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Abstract

The goal of the present paper was to explore the conflict management strategies used by institutional heads in Punjab. A sample of 144 from heads of schools, principals of colleges, and heads of departments of universities was drawn using a convenient sampling technique. An instrument, the Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory (FOCI) used for data collection. SPSS 26 was used for data analysis. The results reported that institutional heads employ avoiding and integrating styles of managing conflicts. Furthermore, no difference in the conflict management styles employed by institutional heads based on their gender, qualification, and experience was found except for the administrative background. It was recommended that research be carried out to explore how conflict management strategies of institutional heads affect teachers' performance.

Keywords: Conflict Management Style, Institutional Heads, Resolving

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University of Okara, Punjab, Pakistan.**Contents**

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Title**A Comparison of Conflict Management Strategies Used by Heads of Educational Institutions in Punjab****Abstract**

The goal of the present paper was to explore the conflict management strategies used by institutional heads in Punjab. A sample of 144 from heads of schools, principals of colleges, and heads of departments of universities was drawn using a convenient sampling technique. An instrument, the Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory (FOCI) used for data collection. SPSS 26 was used for data analysis. The results reported that institutional heads employ avoiding and integrating styles of managing conflicts. Furthermore, no difference in the conflict management styles employed by institutional heads based on their gender, qualification, and experience was found except for the administrative background. It was recommended that research be carried out to explore how conflict management strategies of institutional heads affect teachers' performance.

Keywords: [Conflict Management Style](#); [Institutional Heads](#); [Resolving](#)**Introduction**

Conflict is considered any difference of opinion or disagreement among individuals affecting or posing a harmful impact on any organization. Conflicts in organizations often occur due to personal agendas, and goals of the group or team. Success and failure are major concerns of organizations (Tjosvold, 2008). Conflict is the perception of one party about the harm or victimization of one party by the other party (Rahim, 2001; Wall & Callister, 1995). Conflict occurs as a result of disagreements between employees and the administration (Rahim, 2001). The conflict resolution tactics of heads are helpful for

organizational functioning (Seeber, 2006). Research indicates that conflicts and their resolution have both beneficial and negative effects on the workplace (Bush & Folger, 2005).

Conflict management is necessary since it benefits both employees and organizations (Brahnam et al., 2005). In time conflict resolution lessens the negative effects of conflict creates a good working environment, enhances organizational performance and shapes employee behavior (Friedman et al., 2006). Studies have concluded that good workplace relationships reduce tension and enhance contact (Brown & Robin, 1997). Researchers consider that managers



utilize a variety of conflict management strategies. Most people use the integrating styles, obliging styles, dominating styles, avoiding styles, or compromise styles (Nelson, & Quick, 2000; Robbins, 2001; Visinski, 1995). This section gives a full rundown of the different styles so that the reader can understand them better (Aslam, Khan & Oad, 2021).

Integrating Style

Integrating Style is a strategy used to solve a problem through an acceptable solution for all concerned parties. This style is an approach in which a manager incorporates the interests of all the parties satisfying their needs while addressing the problems (Rahim & Katz, 2020). This style needs more willingness and flexibility from both parties to deal with difficult situations and problems (Imran & Akhtar, 2023). The administrator using this style remains fearless about self-assertion (Bilsky & Wülker, 2000) and do not aim to enforce their needs on others. This approach is used by managers to address difficult situations. The manager incorporates the thoughts of all members in making important decisions. This style is advantageous for managing organizational problems (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Some experts believe in the integrated approach to resolving social conflicts. In conclusion, the integrated approach is suitable for addressing corporate policies and aims (Oad & Alwi, 2021).

Obliging Style

The *obliging style* is based on satisfying the needs of others sacrificing the needs or concern for self. This style recommends the solution of a problem between two parties by proposing selflessness by the decision maker (Bilsky & Wülker, 2000) and high agreeableness (Tehrani & Yamini, 2020), leading to submissive, and obedient behaviour (Rahim & Katz, 2020). Administrators using this style try to minimize differences among others and sacrifice their interests for the benefit of organizations (Valente, Lourenço & Németh, 2020). Additionally, this technique is advantageous for defending the ethics and rights of the corporation (Khan, et al., 2021).

Dominating Style

The *dominating style* is about caring for yourself and having no interest in the needs and concerns of others. This style is based on imposing one's behaviour or goal on others denying or disregarding the concerns of others (Rahim & Katz, 2020). The dominating style is an aggressive style of resolving conflicts portrayed with a willingness to press social needs

(Bilsky & Wülker, 2000), higher assertiveness, and a lack of cooperation (Lourenco & Nemeth, 2020). Dominating style is associated using win-win circumstance.

School administrators are forced to adopt a certain attitude to control difficult situations. This is an authoritarian style in which a party tries to accomplish its goals in return for other parties' expectations and demands (Wall & Callister, 1995). When one side believes that unfriendly decisions could threaten survival, this technique is employed (Rahim, 1992). This method is also advantageous for making fast decisions when the subordinates are not adequately prepared to make technical decisions. Managers utilize this method to make hasty decisions among parties with equal power who are in conflict (Rahim, 2002).

Avoiding Style

The *avoiding style* refers to a conflict management style of avoiding brave decisions and showing lesser interest in one's own needs and needs of the others as well (Rahim & Katz, 2020). Administrators using this style accept a restriction on their interests and others' interests not involving themselves in any conflict with others (Rahim & Katz, 2020). The heads following this style tend to ignore or avoid conflict, ignore mistakes, and avoid bold or brave decisions (Bilsky, & Wülker, 2000), are less cooperative, and avoid conflict situations or conflict parties (Cited in Burger, 2022). The managers employ a style of avoidance to avoid contentious and unexpected circumstances (Rahim, 2002). The avoidance approach is practical and advantageous when addressing petty matters, but it should not be used when making significant, hasty judgments or when parties do not wait for a long time (Rehan, et al., 2024).

Compromise Style

The *compromising style* is about taking care of one's own needs and the needs of workers (Rahim & Katz, 2020). This style focuses on the middle solution where the parties sacrifice their interests and subgoals to reach an acceptable solution for all parties. This includes interests taking care of the interests or concerns of all parties through mutual concessions. The compromise technique is used to make judgments in an exchange situation (Rahim & Strauss, 2003). The managers make decisions by both contending parties using this method. In this approach, choices are reached through negotiation. This design represents both the democratic disposition of managers and the opposing parties.

It provides temporary remedies for difficulties but is inadequate for dealing with complex issues. Rahim (2002) and Burnside (2008) said that many heads used a style of compromise and came up with good solutions to hard problems (Ahmad, Bibi, & Imran, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Conflicts are an inevitable aspect of school administration. Its resolution is the primary responsibility of school administrators. Conflict management has become a very important aspect of school management. Administrators of organizations manage conflicts according to their own styles. It is assumed that each manager employs a unique approach to manage organizational issues. In Pakistan, it is very important to find out how educational administrators at the secondary, high school, and university levels handle conflicts. The major focus of this study is to explore the management styles adopted by the heads of the public sector institutions of the Punjab province of Pakistan.

Objectives

The study objectives were to:

1. Study the conflict management styles of colleges, schools, and university heads.
2. Assess the conflict management styles of colleges, schools, and universities on a gender, qualification, and experience basis.

Methodology

The quantitative survey was conducted to determine the conflict management styles of heads of institutions. The population included all principals of colleges, heads of schools, and chairpersons of universities located in the province of Punjab. The convenient sampling technique was used to draw a sample. In the first stage, five disciplines of eight universities, 50 colleges, and 100 secondary schools were selected from Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujrat, Multan, Sargodha, and Bahawalpur cities. Second, a sample of 144 comprising the principals of colleges, chairpersons of universities, and heads of schools was drawn. The participation of the respondents and their response rate is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Response rate

Designation of Respondent	Requested	Participated	% Response
Chairpersons	40	29	20%
Principals of college	50	32	22%
Heads of Secondary Schools	100	83	58%
Total	190	144	100%

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The process of data collection was completed using the Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory (FOCI-14) developed by Farooqi, Arshad, & Khan (2014). Data were gathered through personal visits to request respondents. The

instruction to fill up the questionnaire was disseminated. SPSS version 26 was used for the analysis of data. Measures t-test, Post-hoc, and ANOVA were utilized to analyze data. The details are given below:

H01: Heads' Conflict Management Styles are not different.

Table 2

Conflict Management Styles of Heads

Conflict Management Style	Designation	N	Mean	SD	F
Integrating	Chairperson	29	4.12	0.42	0.21
	Principals	32	4.05	0.52	
	School Heads	83	4.08	0.40	
Obliging	Chairperson	29	3.88	0.47	0.45
	Principals	32	3.80	0.46	
	School Heads	83	3.89	0.44	

Conflict Management Style	Designation	N	Mean	SD	F
Compromising	Chairperson	29	3.98	0.46	0.33
	Principals	32	3.92	0.45	
	School Heads	83	3.90	0.38	
Avoiding	Chairperson	29	3.62	0.61	2.22
	Principals	32	3.58	0.60	
	School Heads	83	3.78	0.48	
Dominating	Chairperson	29	3.57	0.60	0.86
	Principals	32	3.64	0.53	
	School Heads	83	3.73	0.57	
Overall CMS	Chairperson	29	3.88	0.36	0.49
	Principals	32	3.83	0.38	
	School Heads	83	3.90	0.32	

The calculations given in Table 2 ($F = .49, p=0.05$) deduce that differences in using the colleges, schools, and university heads are not apparently different in managing conflicts. As a result, schools in Punjab were found to have employed comparable dispute resolution techniques in their workplaces. Conflict management strategies employed by educational administrators in Punjab do not appear to differ significantly.

H02: Heads' Conflict Management Styles are not different on a gender basis.

Table 3

Comparison of Heads' Conflict Management Styles (CMS) on a Gender Basis

CMS	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T-value
Integrating	Male	106	4.11	0.36	2.06*
	Female	38	3.86	0.60	
Obliging	Male	106	3.80	0.41	0.79
	Female	38	3.97	0.55	
Compromising	Male	106	3.92	0.37	0.60
	Female	38	3.88	0.50	
Avoiding	Male	106	3.68	0.53	1.03
	Female	38	3.79	0.57	
Dominating	Male	106	3.68	0.62	0.00
	Female	38	3.21	0.40	
Overall Styles of Managing Conflict	Male	106	3.88	0.29	0.19
	Female	38	3.87	0.46	

From Table 3, it appears that there are no apparent differences in overall conflict management style used by colleges, schools, and university heads based on gender because t-values for each conflict management style are non-significant as $p > =0.05$. As a result, it is stated that styles of managing conflict do not differ between male and female educational supervisors in Punjab. In the case of using integrating style managers of educational institutions use different styles on a gender basis. Results indicate that males

($M= 4.11, SD = 0.36$) overcome conflicts in an effective manner than females ($M=3.86, SD=0.60$). The same is the case with obliging, compromising, and avoiding styles. Hence, H02 that there is not an apparent difference in the styles of managing conflict among college, school, and university leaders based on gender was partially rejected.

H03: Conflict Management Styles of college, school, and university heads are not different concerning qualification.

Table 4

Comparison of CMS of Heads concerning their Qualifications

CMS	Qualification	N	Mean	SD	F
Integrating	MA/MSc	91	4.09	0.44	0.41
	MPhil	23	4.01	0.44	
	PhD	31	4.10	0.40	
Compromising	MA/MSc	91	3.89	0.40	0.68
	M.Phil	23	3.76	0.40	
	PhD	31	3.93	0.44	
Obliging	MA/MSc	91	3.89	0.46	0.88
	M.Phil	23	3.77	0.44	
	PhD	31	3.90	0.46	
Avoiding	MA/MSc	91	3.94	0.48	2.50**
	MPhil	23	3.65	0.60	
	PhD	31	3.61	0.62	
Dominating	MA/MSc	91	3.68	0.53	0.50
	MPhil	23	3.76	0.68	
	PhD	31	3.60	0.59	
Overall CMS	MA/MSc	91	3.90	0.34	0.95
	MPhil	23	3.80	0.36	
	PhD	31	3.87	0.33	

Table 4 clearly shows that there is not an apparent difference in using styles of managing conflict of college, school, and university heads concerning qualification. So, the null hypothesis is accepted as $F = 0.95$ is non-significant as $p\text{-value} > 0.05$. When these factors are considered, educational managers did not differ in styles of managing conflict. However, results from a post hoc test indicate a substantial difference in the adoption of the avoidance technique while

resolving conflicts. In comparison to heads having M. Phil qualifications ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.60$), heads with MA/MSc ($M=3.94$, $SD=0.48$) qualifications utilized avoiding style more frequently.

H05: Conflict Management Styles of college, school, and university heads are not different concerning experience.

Table 5

Comparison of CMS of Heads Concerning Their Experience

CMS	Experience (years)	N	Mean	SD	F	Post-hoc
Integrating	1-5 years	66	4.05	0.43	1.27	
	6-10 years	42	4.04	0.45		
	above 10 years	36	4.18	0.40		
Obliging	1-5 years	66	3.86	0.47	1.38	
	6-10 years	42	3.80	0.48		
	above 10 years	36	3.96	0.35		
Compromising	1-5 years	66	3.88	0.42	1.30	
	6-10 years	42	3.91	0.44		
	above 10 years	36	4.01	0.34		
Avoiding	1-5 years	66	3.65	0.56	3.75*	More than 10 > 1-5**
	6-10 years	42	3.63	0.53		
	above 10 years	36	3.94	0.50		

CMS	Experience (years)	N	Mean	SD	F	Post-hoc
Dominating	1-5 years	66	3.71	0.59	1.73	
	6-10 years	42	3.54	0.53		
	above 10 years	36	3.76	0.56		
Overall CMS	1-5 years	66	3.85	0.37	2.95*	More than 10 > 1-5**
	6-10 years	42	3.82	0.31		More than 10 > 6-10**
	above 10 years	36	3.99	0.30		

The calculations given in Table 5, reject the hypothesis that there is not an apparent difference in using styles of managing conflict of college, school, and university heads concerning experience as F-value=2.95* with a p-value less than 0.05. Therefore, it is stated that, based on their experiences with adopting conflict management methods, educational managers in Punjab differ greatly from one another. Additionally, the post-hoc test shows a substantial difference in how they handle conflicts by using an avoidance technique. When compared to educational managers with experience from six to ten years (M=3.62, SD=0.51), those with experience above ten years (M=3.94, SD=0.50) typically utilized an avoidance strategy. In a similar vein, educational heads above ten years of experience (M=3.91, SD=0.47) typically utilized an avoidance approach in comparison to educational managers with 1–5 years of experience (M=3.65, SD=0.56).

Result and Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it appears that educational managers in (Punjab) Pakistan do not use conflict management approaches that differ significantly, since F= 0.49 is insignificant and p-value > =0.05. In their organizations, all directors, principals, and headmasters adopt the same management approaches. The educational organizations of Punjab share a similar condition, as shown by the facts on the ground. As university faculty, the researchers have direct knowledge of the actual situation. The rationale for this result is that educational managers work in nearly identical social contexts and environments and hence employ comparable conflict management strategies (Oad & Niazi, 2021).

The findings of the present study reveal that educational administrators have comparable conflict management strategies in their schools, colleges, and universities based on their gender as F-value is insignificant except for integrating style (Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, 2024). Nonetheless, men and female school administrators in Punjab use integrating

methods differently. In contrast to female institutional heads (M=3.86, SD=0.60), males (M=4.11, SD=0.36) settle conflicts mostly using an integrating method, according to the data. The current study is consistent with Jha's (2014) study, which concluded that male institutional heads employ a more competitive style than female institutional heads. According to the study's findings, institutional heads' conflict management techniques are nearly identical based on their qualifications as F-value = 0.95 with a p-value ≥ 0.05. Researchers were stunned to discover that the qualifications of managers have little bearing on their conflict management tactics. The results of the Post Hoc test demonstrated that there are substantial variations in avoidance style usage. Heads having MA/MSc (M=3.94, SD=0.48) qualifications employed avoidance style more frequently than those having M. Phil (M=3.65, SD=0.60) qualifications. Results reveal that managers with greater academic credentials are more self-assured than those with lower credentials. It also indicates that managers with an MA or MS degree do not wish to engage in conflict situations and avoid them. According to the study's research, there are considerable disparities in conflict management style based on the administrative experience of institutional heads (tenure in years). The F-value of 2.95 is significant as p ≤ 0.05. A pre-existing post hoc test demonstrates a significant distinction in styles of managing conflict. In comparison to institutional heads with 6-10 years (M=3.63, SD=0.53) and 1-5 years (M=3.65, SD=0.56) of experience, institutional heads with more than 10 years (M=3.91, SD=0.47) of experience typically employed an avoidance style. Based on the results, it appears that institutional heads with more expertise employ an avoidance strategy compared to those with less experience.

Conclusions

In summary, it has been determined from the study's findings that there are no appreciable differences in the conflict management approaches used by institutional heads in Pakistan. Education managers' use of conflict management

techniques in their educational organizations is unaffected by their position, gender, and educational background. However, the managerial experience of educational administrators reveals notable variations in the use of conflict

management techniques. In contrast to managers with less administrative expertise, institutional heads who have more experience manage conflicts in an avoidant manner.

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