

RELATIONSHIP OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES WITH TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT: Conflict is the natural element of human organization and has obvious impact on employees' professional commitment. The objective of the current study was to investigate the relationship of head teachers' conflict management styles with secondary school teachers' professional commitment. The population of the study was comprised of head teachers and secondary school teachers (SSTs) of public sector secondary schools of Punjab. The researchers used multistage random sampling technique to collect the data. Three districts namely, Lahore, Sahiwal and Multan were randomly selected. From each district 24 schools were randomly selected. Moreover, from each school 3 SSTs were randomly selected. In this way, total sample of the study was 72 secondary schools heads and 216 SSTs. The collected data were analysed through SPSS. The researchers used Pearson *r* to determine the relationship and *t* test for comparison. The analysis revealed that there is relationship between conflict management styles with teachers' professional commitment. Moreover, urban teachers and female teachers are more committed to their profession. The researchers recommended that such type of studies should be conducted across the board to verify and comprehensive results.

Key words: Head teachers, Conflict management, Secondary school teachers (SSTs), Professional commitment

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a natural phenomenon of social organizations because of human interaction. It is a natural phenomenon in all public and private working spheres; therefore, unavoidable component of human activity [1]. In school organization, it is very common to hear that there exists a conflict between administrators and subordinates. It emerges on certain issues like incompatibility between organizational goals and employee's self-interest. This conflict like situation is needed timely action of the administrators because unresolved conflicts affect the smooth functioning of school organization and negatively affects the professional commitment and development of employees [2]. Moreover, it is said that conflict is an inborn factor of human organization [3]. It requires proper handling for the smooth functioning of schools. Moreover, it is empirically proved across the globe that conflict has a lot of impact on teachers' working attitude. It has both positive and negative impact on employees working attitude [4]. Furthermore, mishandled conflict creates tension and social disagreement which resulted in poor organizational performance. Effective management of conflict creates a learning environment based on competitiveness which ultimately lead towards creativity and novelty. In short words, absence of conflict in organization lead towards ineffectiveness. Thus the conflict existence and its proper management is the vital element of school organization [5]. The theorists and practitioners have invented many styles of conflict management. According to Rahim and Bonama [6], there are five styles of conflict management, i.e. avoiding style, dominating style, Obliging style, integrating style and compromising style. Later on most of the researchers have agreed upon these styles five styles to be applied for conflict management [7,8,9]. The characteristics of these styles are as under:

INTEGRATING STYLE

Integrating style means to resolve a conflict problem through exchange of knowledge, utilization of different options, and assessment of dichotomies to reach a solution which is acceptable for both parties. According to experts, [10]

integrating style successfully used at the time when one of the parties fails to resolve an issue alone and feels the need of some collation partner to seek ideas for the solution of the issue. The empirical evidences across the globe reveal that this style is widely used by the administrators [11][12].

OBLIGING STYLE

Obliging style refers to reducing antagonism through general approaches. It is used when one party is enthusiastic to sacrifice a slight with the hope of achieving the maximum from the other party. Similarly, researchers [10,13] reported that obliging style is appropriated when a party deals from weak position with wish that caring relationship is significant with the other party. It produces concord and societal magnetism; however, it minimizes creativity and innovation [14]. On the contrary to this notion, an expert of conflict management [13] stated that obliging style is unproductive only when one party believes about itself to be correct and honorable whereas second party as faulty and corrupt.

DOMINATING STYLE

Dominating style refers to aggressive behavior in which one party endeavors to gain maximum goals disregarding the will or concerns of the other party. There is no respect for the interests of the second party. This style can be used especially at the time when some urgent decision is required and the subordinates are not adept in dealing with uncommon situation and technical decision making process. Powerful parties utilize the dominating style in rapid and sharp decision to gain maximum [10].

AVOIDING STYLE

Avoiding style refers to stay away from the adverse circumstances. This style is lethal for managing important issues. According to [13] avoiding style is inappropriate to make timely and hasty decisions, particularly when groups are not ready to wait. The avoiding party fails in satisfying itself and the others. In some part of world, managers use this style. According to [15], avoiding style was abundantly utilized by Turkish people in conflict management. Moreover, [16] stated that Chinese people give preference to this style to manage conflicts in their respective

organizations.

COMPROMISING STYLE

Compromising style is engaged in reciprocal solution of the problem which is acceptable for both parties. It is utilized at the stage when the two parties wish to conclude the issue via give and take policy. Generally, compromising is considered to be a tentative resolution of the conflict and applied at the time when both of the parties fail in sorting out the issue. Researchers considered it to be unsuitable for complex issues. But it is very unusual and lethal when administrators use this style for the solution of complicated problems and develop the proficient alternate solutions for the problems [10,13].

From the above elaboration conflict and conflict management styles, it is very obvious that conflict is the vital part of human organization and its proper management is fruitful not only for the organization but also for its employees as well. The proper management of conflict directly affects the performance of employees. Moreover, the performance of employees is directly or indirectly based on their professional commitment. Now the question arises what is professional commitment?

Commitment is an agreement to pursue a definite route plan toward a system of action. Commitment has become the mouth, word of theorists and practitioners in the last few decades of 20th century. According to [17], commitment is an individual's recognition and association with an organization. Prior to this, Buchanan [18] stated that commitment is a linear function associated with issues such as organizational recognition, job involvement, and organizational loyalty. Moreover, the employee's commitment in the workplace, with organizational goals, aims, objectives and ethos is called professional commitment. In the viewpoint of [19], Employee's loyalty to the profession is not only underpinned by his strong face in its core values but is also informed by conscious effort to stay within the larger community of the profession.

Researchers [20,21] defined professional commitment as career commitment, career salience, work-related commitment and 'cosmopolitan-local' division. In the light of the above discussion, it is stated that professional commitment is a vital factor in an organization, such as improvement of working performance, which can reduce resignation tendency and enhance higher job satisfaction. Similarly, [19] viewed that professional commitment is correlated to productive behaviors which are positive for organization and people as well. In short, professional commitment is a compulsory aspect in an organization, such as enhancement of effective performance, which can reduce resignation trend and improve higher job satisfaction [22].

It is revealed from various studies that commitment of teachers is intimately connected with their job satisfaction, morale, motivation, and individuality. It is said that a number of teachers see their commitment as a profound love for teaching [23]. Similarly, [24] stated that committed teachers have commitment with every facet of teaching and know how to speak to students' hearts and minds. It is revealed by [25] that professional commitment of teachers has been classified into four following factors. The major factors which involved in teachers' professional commitment are as under:

COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL

Commitment to School refers to teachers' feelings about the objectives and standards of the school as well as strong desires to remain as a member of the school [17]. Commitment to work place has been remained a subject of intense academic discussion among various stakeholders. The expert [26] has established the magnitude of commitment to different directions in the workplace for an improved understanding of employees' attitudes and performance. Similarly, others stated that the professional commitment manifests itself through various variables such as actual performance, organizational citizen behavior, turnover and absenteeism [27]. Later on, empirical research delved into other aspects of commitment such as profession, job or the co-worker. In a literal way, a good teacher is always committed to his school.

COMMITMENT TO TEACHING WORK

Commitment to teaching work means the teacher's psychological affection with the teaching profession [29]. The teachers who are not committed having have a lot of lame excuses to flee away from their work early. According to [30], it refers as teachers' thoughts and practices in his/her daily life towards their profession. Moreover, teachers pleased with his/her work and to make the additional struggle for achieving the best in the school. In short, he feels proud to be teacher.

COMMITMENT TO PROFESSION

Teaching profession is a complex and challenging task. It requires energy and passion to execute. As [31] described that teacher have to maintain a lot of energy and passion to perform the duties which ultimately lead towards job commitment. The role of teachers has expanded as they are now expected to come up with various performances, benchmarks, enhanced departmental controls, pressure and expectations of society, parents at large. Their performance in classrooms is likely to be measured against these indicators [32]. In the rapidly developing world, without love of his profession, improvement in his field for the teacher does not occur. Passion stems from teacher's love for his profession. It is stated by [33] that commitment to teaching occupations displayed in teachers' attitudes toward their teaching occupation. This definition is based on the concepts of professional commitment, career orientation and career commitment.

COMMITMENT TO WORK GROUP

Commitment to work group refers to employee's faithfulness and collaboration with other teachers in his/her school [21]. Cooperation among colleagues and workers is incumbent at workplace. According to [34], the level of job satisfaction is also related to cooperation and interaction among colleagues at work. The empirical evidences rectify that work place is a societal aspect which affects mutual relations and attitudes of workers. It also verifies that better relations and cooperation among workers enhances commitment towards their profession [35]. It was observed by [36] that university employees exhibit higher commitment because of higher cooperation among students and co-worker. Thus the workplace environment with all necessary facilities is a milestone towards the professional commitment among teachers and coworkers.

In the light of the above detailed description of literature, it is verified that professional commitment of teachers is directly linked with the attitude of head teachers and cooperation of co-workers as well as organizational environment. According to [13] there found a strong and significant relationship between conflict management styles and job satisfaction and job commitment. Similarly, [36] reported that conflict management styles have an effect on organizational commitment. From above evidences, it is important to explore the relationship of conflict management styles with teachers' professional commitment at secondary schools in Punjab Pakistan.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem under investigation was to explore the relationship between conflict management styles of secondary school heads and teachers' professional commitment in Punjab Pakistan.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to secondary schools of the province of Punjab Pakistan. Moreover, secondary schools heads and the teachers who were teaching at 9th and 10th class were the subjects of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship of conflict management styles with teachers' professional commitment.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- Following were the research hypotheses of the study
- H₀1. There is no significant relationship between conflict management styles of school administrators with secondary school teachers' professional commitment.
 - H₀2. There is no significant difference of conflict management styles and professional commitment in male and female teachers at secondary level.
 - H₀3. There is no significant difference of conflict management styles between rural and urban teachers' at secondary level.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was quantitative in nature. The survey technique was used. The population of the study was comprised of secondary schools of the province of Punjab. There were 36 districts in the province of Punjab. Thus, it was not practicable for he researchers to approach whole population. So the researchers used random sampling technique to collect the data. Three districts from the 36 were randomly selected, namely, Lahore, Sahiwal and Multan. From these districts 72 secondary schools (24 from each district) were also randomly selected. Moreover, for equal participation 12 male (6 urban and 6 rural schools) and 12 females (6 urban and 6 rural schools) schools were randomly selected. Furthermore, 3 SSTs from each school along with head teacher were the part of the sample. Thus the whole sample size was 72 secondary school heads and 216 secondary school teachers. The true picture of selected sample is presented in the following table.

Table 1. District wise Selected Sample of Head Teachers & SSTs

S. No	District	Head Teachers (U & R)		Total H T	SSTs (U & R)		Total SSTs
		Male	Female		Male	Female	
		1	Lahore		12	12	
2	Sahiwal	12	12	24	36	36	72
3	Multan	12	12	24	36	36	72
Total		36	36	72	108	108	216

As stated earlier that the study was descriptive and survey technique was adopted. The researcher conducted survey through questionnaires. There were one independent variable, head teachers' conflict management style and one dependent variable. The independent variable was measured through Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory (*FOCI*) (Farooqi, Khan, & Arshad, 2014). The dependent variable teachers' professional commitment was measured through Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Educational Organizational Questionnaire (*TOCEOQ*) (Celep, 2013). Through *FOCI* two types of information were gathered, i.e. demographic information and school administrator conflict management styles. Similarly, through *TOCEOQ* again two types of

information were gathered, i.e. demographic information and secondary school teachers' professional commitment. Through these questionnaires, the data were collected from selected sample. For data collection, the researchers personally visited the selected sample. After the completion of the data collection process, the data were tabulated and analysed through SPSS version 20. The detailed description of data analysis is as under.

DATA ANALYSIS

- H₀1. There is no significant relationship between conflict management styles of school administrators with secondary school teachers' professional commitment?

Table 2 (a). Relationship of Conflict Management Styles of School Administrators with Teachers' Professional Commitment

Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation (r)	P-Value
Conflict Management Styles	72	4.81	0.397	-0.088	0.038*
Professional Commitment	216	4.85	0.358		

*P<0.05

It was indicated from the table 2 (a) that statistically significant negative relationship exists between conflict management styles and professional commitment of teachers, $r = -0.088$, $p\text{-value} = 0.038 > 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between conflict

management styles of school administrators with teachers' professional commitment is rejected. It is, therefore, concluded that there is an inverse relationship exist between conflict management styles and professional commitment of teachers at secondary level.

Table 2 (b) Factor Wise Correlation of Conflict Management Styles and Professional Commitment

Factors	Commitment to School		Commitment to Teaching Work		Commitment with Profession		Commitment to Work Group	
	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	R	Sig.	R	Sig.
Integrating Style	-0.025	0.736	-0.040	0.590	0.038	0.615	0.108	0.150
Obliging Style	0.245**	0.002	-0.020	0.786	0.040	0.592	0.059	0.430
Compromising Style	-0.022	0.765	-0.183**	0.004	-0.216*	0.021	-0.061	0.420
Avoiding Style	0.012	0.871	-0.060	0.421	-0.006	0.935	-0.066	0.377
Dominating Style	-0.145	0.022	0.026	0.730	0.231**	0.001	0.034	0.649

$p < 0.01$ **, $p < 0.05$ *

While on comparison among the factors of conflict management styles and professional commitment, it is found only two styles, i.e. obliging style ($r = 0.245$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) and dominating style ($r = 0.231$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$) is positively correlated with the factors commitment to school and commitment to profession respectively. It means increase in one factor will increase the corresponding commitment factor at the same rate and vice versa. On the other hand, compromising style ($r = -0.183$ at $p = 0.004 < 0.01$ & $r = -0.216$ at $p = 0.021 < 0.05$) and dominating ($r = -0.145$ at $p = 0.022 < 0.05$)

style is negatively correlated with factors commitment to work, commitment to profession and commitment to school respectively. Therefore, an increase in one factor will decrease the corresponding commitment factors at the same extend and vice versa. And no other conflict management style is significantly correlated with other commitment factors.

H₀₂. There is no significant difference of conflict management styles and professional commitment in male and female teachers at secondary level.

Table 3. Difference of Conflict Management Styles in Male and Female Teachers at Secondary Level

Variables	Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	P-Value	Effect size (d)
Conflict management styles	Male	36	3.93	.279	70	-1.98	.031*	.508
	Female	36	4.07	.304				
Professional commitment	Male	108	4.60	.338	214	-.246	.006**	.349
	Female	108	4.71	.300				

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

It was found in this study that no significant difference of conflict management styles in male and female teachers at secondary level, conditions; $t(70) = -1.98$, $p = .031$. It was thus concluded that conflict management style are almost same in male and female teachers at secondary level. It was also investigated that there was a significant difference of professional commitment in male and female teachers at

secondary level, conditions; $t(214) = -.246$, $p = .006$. Thus it was concluded that professional commitment of female teachers' ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .300$) was higher than male teachers' ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .338$).

H₀₃. There is no significant difference of conflict management styles between rural and urban teachers' at secondary level.

Table 4. Difference of Conflict Management Styles in Urban and Rural Teachers at Secondary Level

Variables	Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-Value	P-Value	Effect size
Conflict Management Style	Urban	36	4.00	0.283	70	-.012	.01*	.684
	Rural	36	4.20	0.315				
Professional Commitment	Urban	91	4.56	0.295	178	-1.943	.024*	.593
	Rural	89	4.75	0.342				

* $p < 0.05$

It was observed in the above table 4 that there exists significant difference of conflict management styles in urban and rural teachers at secondary level ($t(70) = -.012, p=.01$). It was observed that conflict management styles work better in rural teachers ($M=4.20, SD=.315$) than urban teachers ($M=4.00, SD=.283$). It is thus concluded that conflict management styles work better in rural teachers than urban teachers at secondary level. It was depicted in the above table that there was a statistically significant difference of professional commitment in urban and rural teachers at secondary level ($t(214) = -.012, p=.024$). It was investigated that professional commitment of rural teachers ($M=4.75, SD=.342$) is higher than urban teachers ($M=4.56, SD=.295$). It is thus concluded that rural teachers were more committed to their profession than urban teachers at secondary level.

DISCUSSION

The empirical evidences from the study at hand revealed that conflict management styles have significant correlation with teachers' professional commitment. In the same way, the detailed investigation (factor wise correlation) revealed that obliging style of conflict management has a positive impact on commitment to school. Similarly, dominating style of conflict management has a positive impact on teachers' commitment to their profession. On contrary to this, it is also inferred that compromising style has negative impact on commitment to work and profession.

Similarly, dominating style of conflict management has negative impact on school commitment. The results of the study at hand are in line in with the results of the study of Ahmed and Ahmed [37] which propagates that conflict management styles have strong relationships with job satisfaction and commitment. The current study shows that as whole conflict management styles have a significant relationship with teachers' commitment while factor wise relationship indicated that obliging and compromising styles have a positive impact on commitment to school and commitment to work while dominating style has negative impact on commitment to work.

The researchers' also investigated gender based comparison of conflict management styles and teachers' professional commitment. The results reflected that male and female head teachers used similar styles to manage conflict while professional commitment analysis reveals that female teachers are professionally more committed than male teachers. The results of the study supports the results of Beri and Beri (2016) [38] which tells that female teachers are highly motivated towards their jobs as compared to male teachers. In the same way, study at hand endorsed the results of the study of Sood and Anand (n.d) [39] which stated that female teachers are more committed than their male in their professional life.

Locality based comparison was also investigated by researchers which reveals that conflict management styles are working better in rural teachers as compared to urban teachers. Moreover, it was also observed that rural teachers are professionally more committed to their profession as compared to urban teachers. The results of the current study negates of the results of the study of Shoib, Khalid and

Mahmood (2015) [40] which noted that urban teachers are more committed as compared to rural teachers

CONCLUSIONS

1. It was reflected from the analysis of the current study that head teachers' conflict management styles have significant correlation with teachers' professional commitment ($r = -0.088, p\text{-value}=0.038 > 0.05$). Moreover, factor wise investigation of conflict management styles with professional commitment revealed that obliging style ($r=0.245, p=0.002 < 0.01$) and dominating style ($r=0.231, p=0.001 < 0.01$) is positively correlated with the factors commitment to school and commitment to profession respectively. While compromising style ($r=-0.183$ at $p=0.004 < 0.01$ & $r=-0.216$ at $p=0.021 < 0.05$) and dominating ($r=-0.145$ at $p=0.022 < 0.05$) style is negatively correlated with factors, commitment to work, profession and school.
2. The gender based comparison tells those male and female school administrators' used similar conflict management styles in their respective schools ($t(70) = -1.987, p=.031$). However, the analysis found statistically significant difference of professional commitment in male and female teachers at secondary level ($t(178) = -.246, p=.006$). Thus it was concluded that professional commitment of female teachers' ($M=4.71, SD=.300$) was higher than male teachers ($M=4.60, SD=.338$).
3. The researchers also investigated locale based comparison and correlation of conflict management styles and teachers' professional commitment. It was observed that there exists significant difference of conflict management styles in urban and rural teachers at secondary level ($t(70) = -.012, p=.01$) as conflict management styles works better in rural teachers ($M=4.20, SD=.315$) than urban teachers ($M=4.00, SD=.283$). It was depicted in the above table that there was a statistically significant difference of professional commitment in urban and rural teachers at secondary level ($t(214) = -.012, p=.024$). It was investigated that professional commitment of rural teachers ($M=4.75, SD=.342$) is higher than urban teachers ($M=4.56, SD=.295$). It is thus concluded that rural teachers were more committed to their profession than urban teachers at secondary level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommended that this type of study should be conducted both at elementary and college level to rectify the results from local settings.

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