Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Organizational Commitment in University Teachers

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Academicians need to learn and practice constructive conflict management by using appropriate and effective conflict management styles (McKibben, 2017). The present study investigated the impact of conflict handling strategies in building commitment with their institutions among university teachers by employing a cross-sectional research. The participants included 400 university teachers (Mage = 38, SD = 8.74) serving both in public and private sector institutions situated in Punjab and Federal Capital Islamabad by employing purposive sampling strategy. Their opinion was sought by administering Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (Rahim, 1983) and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Jaros, 2007) and the data collection period was of one year. The findings revealed that teachers scoring higher on integrating, obliging, and compromising tend to have a stronger commitment to their organizations. A hierarchical regression analysis showed that integrating style strongly predicted teachers' commitment to their organizations. The styles to dominate and avoid conflict based situations turned out to be non-significant predictors of organizational commitment. The study has important implications for teaching faculty of universities in handling their conflicts with chairpersons of academic departments.

Keywords: Integrating, obliging, compromising, organizational commitment, normative commitment, affective commitment, continuous commitment.

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In universities, faculty members experience task related and relationship based conflicts which need to be settled amicably. They need to learn effective strategies for the management of interpersonal conflicts for smooth functioning of academic departments (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004). When they manage the conflicts effectively and timely, it leads to greater productivity, less turnover, and accomplishment of organizational goals which maybe in the form of better teaching at higher education level, effective research projects and approval of research grants which further strengthens institutional commitment (Beersma & De Dreu, 2005). The use of effective conflict management styles also leads to many useful outcomes by promoting the creative potential of employees, the capability to sharpen learning, psychological well-being, commitment with organization, and strengthening of teamwork (Schulz-Hardt, Mojzisch, & Vogelgesang, 2008). Contrary to this, when conflicts are not managed properly, workers experience stress, poor decision making and judgment (Pruitt, & Kugler, 2014).

The current study employed the theoretical framework of dual concern to explain conflict management. This descriptive theory postulated that people choose various conflict management strategies consciously keeping in view self-concerns and concern for others. Concern for others was perceived as positive as it reflects co-operation and prosocial orientation whereas concern for self was perceived as negative as it reflects pro-self-motivation (Caputo, Marzi, Maley, & Silic, 2019). Dual concern model narrated five styles to manage conflicts which include integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating, and avoiding. Among these, three conflict handling styles namely integrating, obliging and compromising styles were perceived as peaceful styles (Robinson, 2010). Integrating style was considered as important because it focusses on solving one's own problems as well as the problems of others. Parties making use of this style present their perspective, give arguments to support it and listen to the constructive criticism made by the other party (Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, & Trochim, 2011). This process is facilitated through valuable discussion and open communication to unfold the underlying reasons for conflict. It is also made possible by involving knowledgeable and experienced people to

seek their expert opinion and skillful then consensus is tried to achieve its solution (Ayub, AlQurashi, Al-Yafi, & Jehn, 2017). Obliging style was also perceived as a significant conflict handling strategy as it emphasized the fulfilment of concerns of others. Obliging a person accommodates others but sacrifices one's own needs and self-concerns. People following this style are generous, friendly and self-sacrificing. They try to minimize the negative feelings generated during the process of conflict. Consequently, the negative impact of conflict is reduced to a great extent. In the process of obliging others, the main emphasis is on looking for similarities and ignore the differences to satisfy the needs and desires of others (Tjosvold, 2006). Moreover, compromising style was associated with giving and adopting a moderate position. The concerns of both parties were satisfied partially but not completely. This style helps to prevent a prolonged time and delay in their problems by reducing the differences. It serves the purpose when people have no other way out to come out of the problem. However, it provides short term solution to problems. Moreover, the problem is not explored in depth. Consequently, it may arise at a later stage (Lorenzi, 2004).

        Avoiding and dominating styles are generally discouraged in workplace settings because avoiding style does not solve the problem of any conflicting group and hence the problem stands still. The significant feature of this style is the indifferent attitude towards the problem which is shown by changing the topic or diverting the attention of another person towards any other situation (Currie, Gormley, Roche, & Teague, 2017). Avoiding person ignores the existence of a problem in public. He fails to pursue his concerns due to a lack of assertiveness and the ability to defend his position. Sometimes the problems of other person or group are not solved due to non-co-operative attitude. Avoiding style is perceived as non-peaceful style because it is suppression and termed as a passive style (Morris-Rothschild, & Brassard, 2006). Dominating person or group wins his/her position and achieve his/her goals at the cost of loss of concerns for another person or group. It is synonymous to competing and forcing behavior. They do so by opting a powerful position or use authoritarian approach through command and control. They prove themselves as fair in their approach

and defend it successfully. Dominating style is perceived as non-peaceful style because it is an aggressive style. This situation stimulates the feeling of frustration in losing a person or group. The use of dominating strategy is fine when the other person or group tends to make dangerous judgements which may lead to highly negative outcomes (De Clercq, Thongpapanl, & Dimov, 2009). The use of this style is also justified while interacting with highly assertive people or those who have less knowledge or skills. Sometimes it is used to enforce a novel or a technical decision (Rahim, 2011).

Conflict management styles were found associated with organizational commitment (Hussein, Al-Mamary, & Hassan, 2017). Before addressing the relationship of these variables, it is important to define organizational commitment (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2001; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The construct of organizational commitment was conceived in terms of three elements which are continuance, normative, and affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Continuance commitment (CC) indicates the desire of a worker to continue one's job in the organization. It shows that worker is well aware of the price of leaving the organization in the form of investment of time, money and effort (Revuelto-Taboada, Canet-Giner, & Balbastre-Benavent, 2021). Normative Commitment (NC) develops as a legation obligation of a worker to work for the organization. It is based upon worker's belief that organization provides pay and fringe benefits to them and hence one is ethically bound to serve the organization. It motivates the person to emphasize organizational development instead of personal growth (Solmuş, 2004). Affective Commitment (AC) reflects the presence of an emotional bond with the organization which is indicated in the form of involvement and participation in workplace activities designed to achieve the major goals of organization. People identify and relate themselves with their organization. As a result, workers are motivated to put in their maximum efforts to uplift the name of their organization (Balay, 2006).

Studies have shown that integrating style was positively associated with organizational commitment (Shih, & Susanto, 2010). People who follow integrating style tend to focus on solving the problems

with mutual understanding and show high concern for their own as well as concerns for others (Trudel, & Reio, 2011). It promotes collaboration of two groups when they present their ideas openly, listen to the arguments of each other, and analyze the costs and benefit of all possible solutions. Moreover, it ensures goal accomplishment through mutual discussion and better judgement (Lorenzi, 2004). Integrating style endorses high sense of social responsibility which further strengthen their relationship with the organization. Moreover, obliging the instructions of chairperson was positively linked to organizational commitment. It happened because obliging the chairperson during conflict situations indicated high concern for the needs of others. They sacrifice their own comfort to fulfil the needs of others. Their communication is marked by the statements showing agreeableness (Rahim, 2017). For example, I agree with you, let us forget the conflict, or you are right". They also attempt to reduce their negative feelings generated by the conflict by showing friendliness and adding comfort and psychological well-being in their lives (Tjosvold, Hui, & Law, 2001). The use of compromising style reduces the conflicts, normalizes the working relationships and diverts their energies towards the tasks. This situation encourages people to stay connected to their organizations (Dobkin, & Pace, 2006). People following compromising style show adopt give and take policy. Both groups feel satisfied to some extent. The issue is resolved temporarily and directly by seeking moderate position. The use of compromise style stops the prolongation of an issue and opens new ways for moving forward (Ilgan, 2020).

       Studies had shown the negative association of dominance and avoidance with organizational commitment (Rahim, 2011). Dominating style lowered commitment with the organization because it was based upon command and control for the satisfaction of one's interests. Another reason was that dominating people make use of power to achieve their goal and gain maximum benefits to win their position. They extend threats, bluffs and persuasive comments to the other party. It aggravates the situation, increases interpersonal problems and cultivates negative attitude towards the other party. Consequently, relationship conflicts arise which lowers the organizational commitment (McKibben, 2017).

Avoiding style lowers the organizational commitment of employees. Firstly, the use of avoiding style fails to build a bond among employees at the workplace and therefore they can't make good teams. Consequently, they don't stand together for the completion of their projects. Secondly, it is inappropriate because it keeps the problem in a standstill and stagnant position. Thirdly, it is useless to avoid when the problem is equally important for the concerned person (Thomas, Bliese, & Jex, 2005).

Some indigenous studies are conducted to assess conflict management strategies in the academic setting. A study examined the preferences of conflict management styles of Pakistani schoolteachers in their encounters with principal and colleagues. Data was collected from 100 school teachers with the help of an indigenous tool titled as Organizational Conflict Management Inventory. The first preference of schoolteachers for conflict-handling styles was integrating, second preference was avoiding style and third preference was the compromising style (Zulfiqar, 2014). Another similar study explored the impact of the college sector, marital status, and family structure on conflict handling styles of college teachers. The sample included 120 college teachers who completed the Organizational Conflict Management Inventory. Results showed that teachers serving in public colleges used integrating style more than those teaching in private colleges. Female teachers were highly dominating than male teachers. Additionally, those who were single and living in joint families obliged more than their counterparts (Saeed, 2015).

An indigenous survey was conducted to find out the conflict handling strategies of faculty members and administrative staff members serving in public and private universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Data were gathered from 2025 teachers (men = 1642, women = 383) and 350 administrators of four universities (public = 2; private = 2) by using a self-developed questionnaire. Results showed that the conflict was more intense in public universities as compared to private ones. Moreover, the type of conflict more prevalent in public universities was relationship-based conflict which was highly detrimental for their smooth functioning whereas task conflict was more common in

private universities. Moreover, teachers used compromising and collaborating to handle task conflicts and they used avoiding style to manage emotional conflicts (Din, Khan, Rehman & Bibi, 2011).

Rationale

The indigenous research literature with reference to conflict-handling styles indicated this phenomenon was explored for school and college teachers in academic settings. These studies investigated how do teachers manage their conflicts with principals and colleagues in schools and colleges (Zulfiqar, 2014; Saeed, 2015). Another study on conflict management styles of university teachers was conducted by taking the sample from only one province. i.e. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The present study extended it by focusing on the sample of university teachers from Punjab province and Federal Capital of Pakistan. Moreover, the present research employed standardized tools to measure the study variables and also included an organizational based outcome. The current research is an initiative to cover this gap in indigenous literature to explore the conflict management strategies of university teachers in conflict-related scenarios in relation to its organizational based outcome.

Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework of Study*
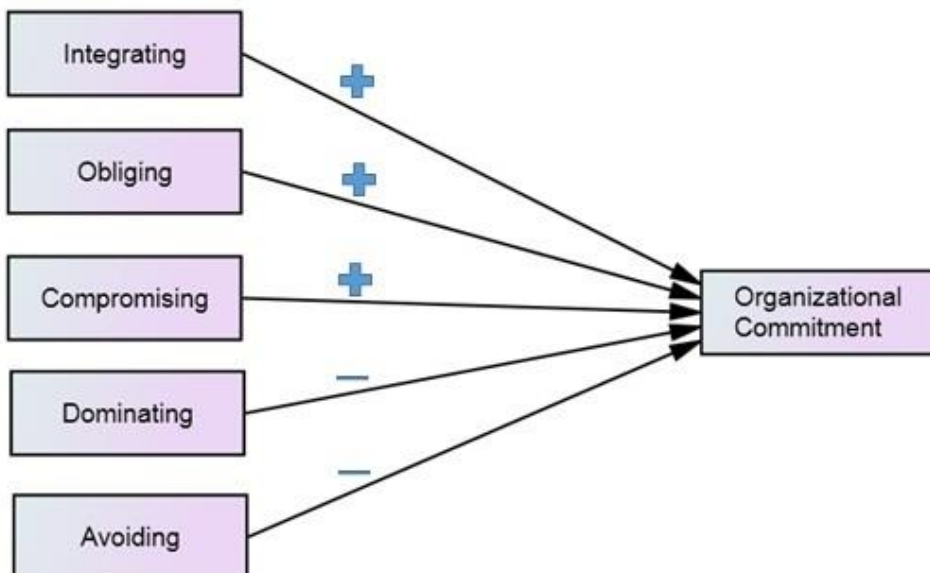
Hypotheses

1.   Obliging, compromising and integrating styles are likely to be positively related to organizational commitment.

2.   Avoiding and dominating styles are likely to be negatively related to organizational commitment.

3.   Obliging, compromising and integrating styles are likely to predict organizational commitment positively.

4.   Avoiding and dominating styles are likely to predict organizational commitment negatively.

Method

Design

A Cross sectional research was employed to seek the opinion of the university faculty members about conflict management styles concerning organizational commitment.

Sample

The participants of this study were 400 university teachers (women = 195; men = 205) with the mean age of 38 years (SD = 8.74) and average job tenure of 9 years (SD=5.58). The sampling strategy used was purposive and sample estimation was made through g power analysis. The initial sample consisted of 467 faculty members but data of 67 participants was excluded due to incomplete responses. The sample of diverse age range and job tenure was selected to assess the differences in their responses about conflict handling strategies based on their job experience. The inclusion criteria for sample was two-fold: a) only those teachers were included who had faced conflict with the chairperson of their department. b) Secondly, they had worked at least for two years under that chairperson. The teachers who were part of visiting faculty or on short term contract were excluded. They belonged to six universities of Punjab and Federal capital Islamabad which were approved by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) and rated as high rank

universities. The sample had representatives of both genders, different age groups, job tenure and designations.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample (*N*=400)

Demographics	*f* (%)	*M(SD)*
Age		38 (8.74)
Job Experience		9.5 (5.97)
Gender		
Male	205 (51.2)	
Female	195 (48.8)	
Qualification		
M.Sc.	21 (5.2)	
M. Phil	221 (55.3)	
Ph. D	158 (39.5)	
Department		
Social Sciences	179 (43.1)	
Natural Sciences	200 (47.6)	
Language	21 (9.3)	
Job Sector		
Public	300(78.1)	
Private	100 (21.9)	
Designation		
Lecturer	198 (49.6)	
Assistant Professor	148 (38.9)	
Associate Professor	34 (8.6)	
Professor	20 (5.0)	
Marital Status		
Single	91 (22.75)	
Married	300 (75.0)	
Divorced	9 (2.2)	
Family System		
Nuclear	160 (40.0)	
Extended	240 (60.0)	

Instruments

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory–II (ROCI–II) Form "A". This self-report inventory measured five different conflict handling styles with the help of 28 items (Rahim, 1983). The present study used original version of scale which was in English language because the participants were well acquainted with English language. These conflict handling styles included obliging (6 items), compromising style (4 items), Integrating (7 items), avoiding (6 items), and Dominating (5 items). It required the participants to respond on the rating scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This inventory was selected because it had good reliability indicated by satisfactory Cronbach alpha coefficients. Secondly, the administration time for this inventory was approximately 15 minutes. Sample items from five scales were: "I try to investigate an issue with my chairperson of department to find a solution acceptable to us" (IN). "I generally try to satisfy the needs of my chairperson of department" (OB). "I use my influence to get my ideas accepted" (DO). "I try to stay away from disagreement with my chairperson of department" (AV). "I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks" (CO). It is self-report and self-administered inventory which took 10 minutes to complete.

Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS). Another scale used in the present study was organizational commitment scale which was developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and revised by Jaros (2007). It contained 20 items with response format of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). It measured three subscales which were "Affective Commitment" (AC) with 8 items, "Continuance Commitment" (CC) with 6 items and "Normative Commitment" (NC) with 6 items. The author of scale had reported good psychometric properties. The administration time for this scale was 7 minutes on average. Sample items from three subscales were: "I am very happy being a member of this organization" (AC). "I am loyal to this organization because I have invested a lot in it, emotionally, socially, and economically" (CC). "This organization has a mission that I believe in and am committed to" (NC).

Procedure

The commencement of this research took place with the approval of the research topic from the institutional review board both at departmental and university level. Then formal permission was sought from the authors of measures used in this study by purchasing it. OCS was in the public domain and hence free to use for research purpose. Afterwards, stratified sampling technique was used for data collection and this process was proceeded with the formal permission of the vice-chancellors of different universities. Then informed consent was taken from the faculty members. For this purpose, research objectives were explained to them. Moreover, confidentiality and anonymity of their responses were also assured. All research ethical considerations were maintained in this process.

Results

Hypotheses of the present study were tested by the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to investigate the relationship among study variables and hierarchical multiple regression was performed to examine the role of conflict management styles in predicting organizational commitment. Model testing on AMOS was carried out to examine model fit indices when multiple regression was performed on AMOS.

Table 2 *Correlation Matrix of all Study Variables* (*N*=400)

	Variables	*A*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	INT	.90	3.75	0.77	-	.11*	.06	.40**	.37**	.58**	.49**	.14**	.41**
2	DOM	.77	2.64	0.79		-	.08	.07	.09	.03	-.13*	.16**	.07
3	AVO	.76	3.47	0.82			-	.37**	.23**	.17*	.05	.19*	.15*
4	OB	.87	3.58	0.74				-	.43**	.45**	.25**	.20**	.33**
5	COMP	.71	3.66	0.70					-	.39**	.23**	.16**	.37**
6	OC	.84	4.70	0.85						-	.75**	.35**	.80**
7	AC	.79	5.04	1.09							-	.11*	.41**
8	CC	.76	4.03	1.21								-	.44**
9	NC	.80	4.93	1.14									-

Note: INT = Integrating; DOM = Dominating; AVO = Avoiding; OB = Obliging; COMP = Compromising; OC = Organizational Commitment; AC = Affective Commitment; CC = Continuance Commitment; NC = Normative Commitment.

Table 2 indicates that integrating has significant positive and moderate relationship with organizational commitment (r= .58, p<.01), affective commitment (r= .49, p< p< .01) and normative commitment (r= .41, p< .01). Dominating has non-significant relationship with organizational commitment (r= .03, p=ns) but low, inverse and significant relationship with affective commitment (r= -.13, p< .05). Avoiding style has significant but low correlation with organizational commitment (r= .17, p< .05), continuous commitment (r= .19, p<0.05), normative commitment (r= .15, p< .05) but non-significant relationship with affective commitment (r= .05, p=ns). Obliging has significant positive and moderate relationship with organizational commitment (r= .45, p<.01), normative commitment (r= .33, p< .01). Compromising has significant positive and moderate relationship with organizational commitment (r= .39, p<.01), low correlation with affective commitment (r=.23, p< .01) and normative commitment (r= .33, p< .01).

Table 3

Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Organizational Commitment among University Teachers (N = 400)

Predictors	ΔR^2	β	Organizational Commitment 95%CI	
			UL	*LL*
Step 1	.006			
Age		.09	-.67	.40
Job tenure		-.03	-.41	.24
Step 2	.20**			
Integrating		.35*	4.58	.94
Obliging		.21*	.28	.88
Compromising		.17*	.09	1.40
Step 3	.005			
Dominating		-.14	-.46	.22
Avoiding		-.13	-.08	.69
Total R^2	.20**			

**p<.01. *p<.05.

A three-stage hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to investigate the role of conflict management styles in

predicting organizational commitment. At stage 1, age and job tenure was entered in the regression model as control variables for organizational commitment. At stage 2, conflict management styles (integrating, obliging, and compromising) reported as positive correlates of organizational commitment in past literature (Balay, 2007) were entered. At stage 3, conflict management styles (avoiding, dominating) reported as negative correlates of organizational commitment in past literature were entered (Kassim, & Ibrahim, 2014). Results revealed that age and job tenure did not contribute significantly to organizational commitment. Conflict management styles found as positive correlates of organizational commitment, integrating ($\beta = .28$, $t(398) = 5.85$, $p < .01$), obliging ($\beta = .16$, $t(398) = 3.01$, $p < .003$), and compromising ($\beta = .11$, $t(398) = 2.29$, $p < .02$) significantly predicted organizational commitment. Conflict management styles found as negative correlates of organizational commitment, dominating ($\beta = -.03$, $t(398) = .54$, $p =$ ns) and avoiding ($\beta = .04$, $t(398) = .80$, $p =$ ns) did not significantly predict organizational commitment.

Integrating style was the most significant predictor of organizational commitment and accounted for 15 % variance in organizational commitment, $R^2 = .146$, $F(1, 398) = 78.74$, $p < .01$. Obliging style accounted for 4 % variance in organizational commitment, $R^2 = .115$, $F(2, 397) = 52.34$, $p < .01$. Compromising explained 1% variance in organizational commitment, $R^2 = .083$, $F(3, 396) = 37.37$, $p < .01$. Together integrating, obliging and compromising accounted for 20 % variance in organizational commitment.

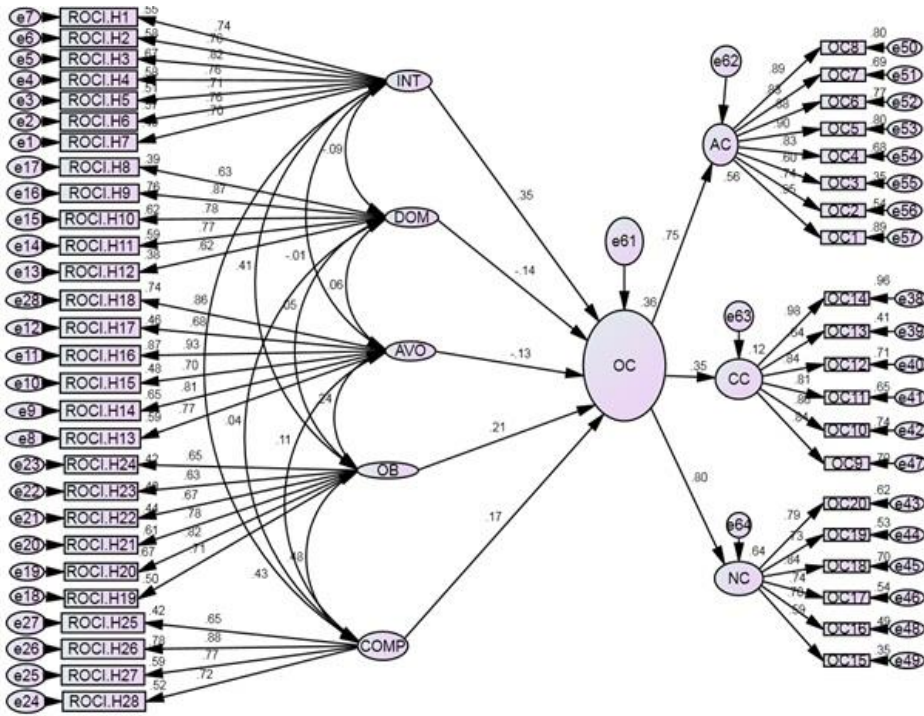Figure 2: *Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Organizational Commitment*

Table 4

Model Fit Indices for Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Organizational Commitment

Model	Model Fit Indices						
	X^2	Df	X^2/df	GFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1	2095.55	1062	1.97	.82	.91	.92	.049

Table 4 indicates that proposed model had good fit with data and model fit indices are within recommended range.

Table 5

Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Different Domains of Organizational Commitment

Predictors	Normative Commitment		Continuance Commitment		Affective Commitment	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Constant						
Step 1	.094***		.02**		.15***	
Integrating		.31***		.14***		.39***
Step 2	.05***		.02**		.009*	
Integrating		.21***		.07		.35***
Obliging		.24***		.17***		.10*
Step 3	.008*		.003		.006	
Integrating		.18***		.05		.33***
Obliging		.21***		.14**		.07
Compromising		.10*		.06		.09
Step 4	.000		.02**		.04***	
Integrating		.18***		.05		.33***
Obliging		.21***		.14**		.07
Compromising		10*		.06		.10*
Dominating		.02		.13**		-.19***
Step 5	.001		.01**		.000	
Integrating		.18***		.06		.33***
Obliging		.19***		.09		.07
Compromising		. 10*		.04		.10*
Dominating		.02		.14**		-.19***
Avoiding		.03		.13**		-.003
Total R^2	.15		.07		.21	

***$p<.001$. **$p<.01$. *$p<.05$.

Step 5 indicates that integrating ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), obliging ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$), and compromising styles ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) significantly predict normative commitment and together these predictors explain 15% variance in normative commitment. Among these predictors, integrating was the strongest predictor of normative commitment. Step 5 also indicates that dominating ($\beta = .14$, $p < .01$) and avoiding ($\beta = .13$, $p < .01$) significantly predict continuous commitment and together these predictors explain 7% variance in continuous commitment.

Integrating ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$), dominating ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$) and compromising ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) significantly predict affective commitment and together these predictors explain 22% variance in continuous commitment.

Figure 3: *Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Different Domains of Organizational Commitment*
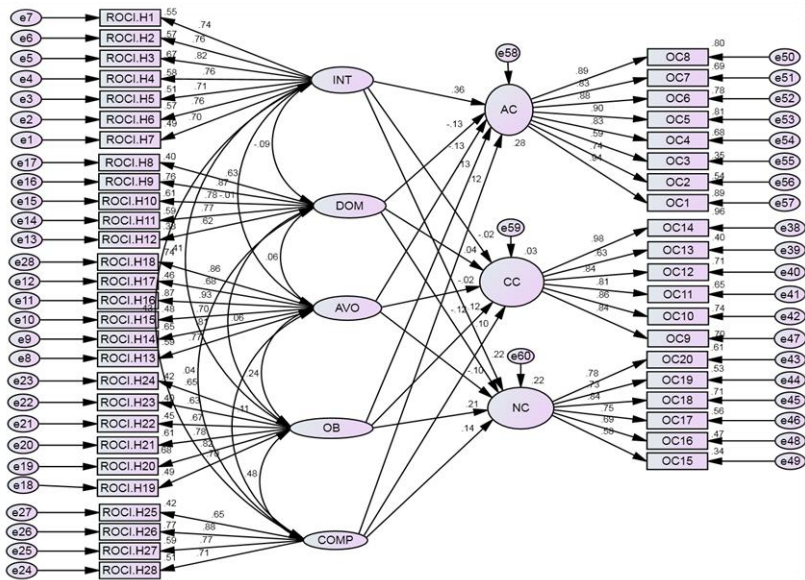

Table 6

Model Fit Indices for Conflict Management Styles as Predictors of Different Domains of Organizational Commitment

Model	Model Fit Indices						
	X^2	Df	X^2/df	GFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1	2189.55	1055	1.97	.87	.91	.91	.05

Table 6 indicates that proposed model had good fit with data and model fit indices are within recommended range.

Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to determine the role of conflict management styles in predicting organizational commitment among university teachers. Results of this study supported the first hypothesis that integrating, obliging, and compromising styles would have a significant positive predictive relationship with organizational commitment. These styles contributed positively to achieving the goals of their department. Previous studies endorse this finding and suggest that employees who were highly integrating, compromising and obliging were highly committed with their organizations (Vigil-King, 2000; Van de Vliert, et al., 1995). Existing literature has also revealed that the use of dominance and avoidance may decrease the commitment with the organization (Van de Vliert, Euwema, & Huismans, 1995). Past literature has revealed the positive relationship of obliging, compromising and collaborating styles with organizational commitment (Kassim, & Ibrahim, 2014).

Faculty members using integrating style tend to be more committed with their universities by promoting co-operation and mutual benefit for each other which further helped them to make better teams and appropriate decisions. Studies which highlighted the effectiveness of integrating style in managing conflicts pointed out that integrating style involves open discussion on opposing viewpoints and willingness to show co-operation towards each other resulting in strengthening commitment with the organization (Tjosvold, et al., 2001). Similarly, Wong et al., (2002) supported this idea that co-operation strengthens the bond of employees with the organization. Nygaard and Dahlstrom (2002) recognized the role of participative decision-making during integration which helps to empower the employees and provides them with a platform where they express differences of opinion. Employees using integrating style tend to identify themselves with the organization and internalize their goals and values. Moreover, commitment to university was also increased when they employed a compromising style by negotiating with chairpersons to find the middle way. Similarly, those who obliged their chairperson also showed high commitment by giving

more importance to concerns of chairperson and ignoring his personal concerns.

Findings of the study supported the second hypothesis that integrating, obliging and compromising styles would be significant positive predictors of organizational commitment. This finding supported a previous study which indicated that integrating, obliging and compromising styles were significant predictors of organizational commitment (Balay, 2007). Findings also indicated that integrating style emerged as the strongest predictor of organizational commitment among significant predictors. One reason for the effectiveness of integrating style could be that it develops trust, mutual understanding and positive perceptions about each other when they sit together, listen to other's perspective, exchange facts and figures in a constructive manner and engage in constructive controversy. Consequently, they make deliberate efforts to maximize both their own and other outcomes.

Similarly, faculty members who obliged the chairperson in managing conflicts are usually perceived as non-threatening. The finding of this study is consistent with the work of Milgram (1974) who pointed out that people comply with authority at the workplace to safeguard their stability at the workplace. The use of the obliging style with higher authority was found common among people living in collectivistic cultures (Smith & Bond, 1998). The faculty members using obliging style were committed to staying with a university which means that they were ready to work earnestly to uplift the profile of their university in high ranked universities. They were inclined to prefer university goals over their personal goals and willing to work selflessly to achieve them.

Compromising style positively predicted organizational commitment because faculty members used a middle ground position to manage their conflicts with chairperson and promoted win-win situation to a moderate level. Coote, Forrest, and Tam (2003) elaborated that compromising style enhanced compliance and tendency to agree with others, thus, decreasing the propensity to leave an organization. This finding supported the model of stress (Cox, 2001), proposing effective interpersonal relationships and a higher understanding of others can function as a buffer to improve interpersonal relations during conflict

situations. Compromising style embraced a win-win approach, concern towards self and others, co-operation, and problem-solving. These characteristics of compromising style contribute to the predictive value of organizational commitment (Ayoko, 2007).

Results of the study did not support the second hypothesis that the dominating and avoiding styles would negatively correlate and predict organizational commitment. Faculty members perceived that dominating style did not predict organizational commitment because this style was based on win-lose orientation. The faculty members who opted for dominating style tend to pursue their own goals exclusively and ignore the goals of others. They try to satisfy their concerns by coercion and sometimes harm others in order to pursue their own goals. Nelson and Cox (2004) pointed out that dominating style follows the autocratic approach which aggravates dysfunctional outcomes of conflict. Consequently, the use of a dominating style could not contribute to organizational commitment. Existing literature revealed that the use of dominance and avoidance may decrease the commitment with the organization (Van de Vliert, Euwema, & Huismans, 1995).

Similarly, faculty members perceived that avoiding style did not predict organizational commitment because it is a passive approach to conflict management based on lose-lose orientation and "let go policy". Those who avoid conflicts tend to be indifferent towards their own as well as others' goals. They make no deliberate attempts to address the task as well as relationship conflicts. Consequently, conflict situations are not managed and most of the times get worsen over time.

Findings of the study showed that avoiding and dominating styles were significant predictors of continuance commitment. Although avoiding and dominating styles were ineffective predictors of organizational commitment yet they predicted one's continuance commitment with the university. It means that the faculty members using avoiding and dominating style in managing conflicts with chairperson prefer to stay in the same university. Faculty members using avoiding style with chairperson continued their membership with the university because they were well aware of the costs associated with leaving the organization. They do not intend to join other universities because

changing the university would not bring any remarkable increase in their salary package and fringe benefits. Secondly, they would have to lose some financial benefits (pension, provident fund) in case of leaving the university. Findings of the study also indicated that faculty members using dominating style also stay connected with their universities to fulfill their needs and expectations in relation to financial rewards and status. Hence it can be said that faculty members using avoiding and dominating styles continued their membership with university on the basis of cost-benefit analysis of financial rewards.

Additional analyses on different domains of organizational commitment indicated that integrating, obliging and compromising were significant predictors of normative commitment, an important domain of organizational commitment. The faculty members employing these conflict management styles felt obliged to stay with university and earnestly work to bring it in the comity of high ranked universities. They preferred university goals over their personal goals and worked selflessly to achieve them to uplift the profile of their university (Song, Xie, & Dyer, 2000). These conflict management styles also predicted overall organizational commitment as well.

Results of the study also indicated that integrating and compromising predicted affective commitment as well. Faculty members who were highly integrating and compromising identify themselves with their university, consider the goals of universities and departments as their own goals and strive hard to achieve them. They take pride in being associated with their university. They represent their university at academic forums to strengthen their professional identity as well as institutional identity. For instance, faculty members present their research work in conferences held at other universities to gratify their own professional concerns as well as the concerns of their university. Dominating also negatively predicted affective commitment. It indicated that faculty members who tend to show dominance towards the chairperson had a low affective commitment. They showed less emotional attachment with their university and could not identify themselves with its goals (Tinsley, & Brett, 2001).

Conclusion

In the light of above-mentioned findings, it can be concluded that the faculty members who managed conflicts with chairperson by showing collaboration, obedience and compromise had better organizational commitment as well as normative commitment. Among these predictors, collaboration with chairperson was the most significant predictor of organizational commitment. Avoiding and dominating styles predicted continuous commitment whereas integrating and compromising styles positively predicted affective commitment while dominating style negatively predicted affective commitment.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

The current study has 15% sample drop-out rate which can be minimized in future studies by asking the participants to fill the missing responses at the time of collecting questionnaires from the participants. Although the sample size was appropriate for the present study but it was taken only from Punjab province and Federal Capital Islamabad. Future studies may include the sample from other provinces of Pakistan. Moreover, the questionnaires used in the present study were psychometrically sound for the present sample, however the indigenous questionnaire for conflict handling strategies of faculty members can be developed to explore the phenomenon in Pakistani context.

Implications

Findings of the present study can be helpful for university teachers in choosing effective conflict management style when they experience conflicts with the chairperson. In general, they can opt for integrating approach as it helps to solve problems more effectively. The study would be beneficial for university teachers as it had identified that compromising and obliging style can help in managing their relationship conflicts with the chairperson. This would in turn enhance their affective commitment of teachers in organizations.

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