

Effects of School Principals' Conflict Management Styles on Teachers' Job Performance

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Abstract

The basic aim of the research at hand was to investigate the effects of conflict management styles of school principals on teachers' job performance. To meet the major objective of the study, the targeted population was comprised of public sector secondary schools in the Punjab province. As the population was most scattered so the researchers used multi-stage sampling techniques to approach the whole population. At the 1st stage Gujranwala division was randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. At the 2nd stage, 176 secondary schools from three districts viz. Narowal, Gujranwala, and Sialkot were selected randomly. Among these 176 schools, 100 were male and 76 were female secondary schools. At the 3rd stage, 532 SSTs were randomly selected from the respective schools. It was a quantitative study and a survey technique was used to conduct it. The researchers used two questionnaires namely, FOCI for measuring school principals' styles of managing conflicts and TPES for measuring their respective teachers' job performance. Using MS Excel 2010 and SPSS version 24, statistical procedures (t-test, ANOVA, and regression analysis) were applied to analyze and interpret the data. It was determined that there was a strong correlation between teachers' job performance and the conflict management styles used by school leaders. Moreover, in conflict management styles, integrating and obliging styles had a positive effect whereas avoiding, compromising and dominating styles negatively effects teachers' job performance. The researchers have recommended that mix method research may be applied to validate the results of the study. Beyond further research, it is suggested that school Principals should be trained for better conflict management.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management Styles, Teachers' Job Performance

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Background of the Study:

There will always be conflict in any institution (Farooqi, 2011). It is a social issue involving two or more people, families, or communities. As Rahim (2000) defined it as a collaborative state established in unsuitability, difference, or variance within or between social objects. From the literature, it is proven that it is an unavoidable factor in any organization as it poses great management challenges (Adomi & Anie, 2006). Carter and Phillips (2017) called it a double-edged weapon as it has both negative and positive impact on the performance of workers and organizations. It can waste an organization's resources, time, and energy, if not handled timely and wisely. On the other hand, it makes room for creativity and innovation if it is managed effectively (Shih & Susanto, 2010).

School is a social organization where individuals learn social adjustment. But conflicts are also a routine matter there (Catana, 2015). These conflicts can be of three types: teacher-student conflict, teacher-teacher conflict, and teacher-head teacher conflict. It all depends upon school norms (Johnson & Johnson 2006). Conflict is good if it is managed timely otherwise it is damaging to a school's performance (Onsarigo, 2007). Summing up the concept of conflict, it is revealed that managing conflict is better than avoiding as it is good for making progress, growth and development (Din, Khan & Bibi, 2011). It cannot be eliminated but its' intensity may be minimized by careful resolution of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict. Here, the question arises how conflicts can be minimized and managed for organizational growth and development?

There are certain styles and techniques available in the literature to cope the conflicting situations. These styles and techniques are the behavioral patterns that are used by administrators while dealing with conflicts (Moberg, 2001). The two aspects of conflict management styles are self- and other-centeredness. Self-concern is about an individual's attempt to satisfy himself. While the concern for others is about an individual's attempt to satisfy others. Various theorists and practitioners have described various styles and techniques in their studies viz. integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding and compromising (Rahim & Psenicka, 2002). A detailed description of these styles is given below:

Integrating style is sometimes called collaborating. This style is cooperative as it is about both, self-concern and others-concern (Robins & Judge, 2009). It reaches an effective solution. It is suitable for long-term planning and vision of an organization (Farooqi, 2011). Whereas, in obliging style, the manager demonstrates a selfless attitude by prioritizing the needs and concerns of others before their own (Rahim, 2000). It is to give up slightly or step backward from their opinion or decision (Farooqi, 2011). The managers who follow obliging style are passive and cooperative with others (Chan, Sit & Lau, 2014). According to Rothschild (2006), this style is beneficial in the sense that it

brings harmony to an organization. In dominating style, self-concern is prioritized over concern for others. This approach creates a lose-lose position or competitive circumstances between two persons or parties (Rahim, 2002). Avoiding style shows a lack of concern for others as well as for oneself. This style is like withdrawal from any situation. According to Kraybill (2008), it is a cowardly behavior of a manager in which he behaves like a turtle that retreats inside its own case and stays away from any challenge. A compromising style has a moderate regard for oneself and others (Victor, 2012). This style employs a give-and-take policy for mutually beneficial decisions and benefits. This is a temporary solution to a difficult problem (Rahim, 2002).

Job performance is the term of Organizational Behavior which is simply defined as how an employee works. Munchinsky (2000) defines it as the sum of observable and measurable activities based on the objectives of an organization. For Sa'atchi, Kamkari, and Askarian, (2013), it is applying knowledge and ability to perform special tasks. Armstrong and Murlis (2007) call it the record of an individual's success. Job performance of teachers means the sum of all curricular and co-curricular activities a teacher does at school (Hamid, Hassan & Ismail, 2012). It includes all verbal and nonverbal actions of a teacher that improve students' learning (Polk, 2006). There are specific factors that are fundamental in teachers' job performance e.g., subject knowledge, communication skills, analytical abilities, and other professional ethics. By following these factors teachers can enhance their job performance to the optimum level (Rao & Kumar, 2004).

The evaluation of teachers' job performance is extremely helpful for enhancing the quality of education (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997). This evaluation is a formal way to check teachers' effectiveness and efficiency against some set criteria (De La Rosa, 2001). A good appraisal makes a teacher confident and more professional (OECD, 2009). Darling-Hammond (2000) narrates six factors for teachers' performance evaluation: forecasting, willingness, self-assurance, understanding and information of work instructional skills, attitude, and class management skills. Stronge (2007), wished for the following canons for real instruction, i.e., specialized information, the delivery of education, learning environment, professionalism, evaluation for learning, and the advancement of the students. In the school sector, the teachers' job performance is measured through Annual Confidential Report (ACR) which consists of six major factors, i.e., knowledge of work, power of expression, analytical prowess, oversight and direction, decision-making skills, and production and quality of work. Through the assessment of these factors, the annual performance report of teachers is measured. A detailed description of these factors follows:

As for as Power of Expression is concerned, it is the ability and potentiality of a person to influence others' behavior through conversation (Foley, 2006). *According to Marshal (2001), the teacher's speech must be grammatically and syntactically valid. In the same way, Knowledge Work* means a teacher's knowledge proficiency and grip on his/her subject. A teacher should have updated knowledge and skills with the latest advancements (OECD, 2009). Decision-making is the core component of the process of teaching and learning. It is observed that teaching is all about decision-making. A teacher has to make several decisions, such as deciding which methodologies to use for education, preparing lessons, establishing goals for their students, and picking evaluation methods, among other things. (Stanovich & Stanovich (2003). Moreover, the analytical Ability of teachers has the main role to play in their performance. The question is what is capacity for analysis? It is defined as the capacity to use logic in different situations to solve problems. It is the most important quality of teaching (Zottman, Fisher & Schrader, 2010). Furthermore, in teachers' performance Supervision and Guidance has an equal role to play. Teaching is a process of supervising a learner's behaviour and providing him guidance in different conflict-like situations, career exploration, healthy life choices, etc. (Gysbers & Moore, 1981). Last but not least, teachers' Work Output and Quality is the major pillar of their performance. The quality of education is commonly acknowledged to be directly related to the quality of teachers (Rubio, 2009). In short, the teachers' work output and quality have a key role to play in their performance.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is an undeniable fact of the world. No one can refrain from it. It is also present in schools where individuals learn social adjustment. It has both negative and positive effects. It depends upon a manager as if he knows how to control and manage conflict it may become a blessing in disguise. By managing conflicts, a manager can enhance the job performance of the employees. The primary aim of this investigation is to determine the potential impact of school principals' conflict management styles on the job performance of their teachers.

Delimitations

The present study was confined to secondary schools in the public sector within the Gujranwala division of the Punjab (Pakistan). Both male and female school Principals of rural and urban locality were selected for measuring Conflict Management Styles. Similarly, the teachers have also been selected from the respective schools to measure their job performance.

Purpose of the Study

The study under discussion was planned to examine the association/relationship between the conflict management styles of school principals and job performance of their teachers in the public sector schools of the Punjab province of Pakistan. Moreover, the researchers also explored the connection between job performance and conflict management styles of teachers in the public sector schools of Punjab on the base of gender and locale.

Hypothesis

Following were the hypotheses of the research work:

- H1: There exists a significant relationship between the School Principals' Conflict Management Styles and job performance of teachers.
- H2: There exists a significant difference between male and female School Principals' Conflict Management Styles and job performance of teachers.
- H3: There exists a significant difference between the rural and urban school Principals' Conflict Management Styles and job performance of teachers.

Research Design

The study was quantitative in nature and correlation between the variables was also calculated. Further, the data was collected using the survey technique. The main purpose was to collect data from public school principals to analyze their conflict management styles and from their respective teachers to measure their performance. Data was also collected from the teachers at the respective schools to measure their performance under the supervision of their respective school principals.

Population

The populace of the study was comprised of public/government sector secondary schools of the Punjab province of Pakistan to examine the effect of Conflict Management Styles on the Job Performance of Teachers.

Sample of the Study

As the population was most scattered so the researchers used multi-stage sampling techniques to approach the whole population. At the 1st stage Gujranwala division was randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. At the 2nd stage, 176 secondary schools from three districts viz. Narowal, Gujranwala, and Sialkot were selected randomly. At the 3rd stage, 532 SSTs were randomly selected working at the same school. Because these teachers had such a significant impact on the careers of their

pupils, the population of teachers was restricted to SSTs exclusively. Below is their tabular presentation:

Table 1

Population and Sample: Gujranwala Division School Principals and SSTs

Participants	Total	Sample obtained	Male Schools	Female Schools	Rural Schools	Urban Schools
School Principals	873	176	100	76	150	26
SSTs	5104	532	302	230	444	88

Research Tool for Gathering Data

Using two distinct questions, the survey method was used to gather the data. The first questionnaire was *Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory* (FOCI) (2014), to assess the conflict management styles employed by the school principals. The second questionnaire was *Teachers' Performance Evaluation Scale* (TPES) (2016) which was used to measure teachers' job performance under their respective principals. Both FOCI and TPES were adopted. The questionnaires also consisted of demographical information of school principals and teachers (gender and locality; rural/urban, qualification, etc.) The study instruments were managed by email, WhatsApp, Google Forms, and so on.

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

Statistical methods were used to analyze and interpret the data using SPSS version 24 and MS Excel 2010. The method of product moment correlation co-efficient given by Karl Pearson was used for computing the strength relationship between School Principals' Conflict Management Styles and job performance of teachers. Moreover, calculated correlations co-efficient is interpreted using the rules given by Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (2003). To model the relationships between school principals' Conflict Management Styles and job performance of teachers are formulated using the linear regression technique. Additionally, Dr. Danial Soper's Online Statistics Calculator is used to generate the p-value and correlation coefficients for comparing two regressions.

Analysis of Relationship between Factors in Combined Data

In this part, the relationship of the job performance of teachers and conflict management styles of school principals are studied for a combined data set. For this, correlation coefficients are calculated (Table 2) and regression models are explored (Table 3).

Table 2
Correlation coefficients (r) between the factors of Conflict Management Styles and Job Performance of Teachers

Teacher Job Performance	Conflict Management Styles				
	Integrating	Obliging	Avoiding	Compromising	Dominating
Power of Expression	0.27	0.18	- 0.38	- 0.19	- 0.06
Knowledge Work	0.29	0.04	- 0.03	- 0.27	- 0.21
Analytical Ability	0.31	0.21	- 0.03	- 0.27	- 0.21
Supervision & Guidance	0.31	0.15	- 0.29	- 0.24	- 0.42
Ability to take Decision	0.48	0.36	- 0.36	- 0.54	- 0.46
Work (Output & Quality)	0.56	0.53	- 0.65	- 0.62	- 0.58

The above table shows that factors of teachers' job performance and school principals' conflict management styles are correlated. Its interpretation is given below:

Integrating factor has a moderate positive correlation with work (output & quality) (0.50 to 0.70); has a negligible correlation with knowledge of work and power of expression (0.00 to 0.30); has low positive correlation with analytical ability, supervision & guidance and ability to take decision (0.30 to 0.50).

Obliging style is moderate positively correlated with work (output & quality) (0.50 to 0.70). It has negligible correlation with knowledge of work, power of expression, supervision & guidance and with analytical ability (0.00 to 0.30), while ability to take decision is low positively correlated (0.30 to 0.50).

Avoiding style is moderate negatively correlated with work (output & quality) (- 0.50 to - 0.70). It has low negative correlation with power of expression and ability to take decision (-0.30 to -0.50). While it is negligible correlated with both Knowledge work, supervision & guidance and Analytical ability (0.00 to - 0.03).

Compromising style is moderate negatively correlated with ability to take decision (- 0.50 to - 0.70). It is highly negative correlated with work (Output & Quality) (- 0.70 to - 0.90). While it is negligible correlated with power of expression, Knowledge work, Analytical ability and supervision & guidance (0.00 to - 0.03).

Similarly, dominating style has a moderate negative relationship with work (output & quality) (- 0.50 to - 0.70) but low negative correlation with Supervision & guidance and ability to take decision (- 0.30 to - 0.50). It has negligible correlation with power of expression, knowledge work and analytical ability (-0.00 to 0.30).

Table 3

Regression models between the factors of school principals' Conflict Management Styles and Teachers' Job Performance

Teacher Job Performance	Conflict Management Styles				
	Integrating	Obliging	Avoiding	Compromising	Dominating
PE	2.8+0.2 I	3.1+.02 O	2.1- .4 A	3.0- 0.2 C	3.7- 0.1 D
<i>p</i> -value	.0163	.1007	.0000	.0838	.6007
KW	3.3+0.1 I	3.7+.02 O	3.7- .02 A	3.8- 0.2 C	3.8- 0.2 D
<i>p</i> -value	.5611	.8580	.7672	.0153	.0571
AA	2.6+0.2 I	3.0+0.1 O	3.4- 0.2 A	3.6- 0.4 C	3.5- 0.3 D
<i>p</i> -value	.0883	.3686	.3136	.0011	.0303
SG	2.6+0.3 I	3.2+0.1 O	3.7- 0.3 A	3.7- 0.2 C	3.9- 0.5 D
<i>p</i> -value	.0063	.1787	.0098	.0343	.0000
ATD	2.0+0.4 I	2.5+0.3 O	3.7- 0.4 A	3.8- 0.5 A	3.8- 0.5 A
<i>p</i> -value	.0000	.0011	.0000	.0000	.0000
WOQ	1.9+0.5 I	1.4+0.6 O	4.0- 0.5 A	4.0- 0.4 C	4.0- 0.6 A
<i>p</i> -value	.0021	.0039	.0001	.0012	.0004

This table estimates regression models between teachers' job performance and school principals' conflict management styles. *p*-values of the regression coefficient are also calculated. The results show that conflict management styles are not statistically significant on power of expression (PE), knowledge work (KW) and analytical ability (AA), but the effects of these factors of conflict management are significant on ability to take decision (ATD), supervision & guidance (SG) and work (output & quality) (WOQ), by comparing *p*-values with 0.01.

Testing of Hypothesis about Comparison between Male and Female Teachers

In this part, correlation coefficients between different factors of teachers' job performance, and school principals' conflict management styles and regression models between these factors are estimated also.

Analysis of Relationship between Factors for Male and Female Teachers

In this part of the relationship between teachers' job performance and school principals' management behavior is studied for the data sets of male and female teachers.

Table 4
Relationship between Teachers' Job Performance and Conflict Management Styles in Male Schools

Respondent	<i>n</i>	Mean	S.D	<i>Correlation (r)</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Conflict Management Styles	302	2.9	.42	0.43***	8.249	.000
Teachers' Job Performance	302	3.4	.45			

$p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***

Correlation coefficient between conflict management styles and teachers' job performance in male schools is 0.43. It means by managing conflicts at school, a principal can improve job performance of his teachers.

Table 5
Relationship between Teachers' Work Performance and Conflict Management Styles in Female Schools

Respondent	<i>N</i>	Mean	S.D	<i>Correlation (r)</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Conflict Management Styles	230	2.7	.43	0.41***	6.788	.000
Teachers' Job Performance	230	3.0	.47			

$p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***

Correlation coefficient between conflict management styles and teachers' job performance in female schools is 0.41. It means by managing conflicts at school, a principal can improve job performance of his teachers.

Testing of Hypothesis about Comparison between Rural and Urban Teachers

In this part, correlation coefficients between different factors of teachers' job performance and school principals' conflict management styles is studied. Regression models between these factors are estimated also.

Analysis of Relationship between factors for Rural and Urban Teachers.

This section examines the relationship between rural and urban teachers' job performance and school principals' conflict management styles.

Table 6
Relationship between Teachers' Job Performance and Conflict Management Styles in Rural Schools

Respondent	<i>N</i>	Mean	S.D	<i>Correlation (r)</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Conflict Management Styles	444	2.6	.42	0.39***	8.904	.000
Teachers' Job Performance	444	3.2	.47			

$p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***

Correlation coefficient between conflict management styles and teachers' job performance in rural schools is 0.39. It means by managing conflicts at school, a principal can improve job performance of his teachers.

Table 7
Relationship between Teachers' Job Performance and Conflict Management Styles in Urban Schools

Respondent	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation (r)	t-value	p-value
Conflict Management Styles	88	3.1	.39	0.45***	4.673	.000
Teachers' Job Performance	88	3.5	.43			

$p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***

Correlation coefficient between conflict management styles and teachers' job performance in urban schools is 0.45. It means by managing conflicts at school, a principal can improve job performance of his teachers.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of the current study was to examine the potential effects of managing conflicts at the school level to improve teachers' job performance. The population of the study was Punjab province. Through multistage random sampling, Gujranwala division was selected and data collection was processed. The nature of the study was a survey in which two questionnaires were employed as research instruments for data collection. The research was delimited to school principals of high and higher secondary schools and the SSTs working under their supervision. Regression analysis, ANOVA, and t-test were among the statistical methods used to evaluate and interpret the data. It was concluded that there was a significant and positive correlation between the conflict management styles of school principals and the job performance of teachers. In terms of conflict management styles, integrating and obliging had a positive impact on the job performance of teachers, particularly in terms of analytical capacity to make choices, supervision and guidance, and work (output & quality). In the current study, regression analysis has been made between five factors of conflict management styles of school principals and six factors of the job performance of teachers. Their summary is given in the table given below:

Table 8
Summary of Regression Analysis between Conflict Management Styles and Teachers' Job Performance

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation coefficient	Regression coefficient
Integrating Style	PE	Negligible	Significant
	KW	Negligible	Insignificant
	AA	Low positive	Insignificant
	SG	Low positive	Significant
	ATD	Low positive	Significant
	WOQ	Moderate positive	Significant
Obliging Styles	PE	Negligible	Insignificant
	KW	Negligible	Insignificant

	AA	Negligible	Insignificant
	SG	Negligible	Insignificant
	ATD	Low positive	Significant
	WOQ	Moderate positive	Significant
Avoiding Style	PE	Low negative	Significant
	KW	Negligible	Insignificant
	AA	Negligible	Insignificant
	SG	Negligible	Significant
	ATD	Low negative	Significant
	WOQ	Moderate negative	Significant
Compromising Style	PE	Negligible	Insignificant
	KW	Negligible	Significant
	AA	Negligible	Significant
	SG	Negligible	Significant
	ATD	Moderate negative	Significant
	WOQ	Moderate negative	Significant
Dominating Style	PE	Negligible	Insignificant
	KW	Negligible	Insignificant
	AA	Negligible	Significant
	SG	Low negative	Significant
	ATD	Low negative	Significant
	WOQ	Moderate negative	Significant

Discussion

The present study at hand was about the effect of principals' conflict management styles on job performance of teachers. It was concluded from the analysis that principals' conflict management styles have a significant and positive correlation with the job performance of teachers. The results of the current study are in line with the results of a study of Mejia and Arpon (2021) in which it is revealed that heads conflict management styles have a significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction and efficiency. Moreover, in conflict management styles, integrating and obliging styles had a positive effect whereas avoiding, compromising and dominating styles negatively affect the job performance of teachers, and sub construct, i.e. analytical ability to take decisions, supervision and guidance, and work (output & quality). In the same way, the current study also endorsed the results of the study of Onuorah, Chukwu, and Oshia (2023) which described that there exists a strong and positive relationship between collaboration/integrating styles of heads with job performance of teachers.

Recommendations

1. Beyond further research, it is suggested that school Principals should be trained for better conflict management.

2. The relationship of teachers' job performance with given factors can be further investigated by introducing other variables in the factors of teachers' job performance e.g., annual results of class, teamwork, positive attitude, progressiveness, etc.

Moreover, the research may give more valid results if Mix-method is used to get data. In mix-method, interviews may be proven a more effective tool for data collection.

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