



RESEARCH PAPER

**Transformational Leadership As Mediating Factor Influencing
Conflict Management and Performance of Teaching Faculty at
Higher Education Level: A Study in Punjab, Pakistan**

Sidra Kiran ¹Dr. Almas Ikram Kayani ²

1. Ph. D Scholar, Department of Education Faculty of Social Sciences, Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.
2. Associate Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan

PAPER INFO

Received:
April 18, 2020
Accepted:
June 15, 2020
Online:
June 30, 2020

Keywords:

Conflict
Management,
Transformational
Leadership,
Faculty
Performance

Corresponding

Author:

sidrakiran67@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between conflict management and performance of teaching faculty with the mediating role of transformational leadership. Conflicts are unavoidable results of social interaction between individuals, between groups, between organizations due to individual differences, incompatibility in goals etc. Same is the case with higher education institutions, unmanaged conflicts results in low performance. Researcher used Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory to identify conflict management strategies (independent variable), Institutional Performance Evaluation, to assess faculty performance (dependent variable) and Multifactor Leadership Style Questionnaire for transformational leadership style (mediating variable). Multistage random sampling technique was used, data was analyzed by mean, standard deviation, mediation multiple regression and AMOS. Findings revealed most of the respondents used compromising, integrating conflict management strategy; transformational leadership style mediates the relationship between conflict management and faculty performance.

Introduction

In the education sector, leadership is vital because the gradual changes are required at a very short interval. The students are the outcome of educational institutions and institutes must provide the leadership pieces of training to the students (Tahseen, 2019). The teaching staff must have the leading abilities besides the knowledge and grip on the subject because the instructor must have the tolerating power and the ability to compromise and collaborate. The transformational leadership is the most appropriate leadership style which needs to be implemented in the educational sector of Punjab (Danish, 2019).

Transformational Leader

The transformational leader is a trainer and mentor for his followers. Transformational leader focuses on the ability and talent of every individual besides the teamwork because the personal ability is vital to achieving organizational performance. Secondly, inspirational motivation is vital to get an exceptional result from the employees because the followers put their best efforts if the leader delivers something inspirational and motivational to the employees. Moreover, the transformational leader believes in the optimistic approach even in the most difficult situation because a positive approach allows the employees to put the best efforts to achieve appropriate organizational goals. (Tahseen, 2015).

Definition of the terms used in study

Following are the definitions of the term used in this study

Conflict

A felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control and connectedness. (Hocker&Wilmont, 2011)

Management

The process of mobilizing the available scarce human and material resources in an organization to realize stated goals and planned mission. (Mukoro, 2013)

Conflict Management

Strategies and practices that are acted upon at the lowest levels of an organization to allow all individuals the ability to take preventive measures to manage conflicts. (Lipsky et al., 2003)

Conflict Management Strategy/Style or Theory

Conflict management styles and conflict management theories are sometimes used interchangeably and they refer to the behavioural orientation of an individual in a conflict situation. (Rahim, 2002)

Transformational Leadership

It is the process in which leader inspires the members of the group to change their motivations, expectations, and perceptions towards the objectives of the organization. The transformational leader transforms the followers into caring for each other working for the good of the group. (Morgan, 2012)

Literature Review

This literature review is about to investigate the transformational leadership and influential elements of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. To understand transformational leadership, it is necessary to have a brief look at the development of leadership theory and transformational leadership adds a new dimension to this arsenal. The transformational leader is the one who influences his followers to compromise on their self-interest for the sake of the organization while elevating "the followers' level of need on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy from lower-level concerns for safety and security to higher-level needs for achievement and self-actualization".

Transformational leadership plays a vital role to bring positive changes in the educational sector of Pakistan and more specifically in Punjab. The group of teachers from different backgrounds must vary in knowledge, skills, and talent and the differentiation amongst professionalism brings negative changes in a particular domain. Transformational leadership and transformation instructions play a vital role in the training of teaching staff. The productivity of teaching staff is entirely based on the outcome of students. The talented and highly skilled students depict the productivity of the staff (Aga, 2016).

The transformational leader brings changes in the educational sector by setting a goal that enhances the learning ability of a student and maintaining the environment in the classrooms and the institution. However, leadership is vital to define the work ethics in the educational sector. Moreover, the education sector of Punjab observes three major challenges that need to be resolved. Firstly, the lack of quality education is a major issue. The particular issue can only be resolved with proper guidance and leadership from the higher authorities. The teaching staff needs training which enhances the skills and intellectual consideration of the staff. Individual consideration is vital in the education sector because the teacher must have the teaching ability and control over the class environment. Secondly, the conflict in ideas amongst the staff is a major issue in the educational department and an appropriate conflict management strategy needs to be implemented to resolve this particular issue. At last, the gender difference is the major issue regarding the performance of teaching staff in Punjab. Gender equality is a vital element to improve the condition of education in Pakistan. Transformational leadership can play a vital role in improving the condition of gender disparity (Folger, 2015).

Transformational Leadership and Conflict Management Strategies

Transformational leadership is vital to manage the conflict in the education sector. The conflict either belongs to the policies of education or the training of staff. The policies have a couple of major points. Firstly, the teaching staff must be fully equipped to produce productive material for the students. Secondly, the staff is trained properly to maintain the environment of the institution and the

classroom. For instance, the proper implementation of classroom policies. The transformational leader brings changes by improving the overall structure of the organization. Moreover, it is the prime responsibility of the leader to avoid conflict and go for the best solution. Moreover, the conflict can only be resolved through accommodating the gender-based issues is the part of the policies of transformational leadership. Moreover, the teacher is the role model for the students and the teacher-student relationship can only be maintained in a positive environment (Ghasabeh, 2015).

Transformational leadership and conflict management strategies are vital to handle the challenging situations. However, the researchers argue that leadership traits are developed and polished in an organization. The leadership qualities depict the behavior of the employees in an organization and in the educational institution, the tolerance is the prime quality of the leader (Zhang, 2015).

There is a need of training, guidance, and leadership to resolve the conflicts in the system because the conflict management and positive changes in the system enhance the outcome of the system. The staff in higher education lacking the concept of creativity. Moreover, creativity and the ability to deliver information is the basic requirement amongst the staff of higher education. The positive changes through transformational leadership style and the amendments in the strategies and policies played a vital part in the development of a quality education system (Banks, 2016).

The researchers argue that any sector of the country can't be succeeding without an appropriate leadership strategy (Ghasabeh, 2015). Moreover, a good leader has a couple of abilities. Firstly, the leader must be a team member to do a collaborative effort to achieve the goals. Secondly, the leader must have a motivational attitude. The benefits belong to financial and non-financial incentives (Tahseen, 2019).

The financial advantages belong to the maximization of the revenue cycle of the country. Moreover, the revenue stream can only be increased if the institution is ready to deliver a quality service. The students are the only outcome of the education sector of the country. The students must have leadership qualities because the leadership traits are vital to handle the challenging situations of the country (Zhang, 2015).

The non-financial benefits are vital for the institution because the education sector of the country is the driver of the whole society and the lack in the educational sector can be a disastrous element for society. The non-financial element relates to the productivity of the organization such as the positive environment which is exactly according to the cultural norms and values. The norms and values of the organizations are necessary to maintain a healthy working scenario. Moreover, a healthy working environment can be created through excellent leadership traits and a collaborative working environment. The staff who

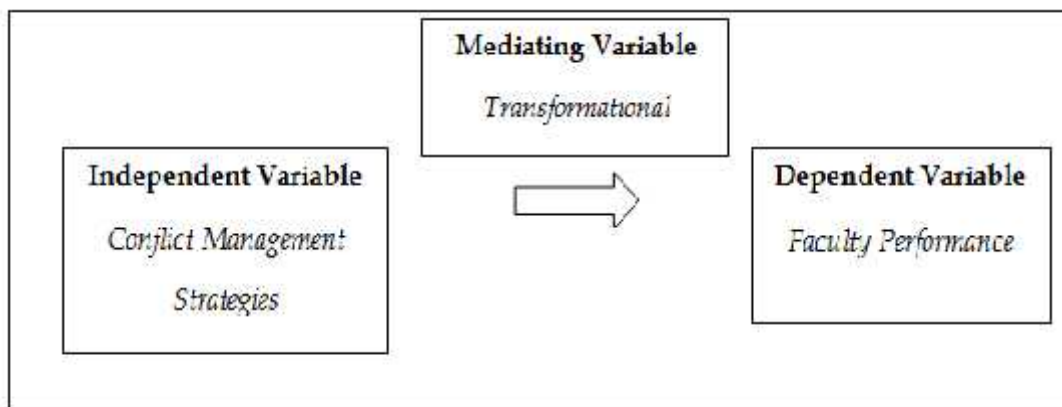
is ready to work as a team and cooperate can be a useful asset in the education sector of the country. A healthy relationship can only be maintained if the workers respect each other. More importantly, the vital element is to respect the values of each other (Prause, 2015).

The educational staff belongs to different backgrounds and own different cultures. However, it is a positive sign for the institutional perspective because people who belong to different backgrounds can share different ideas. The variation in ideas is beneficial for the institutions and the society as well (Erdenk, 2017).

Hypothesis

H 1: Transformational leadership style has positive significant effect on relationship between conflict management and faculty performance.

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Material and Methods

Delimitations of the study

The study was delimited to the:

- i. Public sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan
- ii. Three regions of Punjab, Pakistan
- iii. Public sector universities included in the ranking of Higher Education Commission
- iv. Teaching Faculty, Heads, Deans and Director/Deputy Director of Quality Enhancement Cell

Population

The population of the study comprised as follow (Source: HEC, Statistical Unit (2016)):

- I. All (36) districts of Northern, Central and Southern Punjab
- II. Deans of Faculties
- III. Heads of Departments
- IV. Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers.
- V. Director/Deputy Director of Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)

Sample

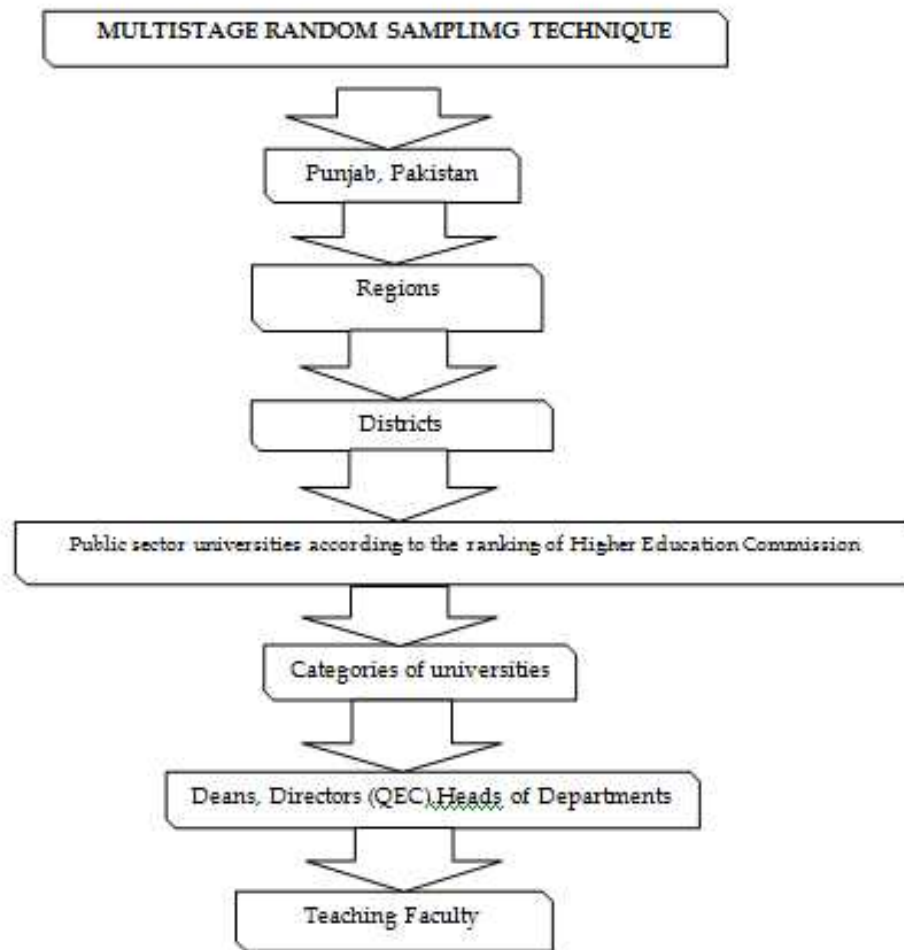
A true representative sample of teaching faculty of universities was derived from northern, central and southern Punjab. Category of the universities was main indicator to sample universities. In order to get maximum presentation of the whole Punjab based on 35 districts were selected from northern, central and southern Punjab. Seven districts from northern Punjab, 19 districts from central Punjab and 9 districts from southern were selected from the Punjab province. A sample of 440 respondents were taken in this study including Teaching Faculty, Heads of Departments, Deans of Faculty and Director/Deputy Director of Quality Enhancement Cell of the sampled universities.

Sources of Data

Following were the main sources of data:

- i. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan
- ii. Directors Quality Enhancement Cell
- iii. Websites of the sampled universities
- iv. Statistical unit of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan
- v. Teaching faculty of sampled universities
- vi. Director, Deputy Director of QECs of sampled universities

Sampling Technique



Instrumentation

Following were the relevant instruments according to the need of the study were selected to collect data.

FAROOQI Organizational Conflict Inventory (FOCI)

Farooqi Organizational Conflict Management Inventory was developed by Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi, Assistant Professor from University of Education Lahore, Pakistan. Above mentioned inventory is based on five conflict management strategies such as integrating, obliging, compromising, avoiding and dominating. This inventory was used to investigate the conflict management strategies adopted to manage conflicts.

Multifactor Leadership Style Questionnaire (MLQ)

Multifactor leadership style questionnaire is used (after seeking permission) to measure three leadership styles such as transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership style based on 45 items developed by Bruce Avolio & Bernard Bass published by Mind Garden. According to the need and demand of this research article researcher used 20 items of this questionnaire that were based on transformational leadership style.

Institutional Performance Evaluation (IPE)

There were 11 standards of Institutional Performance Evaluation in the manual developed by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. In this manual, one of the standard was about faculty performance. So in this research, researcher picked up standard five that was about faculty performance. It is noteworthy that there were 7 qualitative indicators described in the manual developed by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. But researcher used 13 quantitative indicators to access faculty performance. For the validity and reliability of these indicators, researcher go through from the following process.

Modification of the Scale

The phase of pilot testing was completed after detailed and critical analysis under the opinions and keen observations of the experts for the revision of Institutional Performance Evaluation. Some of the indicators were revised in order to reduce the ambiguity and unclarity in statements and finally this process resulted.

Reliability of the Instruments used in Study

S.No.	Instrument	No. of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Reliability
1	Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory	34	3.44	.715	.875
2	Transformational Leadership Style Questionnaire	20	2.48	.750	.745
3	Institutional Performance Evaluation	13	3.42	.804	.817

Data Analysis

Researcher analyse the data according to the nature and demand of the study such as mediation by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS.

Results and Discussion

Findings based on collected data showed that

Table 1
Conflict management strategies adopted by teaching faculty of sampled universities

S. No.	Conflict Management Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Integrating Conflict Management Strategy	26.98	6.72
2	Obliging Conflict Management Strategy	27.04	7.68
3	Compromising Conflict Management Strategy	26.15	6.13
4	Avoiding Conflict Management Strategy	18.84	5.54
5	Dominating Conflict Management Strategy	12.85	3.64

Table 1 shows the conflict management strategies adopted by faculty members to manage their conflicts. In this respect the mean value for integrating conflict management strategy was 26.98 with standard deviation 6.27. The mean value for obliging conflict management strategy was 27.04 with standard deviation 7.68 and for compromising conflict management strategy the mean value was 26.15 with standard deviation 6.13. With respect to avoiding conflict management strategy the mean value was 8.84 with standard deviation 5.54 and for fifth and last conflict management strategy that is dominating conflict management strategy the mean value was 12.85 with standard deviation 3.64.

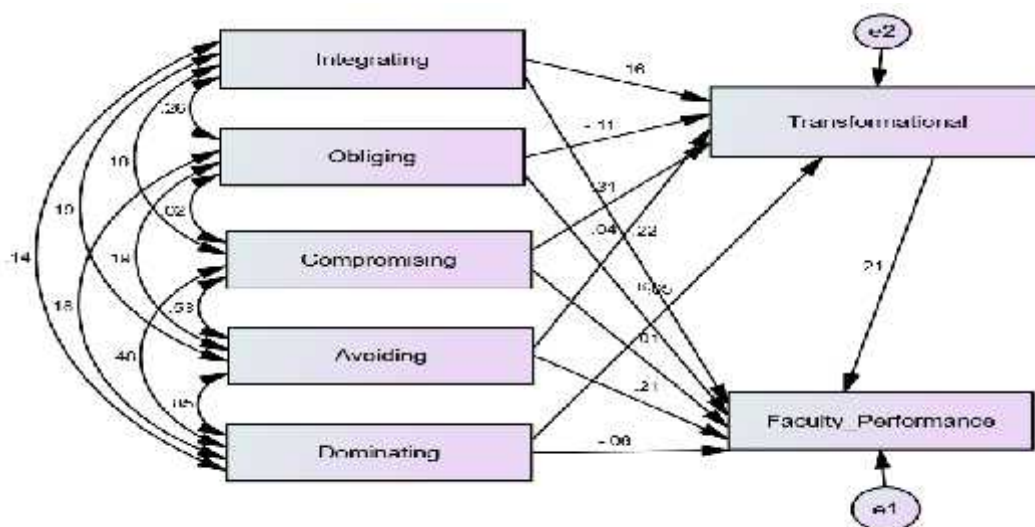
Table 2
Position of universities on the basis of quantitative indicators

#	University Name	Indicators													Position
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1	UAF	19	32	41	34	45	9	1628	7	3	9	4	60	68	2 nd
2	UHSL	17	27	38	29	17	9	1789	5	3	5	8	69	48	1 st
3	PMAS-AAUR	19	12	31	34	29	13	295	2	0	5	9	56	47	4 th
4	UF	11	8	13	9	6	3	98	2	0	1	4	44	56	13 th
5	FJWU	38	14	48	63	19	11	356	3	0	2	10	48	49	3 rd
6	UETT	13	13	23	9	13	4	130	3	0	1	2	76	50	9 th
7	UG	9	12	12	4	13	4	156	4	0	0	3	56	58	6 th
8	GCUL	18	11	16	21	16	6	147	13	0	9	7	34	69	8 th
9	UEL	13	15	11	45	13	8	67	2	0	2	2	44	29	14 th
10	GCUF	9	8	17	10	14	9	126	1	0	3	2	39	38	11 th
11	UETL	9	19	8	11	17	2	102	2	0	0	7	79	48	12 th
12	UOS	17	14	12	6	12	4	127	8	1	0	2	39	34	10 th
13	GSCWU	19	17	13	14	13	17	185	1	0	0	2	19	46	5 th
14	BZU	15	18	19	11	17	13	154	3	0	0	5	14	17	7 th
15	IUB	12	9	14	9	14	11	60	2	0	0	4	18	18	15 th

Table 2 shows the positions of fifteen sampled universities on the basis of quantitative indicators. It was found that University of Health Sciences Lahore was on first number with respected to quantitative indicators, University of Agriculture Faisalabad was second and Fatimah Jinnah Women University was third and position of rest of the universities was as follow; PirMehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Government Sadiq College Women University, University of Gujrat, BahaudinZikria University, Government College University Lahore, University of Engineering And Technology Taxila, University of Sargodha, Government College University Faisalabad, University of Engineering and Technology Lahore, The University of Faisalabad, University of Education Lahore and Islamia University Bahawalpur.

Table 3
Transformational leadership style mediates the relationship between conflict management strategies and faculty performance.

Parameter		Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
Transformational	<--- Integrating	.158	.071	.247	.001
Transformational	<--- Obliging	-.114	-.200	-.018	.019
Transformational	<--- Compromising	.311	.207	.418	.001
Transformational	<--- Avoiding	.036	-.139	.215	.694
Transformational	<--- Dominating	.048	-.137	.215	.629
Faculty_Performance	<--- Compromising	.010	-.012	.034	.357
Faculty_Performance	<--- Avoiding	.211	.174	.251	.001
Faculty_Performance	<--- Dominating	-.062	-.099	-.027	.002
Faculty_Performance	<--- Transformational	.214	.189	.239	.001
Faculty_Performance	<--- Obliging	.821	.791	.853	.001
Faculty_Performance	<--- Integrating	.216	.195	.236	.001



In the above figure faculty performance is a dependent variable while conflict management strategies integrating, obliging compromising, avoiding and dominating are independent variable while transformational leadership style is mediating variable. The mediating effect of transformational leadership style is tested using AMOS 24 graphics. This model is measured using mean value of each variable measured by its items. Table 3 presents the results of this model. We have tested this model at 95% significance level. If p value is less than 0.05 it means that estimates are significant otherwise insignificant. In this model there are two paths of measurement. First is the direct effect of independents on faculty performance and the second is indirect effect through mediating factor i.e. Transformational leadership. First, we present the results of direct effect than the mediating effect. Integrating factor has the positive and significant effect on the faculty performance. It has the value of 0.216 (about 21 %). Obliging has the highest value of coefficient 0.821 and it is also highly significant at 99.9% level. The coefficient of compromising is 0.010 and it is insignificant (p-value > 0.05) at 95% significance level. Avoiding behavior has the positive and significant effect on the faculty performance in mediation. Its coefficient value is 0.211 having p-value less than 0.05. Dominating has negative and significant effect on the faculty performance. Its coefficient value (-0.062) is significant at 99%.

In the indirect effect integrating has the positive and insignificant effect on the Transformational leadership style a mediating factor. It has value of coefficient 0.158. Obliging have the negative but significant effect on the Transformational leadership style. Its p-value is less than 0.05 and negative coefficient value of 0.114. Compromising factors effect on the mediating factor is found positive and significant (p-value is less than 0.01). Its effect is about 31% (0.311) on the Transformational leadership style. Avoiding has the about 4% positive but insignificant effect on mediating variable. It is insignificant at 95%. Dominating has also insignificant and positive effect on the Transformational. Its effect is about 5% on the Transformational at 95% significance level.

Finally, it was found that transformational leadership style have positive and strong significant effect on the faculty performance. Its effect is about 21% (0.214) on faculty performance at 99% significance level. We can conclude that there exists partial mediation overall in this model. Some of variables have the significant direct and indirect effects on the faculty performance. Mediating factor also have positive significant effect on the faculty performance. Thus, transformational leadership style strengthens the effect of independents variable (conflict management strategies) on the faculty performance. The stated hypothesis is accepted that transformational leadership style has positive significant effect on relationship between conflict management and faculty performance.

Conclusions

It is concluded under the findings of the study that most of the respondents used compromising, integrating conflict management strategy and positions of fifteen sampled universities on the basis of quantitative indicators to assess faculty performance showed that University of Health Sciences Lahore was on first number, University of Agriculture Faisalabad was second and Fatimah Jinnah Women University was third in position. It was also concluded that transformational leadership style mediated the relationship between conflict management and faculty performance.

Recommendations

Researcher recommends following recommendations such as:

1. Awareness about the type of conflict should be known, in the way they can better manage conflict possessing constructive outcomes of conflicts.
2. Leaders should keep in vision the ultimate goals of both the parties who were in conflict for constructive and productive outcomes. The consequences of conflicts should be perceived before taking any final decision.
3. Training workshops, seminar sessions should be conducted in order to better shed light on the types of conflicts, its outcomes and the best strategy to manage perceived conflict. This can also facilitate the leader to manage conflicts by having constructive outcomes.
4. Conflicts should be regarded by leaders and participants involved in conflict as an opportunity for productive outcomes to increase performance.

References

- Aga, D. A., Noorderhaven, N., & Vallejo, B. (2016). Transformational leadership and project success: The mediating role of team-building. *International Journal of Project Management*, 34(5), 806-818.
- Banks, G. C., McCauley, K. D., Gardner, W. L., & Guler, C. E. (2016). A meta-analytic review of authentic and transformational leadership: A test for redundancy. *The leadership quarterly*, 27(4), 634-652.
- Erdenk, N., & Altuntaş, S. (2017). Do personality traits of nurses have an effect on conflict management strategies?. *Journal of nursing management*, 25(5), 366-374.
- Danish, R. Q., Qaseem, S., Mehmood, T., Ali, Q. M., Ali, H. F., & Shahid, M. (2019). Work-related stressors and teachers' performance: Evidence from college teachers working in Punjab. *European Scientific Journal*, 15(4).
- Folger, J., Poole, M. S., & Stutman, R. K. (2015). *Working through conflict: Strategies for relationships, groups, and organizations*. Routledge.
- Ghasabeh, M. S., Soosay, C., & Reaiche, C. (2015). The emerging role of transformational leadership. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 49(6), 459-467.
- Lipsky, D., Seeber, R., & Fincher, R. D. (2003). *Emerging systems for managing workplace conflict: Lessons from American corporations for managers and dispute resolution professionals*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality* Harper & Row. New York.
- Morgan, N. A. (2012). Marketing and business performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40(1), 102-119.
- Mukoro, S. (2013). Conflict management and resolution strategies for enhanced personnel productivity and sustainable administration in higher institutions in Nigeria. *International Journal Scientific Research in Education*, 6(4), 365-371.
- Prause, D., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2015). Conflict management practices for diverse workplaces. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 6(3), 13.
- Rahim, A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(3), 206-235.
- Tahseen, N. (2015). Work-related stress among teacher-educators: Evidence from Punjab. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 30(2).
- Wilmot, W. W., & Hocker, J. L. (2011). *Interpersonal conflict*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zhang, S. J., Chen, Y. Q., & Sun, H. (2015). Emotional intelligence, conflict management styles, and innovation performance. *International Journal of Conflict Management*.