



RESEARCH PAPER

Effect of Conflict Management Styles on Organizational Commitment of University Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of the study was to explore the effect of conflict management styles on organizational commitment of university teachers. Casual comparative research design was used. The population of the study was the teachers of public and private universities of Lahore and the sample for current study was 910 university teachers taken by using stratified random sampling. Strata were made on the basis of institution. Conflict management style scale developed by (Adkins, 2011) was used. The organizational commitment scale was developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). Results of this study showed that the factors of conflict management styles (Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, and Accommodating) are significantly and positively effecting organizational commitment except compromising. It was recommended that workshops and seminar can be organized for the awareness about conflict management styles for universities teachers.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management Styles, Organizational Commitment, University Teachers

Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human activity because it is a natural process that takes place in both the public and private sectors (İlhan, 2020). It is an inescapable state that can occur in one's social or professional life at any time. Individuals differ in their behavioral patterns, life expectations, and aspirations, which leads to conflict between couples, parents and children, and teachers as well (Longe, 2015).

As conflict has such a profound impact on humans, it is difficult to find a definition that is widely agreed by researchers (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). Conflict, according to Asyraf, Ibrahim and Kassim (2014), occurs when one notices that another has annoyed or is about to frustrate them. Whereas Rahim (2010), defined it as an interacting process that showed up as social entities' incompatibility, disagreement, or disharmony.

Conflict is seen as a fact of life in every organization; it is difficult to prevent, but manageable when we are aware of the symptoms and warning indications of conflict. With good conflict management, the organizations can succeed (Meyer & Allen, 1984). If conflict is handled well, it can spur constructive and innovative competition among the group members.

Therefore, finding a solution to this issue is urgently needed. Ineffective conflict resolution can have serious negative effects, including disappointment, discouragement, instructor turnover, and low productivity (Asyraf, Ibrahim, & Kassim, 2014).

Few of the variables that can affect conflict include different job structures, the desire for stress relaxation, distinct aims, various financial interests, power or apprehension, rivalry for positions, different perspectives, the diversity of the workforce, and group affiliations. Some other causes of conflict can be desire for stress reduction, environmental changes, personal dislikes, value disagreements, variations in fundamental knowledge or views, variations in core belief systems, and disparities in fundamental role structures (Alzahrani, 2013).

Conflict management is very crucial subjects in the literature on conflict. It speaks of the actions that participants take when they are at odds. The primary and crucial component of society and the workplace is conflict (Mayer, 2000). Positive functional conflict results are advantageous to the participants as individuals, groups, or organizations. It is normal and necessary, but if it is not controlled, it can turn into a major problem.

Organizational commitments boost the output and growth of the organization. Conflict arises in organizations where numerous people work together owing to a variety of factors. When conflict is not handled appropriately, it has a significant influence at the individual, group, and collegiate levels, organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment has three components. The individual's understanding of the costs of leaving is related to their commitment to continuing. It implies that the individual joined the group out of necessity. Normative commitment is based on a sense of normative expectations to stay in the organization, which suggests that the person is not restricted by moral commitments (Meyer & Herscovitsch, 2001). They developed the theory that the three commitment components exist simultaneously for each person, but that their intensities differed.

Literature Review

Conflict is an argument between two people or between two or more people (Soelton et.al; 2020). If dispute is not resolved immediately, it will cause more problems for the organization and the individuals as well. Additionally, it can help an organization as it encourages unique and creative problem-solving, true interpersonal peace, and the explanation of challenges for the benefit of the group as a whole (Burnside, 2008). Conflict is thought to be a sign of human existence and a gauge of how often their daily activities interact with one another. In fact, maintaining and achieving the highest level of organizational success requires a reasonable amount of conflict that is handled constructively.

Conflict is something that organizations naturally have, according to organization theorists. Therefore, conflict should be appropriately managed to lessen its adverse effects and maximize its beneficial outcomes (Berryman-Fink, 1998; Rahim, & Buntzman, 1989). Conflict can either be constructive or destructive depending on how people or groups handle it. If people are to work effectively in organizations at any level, they need to have the ability to manage conflicts (Ohbuchi, Suzuki, & Hayashi, 2002). Conflict must be managed so that its beneficial outcomes outweigh its negative consequences if a social system is to gain from it (Janet, 2015).

Conflict resolution entails reducing undesirable outcomes and giving priority to desirable effect. This crucial managerial skill involves negotiation, creative problem-solving, and the use of different techniques based on the situation (Nair, 2008). Modern businesses require conflict management rather than conflict resolution. People's unique approaches to addressing conflict in any setting involving interaction are known as conflict management styles. Through the use of conflict management techniques, companies are able to avoid the negative effects of destructive conflict and transform it into an opportunity for growth (Rahim, 2002). Conflict management techniques should be developed to increase

organizational performance and learning as well as to meet the requirements and expectations of all participants.

Karim and Noor (2006) are credited with developing the conflict theory, which contends that societal conflict is caused by competition for limited resources. The theory views all social events through the prism that conflict is an instinctive human need. Conflict is a natural part of human nature and helps us understand why things are the way they are, according to Kimencu (2011), who does not claim that it is good or evil.

Classical theorists believed conflict to be a bad force that results in bad things from the 1900s through the 1940s. The proponents of this strategy sought to prevent conflict by focusing on its causes and addressing its shortcomings to ensure the effectiveness of groups and organizations. When human interactions movement first began, conflict was seen as a normal part of human interaction and communication (Vigil-King, 1999).

Conflict is seen by those who support this point of view as an unpleasant and harmful element that has to be diminished or eradicated. In the 1970s, new approaches to conflict arose. The development of social systems and open system theory altered perspectives on conflict (De Dreu & Vliert, 2004). According to Rahim (2002), disagreement in companies is inevitable and can even be a positive factor that produces results.

In cross-cultural research, the individualism-collectivism component is frequently used. These studies showed that individuals from individualistic cultures were less likely to avoid conflict than those from collectivist cultures. As an illustration, Visagie and Havenga (2011) came to the conclusion that people frequently employ conflict management strategies that take their underlying cultural norms into account. Numerous studies have compared preferred management styles using samples from China, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan are examples of collectivistic societies, whereas the United States is an example of an individualistic culture. These studies have used individualist and collectivist structure.

The fact that organizational commitment predicts a variety of behavioral traits that organizational members may display is one of the key explanations (Hussein, Al-Mamary, & Hassan, 2017). Unfortunately, there is little agreement in the literature regarding the definition of organizational commitment or how it relates to other ideas within the broader concept of work commitment. The conventional perception is that organizational commitment refers to a worker's overall devotion to the business as a whole.

Conflict at work creates a danger because of the effects it has on the employees' morale, organizational dedication, and production. A varied workforce can make it challenging to resolve disputes, particularly when workers from various generations, genders, or levels apply their distinctive approaches to problem-solving. Unresolved employee disputes are seen to increase workers' desire to leave the company, whereas well resolved disputes are thought to increase workers' commitment to and retention in the organization.

According to Ahmad and Marinah (2013) increasing commitment to the organization is a major benefit of the integrated approach of conflict management. When the integrating style was employed in the company, Ayoko, (2007) discovered that there was little disagreement. Because it emphasizes collaborative problem solving, the integrated approach is thought to be the most effective at increasing employee commitment. This kind of worker confronts conflict head-on and seeks out creative, original solutions to the issues at hand by placing both their own needs and the needs of others first. In their study, researchers looked at how universities deal with disagreement. If this strategy is employed, both parties will be more dedicated to resolving workplace disputes.

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant effect of conflict management styles on organizational commitment of university teachers.

Ho: There is no significant difference among conflict management styles of male or female teachers.

Material and Methods

The study was quantitative in nature. Casual comparative research design was utilized to conduct the research. Casual –comparative research design is also acknowledged as ex-post facto as it seeks to determine the cause or effect of current disparities in the status of individual groups (Gay, Millis & Ariasian, 2005).

Population

All teachers of public and private sector universities recognized by HEC (Higher Education Commission) of Lahore City teachers were the population for the study. There were 31 public and private universities listed by HEC in Lahore in which 19 were private universities and 12 universities were public sector universities in Lahore.

Sample

Proportionate stratified random sampling was employed to select sample. It is a sampling process that includes classification of a population into smaller subgroups known as strata. For this study, strata were made on the basis of nature of institution. Stratified random sampling or stratification is used, for selecting proportional samples from each of various subgroups (Gay, Millis & Ariasian, 2005). The details of the sample are presented in the following table.

Table 1
Sample from Public and Private Sector Universities

Nature of Universities	N	n
Public Universities	1529	460
Private Universities	1491	450
Total	3020	910

Note. Number of teachers from public and private sector universities selected as sample

Instrumentation

The data for demographic characteristics such as gender and nature of institution was collected using a demographic information sheet. Conflict management styles (CMS) of university teachers were measured by a questionnaire developed by Adkins, (2011) and organizational commitment (OC) was measured by the questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer, (1990).

Table 2
Factor wise Division of the Items of Conflict Management Style.

Sr. No	Factors	Items
1	Collaborating style	1,5,7
2	Competing style	4,9,12
3	Avoiding style	6,10,15
4	Accommodating style	3,11,14
5	Compromising style	2,8,13

Results and Discussion

Table 3
Relationship between Conflict Management Styles and Organizational Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.733a	.538	.535	7.79399
a. Predictors: (Constant) Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating, Compromising)				

The effect of conflict management styles on organizational commitment was checked by multiple regression. The dependent variable's (organizational commitment) variance is defined 53.3% (R square =.538*100=53.8) by the independent variable (conflict management styles).

Table 4
Regression Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
1 Regression	63871.145	5	12774.229	210.288	.000 ^b
Residual	54914.609	904	60.746		
Total	118785.754	909			

a. Dependent Variable: OC

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

The F ratio is used to assess how reliable procedures are in producing a model that fits the data well. A good match for the model may be seen by the significance (p) value, which is .000 and less than .05.

Table 5
Beta Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
1 (Constant)	-6.248	3.673		-1.701 .089
Collaborating	.586	.287	.066	2.045 .041
Competing	1.835	.193	.329	9.507 .000
Avoiding	1.741	.158	.269	11.035 .000
Accommodating	3.95	.248	.456	15.908 .000
Compromising	-.313	.262	-.037	-1.193 .233

a. Dependent Variable: OC

Table 4 shows the statistical significance and beta weights. Collaborating = 0.066(p=.041), Competing = 0.329(p=.000), Avoiding = 0.269(p=.000), Accommodating = 0.456(p=.000), and Compromise = -0.037(p=.233) were the beta weights and p-values for the five predictive variables.

The negative effect of one factor compromising with organizational commitment is indicated by the beta value. The p values demonstrate that except compromising, all components of conflict management (collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising conflicts) have positive effect on organizational commitment.

Discussion

The quantitative study tried to explore the effect of conflict management styles on organizational commitment. Results of the study showed that the factors of conflict management styles (Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, and Accommodating) have significant and positive effect on organizational commitment except compromising. Faculty members using conflict management styles tend to be more committed with their universities by promoting co-operation and mutual benefits for each other which further helped them to make team management better and appropriate decisions. The results showed no significant difference between conflict management styles of female and male university teachers. This finding was similar with the study of Kiss (2013), who found that there was no significant difference exist between male and female teachers regarding conflict management styles. Another study conducted by Asyraf, Ibrahim and Kassim (2014) also found no significant difference on the basis of gender.

Conclusion

This study was an attempt to determine the effect of conflict management styles on organizational commitment of university teachers. Results of this study showed that the factors of conflict management styles (Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, and Accommodating) are significantly and positively effecting organizational commitment except compromising. The results also indicated no significant difference exists between conflict management styles of female and male university teachers.

Recommendations

It was recommended that workshops and seminar can be organized for the awareness about conflict management styles for universities teachers and organizations should maintain the standard operating policies for conflict management and should apply accordingly as per requirement of a given situation. It was recommended that further studies need to be conducted to explore such varied factors which can affect the organizational commitment and conflict handling behaviors of teachers from different cross-cultural perspectives.

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