



Interpersonal Conflict Management Strategies in Private Schools of Kpk, Pakistan

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Abstract

Conflict has been a debatable topic for discussion in the academic circle both in business management as well as with educational leaders. All organizations are replete with one or other type of conflict. The main focus of discussion of this paper is on the management of these conflicts by the principals. This paper aimed at the investigation of knowing about the interpersonal conflict among the staff members and then to investigate the Interpersonal Conflict Management Strategies in Private Schools of KPK (Pakistan). Data were collected from both principals as well as vice-principals of the selected schools of District Charsadda. Questionnaires were served to both type of target population who gave their responses regarding the existence of conflict and its management styles by the principals. The tabulated data were analyzed through Kendall's Tau B and Tau C. Findings show that interpersonal conflict ($0.003 < 0.05$) exists, principals' role as mediator ($0.001 < 0.05$) in the school show that principals play an important role, about the win-win situation the findings of the study show that this is also adopted by some of the principals. It is further revealed that in the study's findings that all the schools are replete with one or other type of conflict, to handle these conflicts different conflict management strategies have been followed by different persons. It is further recommended that the best strategies should be followed by the principals.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management, Win-Win Approach, Collaborative Style.

Introduction

Conflict has been a common phenomenon from time immemorial which has remained the main cause of strife between the members of the organization¹. Coser, L.rgues about conflict that it is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals.

Different individuals while having different goals are prone to interact for the achievement of their mutual gains which in one way or the other lead them to conflict. Thus interpersonal conflicts exist between the school members.

Interpersonal conflict has been defined as a phenomenon that happens to occur between two opposing but interdependent parties due to the experience of negative emotional feelings for the achievement of their respective goals². Conflict as part of organizational life should be understood in its entirety i.e. its positive as well as negative effects should be acknowledged. As such it should be made result oriented in the work relationship of the members of the school.

Interpersonal conflict often happens in the workplace in the organization, between two individuals. Conflict occurs among various individuals due to scarcity of resources, goal obstructions and/or power and position. Sometimes individual also come into conflict for approval and recommendation from the high ups.

Jandt³ opined that conflict on its face value seems to be negative in nature but in fact it is through these negative feelings or conflicts which lead to a competitive environment and thus existing norms of the organization are challenged. It is strongly defended by him that conflicts should not discarded/negated from the organizational life. Conflicts occur because of the primary sources in the individual life; these are i. Personality difference, ii. Power struggles, and iii. Competition. Conflicts also arise between the individuals because of their differences about objectives and goals of the institution.

Conflict also occurs because of the subjective grievances about the individuals' attitudes, motives, values, expectations in the organizational life.

Interpersonal conflict is caused by policies' disagreement, the adoption of existing practices and the formulation of plans in the organizational settings. Interpersonal conflict is also a common phenomenon as described by Deer⁵ in the organizations.

This study aimed at the investigation of the existing management techniques for the solution of interpersonal conflict that are in use in the private secondary schools of KPK. Thus, the objective of this study was to identify interpersonal conflict management strategies followed by the school heads of the private schools of Pakistan.

Methodology

Research Design: Since this study aimed at the investigation of different conflict management techniques in the schools, both primary and secondary data were collected and utilized. For primary data, questionnaires were served in order to obtain the data concerning the existence of conflict and the most probable and utilized strategy of its management. Data were collected from the principals and vice principals of the target population. Likert scale was used for the collection of data which was consisted of closed-ended items. For secondary data books, research papers and other published materials were used.

Sample: Participants of the Study: Sixteen private schools were randomly taken as the population of this study. Principals and vice principals were taken as sample of the study. Total number of respondents is sixteen. Respondents are taken from the administrative cadre from different private schools of KPK.

Research Instrument: For analysis purposes data were first tabulate and then simple percentages as well as Tau B and Tau

C were used. Mostly descriptive statistics has been used in analyzing the data.

Procedure: Questionnaires were served to sixteen principals and sixteen Vice-principals from the selected schools of KPK.

Data Analysis: Following tables are representative of the analyzed data as well as interpretation of the data has been given with each table.

Results and Discussion

Findings and Results: The P value (0.003) shows that conflict management exists between staff members in the school. Thomas⁶, has argued that conflict always start between the individuals because of certain causes

In symmetric measures, the P value 0.001 shows that conflict once solved doesn't occur. The responses from both the respondents confirm that it is not being noticed after its solution

Table-1
Cross-tabulation c1p *c1vp

| Count | | interpersonal conflict=c1vp | | | Total |
|-------|-----|-----------------------------|----|---------|-------|
| | | Yes | No | Missing | |
| c1p | Yes | 6 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| | No | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Total | | 11 | 4 | 1 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Nominal by Nominal | Phi | .229 | .003 |
| | Cramer's V | .229 | .003 |
| | Contingency Coefficient | .223 | .003 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | |

Table-2
Cross-tabulation c5p *c5 vp

| Count | | conflict solved=c5t | | | Total |
|---------------------|-----|---------------------|----|---------|-------|
| | | Yes | No | Missing | |
| conflict solved=c5p | Yes | 5 | 2 | 1 | 8 |
| | No | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| Total | | 8 | 6 | 2 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Nominal by Nominal | Phi | .294 | .001 |
| | Cramer's V | .208 | .001 |
| | Contingency Coefficient | .282 | .001 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | |

Table-3
CMG5P * CMG5 vp Cross-tabulation

| Count | | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Acts as a mediator | | | | | |
| | | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Frequently | Always | Total |
| CMG5P | Never | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Seldom | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Frequently | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| | Always | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Total | | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .223 | .066 | 3.381 | .002 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .157 | .046 | 3.381 | .002 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

Table-4
Crosstabs CMG8P * CMG8 vp Cross-tabulation

| Count | | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------|--|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Strives for a win-win situation in conflict management | | | | | |
| | | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Frequently | Always | Total |
| CMG8P | Never | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Seldom | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Frequently | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| | Always | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Total | | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .139 | .056 | 2.461 | .014 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .134 | .054 | 2.461 | .014 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

The correlation between the responses is highly significant which show that principal acts as mediator in conflicting situations. Mediation can really turn conflict around and make organizations better as a result.

Win-Win Approach (for which 0.014<0.05) is one of the styles for resolution of conflicts. (Jeff Jones, 2001, P.10)

Table-5
CMG11P * CMG11 vp Cross-tabulation

| Count | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------------|---|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Collaborative approach for conflict management skills | | | | | |
| | | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Frequently | Always | Total |
| CMG11P | Never | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Seldom | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Frequently | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | Always | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| Total | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .201 | .065 | 3.017 | .004 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .132 | .044 | 3.017 | .004 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

Table-6
CMG12P * CMG12 vp Cross-tabulation

| Count | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------------|---|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Seeks a compromising solution for ending conflict | | | | | |
| | | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Frequently | Always | Total |
| CMG12P | Never | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Seldom | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Frequently | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| | Always | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| Total | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .218 | .066 | 3.272 | .002 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .154 | .048 | 3.272 | .002 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

The p-value is significant (0.003<0.05), meaning that collaborative approach is one of the styles adopted by the principal for management of conflict, it is necessary for good working relationship so as to satisfy the conflicting parties' interests.

Compromising approach for ending conflict is another preferred style of the principals. Compromising approach is the most common Therefore, it would be expected that the compromising style would be more likely to be used as a means of conflict management.

Table-7
CMG13P * CMG13 vp Cross-tabulation

| Count | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------------|--|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Prefers competitive approach to deal with conflict | | | | | |
| | | Never | Seldom | occasionally | Frequently | Always | Total |
| CMG13P | Never | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| | Seldom | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| | Frequently | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Always | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .147 | .061 | 2.098 | .056 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .165 | .061 | 2.098 | .056 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

Table 8
Crosstabs CMG14P * CMG14 vp Cross-tabulation

| Count | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------------|---|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Accommodates the conflicting parties to resolve the issue | | | | | |
| | | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Frequently | Always | Total |
| CMG14P | Never | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Seldom | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| | Frequently | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | Always | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Total | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 16 |

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .208 | .067 | 3.081 | .003 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .153 | .048 | 3.081 | .003 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

Table-8
CMG15P * CMG15 vp Cross-tabulation

| | | Avoids conflict whenever it occurs | | | | | Total |
|--------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------|--------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Frequently | Always | |
| CMG15P | Never | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | Seldom | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | Occasionally | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| | Frequently | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Always | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 16 |

| Symmetric Measures | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| | | Value | Asymp. Std. Error ^a | Approx. T ^b | Approx. Sig. |
| Ordinal by Ordinal | Kendall's tau-b | .189 | .065 | 2.806 | .059 |
| | Kendall's tau-c | .174 | .049 | 2.806 | .059 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 16 | | | |

The above table shows that the P-value which is (0.05<0.056) and showing that the principals never opted for a competitive approach⁹.

The p-value (0.002<0.05) show that the principals most of the time strives to accommodate the conflicting party by following an accommodating style.

The p-value which is higher than the significant value (0.05<0.058) shows that the principals and vice-principals agree on the same level of response. It means that the principals seldom adopt an avoiding approach for conflict management in the schools.

Recommendations: In this study the researchers focused on the interpersonal conflicts among the school staff and their management strategies which were followed by the concerned schools' principals.

The study found out that win-win approach for management of conflict is occasionally followed by the school's principals. The sample population also agreed on the fact that they seldom opt for a win-win style. It is evident from findings of the study as per the responses of the vice-principals and principals that collaborative approach is most of the time followed for ending the conflict among the staff members. Next in line and most liked and adopted style for conflict management is compromising one. The findings show that competitive approach for management of conflict is least followed by the principals. According to the findings of the study the third preferred style of the principals is accommodating, i.e. the principals try to accommodate both the conflicting parties in the conflict situation. An avoiding style, as shown in the findings, for handling conflict by the principals has never been followed.

Conclusion

It is concluded that different principals use different conflict management approaches which show that it depends on the situation and the person as well to opt for the best strategy to deal with conflict.

It is therefore imperative that school principals as well as concerned teachers should be given proper training in conflict management strategies. It will enhance the individual conflict management styles of the principals on one hand and will facilitate teachers in a more attractive work environment on the other hand.

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