et al., 2003).

Fink and Brunner (2011) described conflict as individual's efforts for successful accomplishment of secure status, influence, values and resources to sweep rival in a group or a number of individuals. Conflict can be explained as the manner in which a person feels that his/her values, needs, interests, goals, or behaviors are different from the other person (Baker, 2016). Organizational conflict has several forms: intrapersonal (when individual is required to perform a task beyond the skills and goal), interpersonal

(two or more members working together in groups), intra group (between two or more subgroups within a group), and intergroup (between two or more groups or units of an organization (Rahim, 2001).

Rahim, (2001) also contended that here are five different styles to manage conflict, integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding style. Williams and Ana (2011) defined compromising style as a situation in which each of the groups involved in the conflict make an agreement on several points based on the results of a joint compromise. For them the avoiding style of conflict management is neglecting the conflict as its action even though the individual is fully cognizant of the surrounding conflicts. Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) argue that the dominating style is a conflict management style that compels one group to obey other. According to Rahim (2001), integrating style is a problem solver and always engages all members of the group in spreading information whereas in obliging style, care and consideration of self is low but high for others.

Robbins and Coulter (2005) expressed that organizational environment can be defined as the internal and the external systems of organization that can affect the organizational performance. Organizational environment is affected by the nature of conflict in the organization that could create either healthy working environment or might result in poor performance of the organization (Green, Lesile, & Marks, 2001). This study was conducted to reveal the effect of conflict management styles and their relation with organizational environment at university level.

Literature review

Conflict is an incompatibility of aspirations, targets or values between individuals or groups (Fisher, 1990). Rose et al., (2006) expressed that conflict occurs when the employees of the organization feel that other members produce troubles in achieving their goals.

There are multiple reasons that can originate a conflict. Few basic causes of conflict can be identified as: Power, worth and monetary. Power related conflict occurs when individuals are attempting to obtain more power and influence than others. Worth related conflict emerges due to difference in people's culture and way of life. Monetary related conflict happens when individuals have tussle for resources that are always scarce (Katz, 1965).

Conflict management is one of the major issues of today's organizations internationally. Conflict management is lessening the conflict whereas the conflict management demands ways to reduce its side effects (Farooqi, 2011; Robbins, 1978). Conflict has both positive and negative aspect depending on the way conflict is handled (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Thus, the management of conflict is very important not only for the workers but for the organizations too. Among the different conflict management styles the major are contending, conceding, avoiding and collaborating (Carsten, Dreu, & Beersma, 2005). According to Thomas, (1974) different styles of conflict management are the following;

Collaborating: Two brains are better than one

Accommodating: Kill your opponents with kindness

Compromising: Split the discrepancy

Avoiding: Leave well enough alone

Competing: Might makes fight

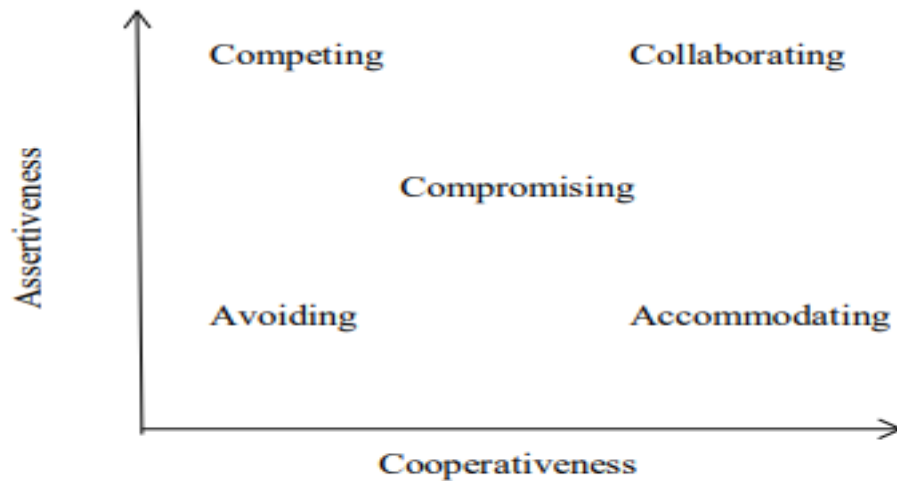


Figure 1: Conflict grid

Source: According to Thomas & Kilmann, 1976

Hall's specific environment relates to the area of inter-organizational relations. It is composed of the organizations and individuals with which an organization is in direct interaction.

According to Farooqi (2011) conflict management has gained international attention because it affects the working environment. He compared the conflict management styles of teachers and organizational environment in the old and newly established universities of the Pakistan (Punjab).

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant relationship between conflict management styles of teachers and organizational environment of universities.

Ho: There is no significant difference in conflict management styles (collaborating style, competing style, accommodating style, compromising style and avoiding style) of male and female university teachers.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The study was quantitative in nature and co-relation research design was used.

Population

Population for the study was the teachers of HEC (Higher Education Commission) recognized public sector universities of Lahore. There were total 12 public sector HEC recognized universities in Lahore. Teachers from five selected universities were the accessible population.

Sampling

Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed for selecting the sample. Strata were formed on the basis of gender of the teachers. 208 male and 358 female teachers were selected randomly which were 30% of the total population.

Instruments

A five-point Likert type scale developed by Adkins (2011) was used to measure conflict management styles; collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, compromising and competing. Organizational environment was measured on a five-point Likert type scale developed by Khan (2011) having 38 items with seven factors; group work, contribution & direction, simplifications, prize & profits internal environment, and specialized development.

Reliability

Reliability of the tools was tested through Cronbach alpha and the overall alpha value for conflict management and organizational environment was 0.82 and 0.75 respectively.

Results and Discussion

Ho: There is no significant relationship between conflict management styles of teachers and organizational environment.

Table 1
Relationship between conflict management styles of teachers and organizational environment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.736a	.546	.542	8.53923
a. Predictors: (Constant), Accommodating, Avoiding,		Compromising,	Competing,	Collaborating,

The table explains the relationship between variables by multiple regression. 54.6% (R square = $.546 \times 100 = 54.6$) variance is defined in the dependent variable; organizational environment by conflict management styles. The R square in a multiple regression indicates difference that can be contributed by all the predictors in a progression. The R square gives explanatory power. In this table the value of R Square is 0.556 which displays the variance in organizational environment (criterion) due to conflict management style (predictor).

Table 2
Multiple Regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.305	8.289		3.893	.000
Collaborating	.952	.437	.083	2.185	.029
Competing	-.611	.179	-.124	-3.413	.001
Avoiding	2.597	.426	.242	6.098	.000
Accommodating	3.376	.531	.283	6.360	.000
Compromising	2.247	.472	.108	4.757	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OE

Table represents the beta values and statistical significance. Beta and p-values for the predictive variables were Collaborating = 0.083(p=.029), Competing = -0.124 (p=.001), Accommodating = 0.283 (p=.000), Avoiding = 0.242 (p=.000), Compromising = 0.180 (p=.000). The negative beta value of competing factor specifies its inverse relationship with organizational environment whereas other factors have direct relationship. The significance values show that all factors of conflict management styles (Collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising) have significant relationship with organizational environment except competing.

Table 3
Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	50846.889	5	10169.378	139.136	.000 ^b
	Residual	40637.675	556	73.089		
	Total	91484.564	561			

a. Dependent Variable: OE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Compromising, Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating

The F ratio (139.136) is used to check how reliable methods are in making a good fit of model. P-value .000 < .05 shows a good fit of the model.

Ho: There is no significant difference in conflict management styles (collaborating style, accommodating style, competing style, avoiding style and compromising style) of teachers on the basis of gender.

Table 4
Gender based Difference in Conflict Management Styles of Teachers

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Collaborating	Male	208	15.23	1.06561	4.038	562	.001
	Female	358	14.82	13.8482			
Competing	Male	208	9.86	2.56061	-5.833	562	.000
	Female	358	11.19	2.49865			
Avoiding	Male	208	14.89	1.10010	4.461	562	.001
	Female	358	14.44	1.20255			
Accommodating	Male	208	15.22	.98242	6.433	562	.000
	Female	358	14.44	1.20255			

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	Female	358	14.66	1.05621		392.918	
Compromising	Male	208	15.26	.92722	5.323	562	.001
	Female	358	14.83	1.03386		406.095	

The result of t-test indicates that male and female university teachers differ significantly for all factors of conflict management styles. For collaborating style mean value of male and female teachers is 15.23 and 14.82 respectively which indicates that male use more collaborating style than female when they face conflict. Mean value of competing style for male is 9.86 and female is 11.19 which shows that female use more competing style. Avoiding style mean value for male and female is 14.89 and 14.44 respectively which leads us to result that both male and female are using avoiding style equally. Mean value for accommodating style is 15.22 and 14.66 for male and female teachers whereas for compromising style it is 15.26 and 14.83 for male and female. The mean values of both factors indicate that accommodating and compromising style are more used by male teachers.

P- Value of all factors of conflict management styles are less than .05 which show that significant difference exist for these factors in male and female teachers of universities. Thus significant difference was found in conflict management styles (collaborating style, competing style, accommodating style, avoiding style, and compromising style) of university teacher on the basis of gender and hence the above null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

It was identified that conflict management styles had significant relationship with organizational environment. Collaborating, avoiding, compromising, and accommodating styles of conflict management create positive or constructive environment of the organization but the competing were related negatively. If conflict management styles are used appropriately at the time of conflict then problems of university teachers can be reduced.

Results of the study showed that there was significant difference among male and female teacher's conflict management styles. Results declared that collaborating, accommodating and compromising style were more used by male teachers as compared to female teachers of universities. The female teachers being more competing in nature preferably used competing style of conflict management whereas avoiding style was used equally by male and female teachers.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to find out the relationship of conflict management styles (collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating and compromising styles) of university teachers with organizational environment in public sector universities of Lahore. Results of the study explored that collaborating, accommodating, compromising, and avoiding styles of conflict management had positive relationship with organizational environment whereas the competing factor had negative relation with it. The structure of the environment has been analyzed from a number of different perspectives. In study of Farooqi (2011) no relationship existed between conflict management styles and organizational environment in the old universities of the Punjab

but a weak positive relation was founded in newly established universities. One perspective has to do with how individuals in an organization might perceive the environment (Aldrich, 1975). Copley (2008) studied the relationship between conflict management styles and two different components of environment i.e likability and perceived effectiveness of managers. His results were contrary to the findings of the study that likability and effectiveness was not affected by choice of conflict management style.

Results of the study indicates that 'compromising style' helps in developing positive environment within the organization which are similar to the results of the study by Ma (2007).

The research revealed positive relation between collaborating style of management and the organizational environment but Khanaki and Hassanzadeh (2010) found that the Swedish students are less cooperative under collaborating style of conflict management. Results are in accordance with the research by Farooqi (2011) that the 'avoiding style' has positive effect on the organizational environment.

It was evident that competing style is helpful for maintaining positive environment of the organization. The results of the study conducted by Farooqi (2011) revealed that in the newly established universities 'dominating style' develops teamwork among the University teachers.

The results of significant difference between male and female teachers for conflict management style were supported by the findings of Sadia (2009) and Fink and Brunner (2009). Current study explained that male teachers used more accommodating, collaborating, and compromising style whereas female teachers preferably used competing style of conflict management. But avoiding style was used equally by male and female teachers. Study of Yasin, and Khalid (2015) showed that Females use the avoiding conflict management style more than males but no significant difference found on all other conflict management styles (competing, compromising, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating). Contrarily, Chusmir and Mills (1989) reported that gender has no role in using the conflict management styles.

Recommendations

Study was conducted on public sector university teachers to assess the relationship between conflict management styles of university teachers and organizational environment; further studies may be conducted to explore the difference between the conflict management styles used by the university teachers of public and private sector. Seminars and workshops can also be arranged to guide teachers about different styles to manage conflict in different scenarios.

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