



RESEARCH PAPER

Identifying the Major Causes of Interpersonal Conflicts of Teachers and Managing Strategies of Conflicts at Secondary Schools in Rawalpindi

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: June 22, 2021	The objectives of this study were to find out the major causes of interpersonal conflicts of teachers and managing strategies of conflicts at Secondary schools and to compare the opinions of head teachers and SSTs regarding causes of conflicts and managing strategies for conflicts at Secondary level. The design of the research study was descriptive and all the Head teachers (388) and Secondary school teachers (1300) were population of the study. The sample of the study was comprised of (194) Head teachers and (260) Secondary school teachers which was selected through random sampling technique. In order to collect data, a validated questionnaire was used by the researcher. The major findings of the study showed that majority of the head teachers and secondary school teachers favoured that personal antagonism, a lack of civility, intolerance among teachers, misinterpreted communication, incompatible goals, and stressful environment, personal differences were main causes of interpersonal conflicts and suggested the strategies of accommodating, collaborating, competing and avoiding for handling the interpersonal conflicts. On the basis of findings, the major recommendations were given by the researcher.
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Introduction

The term of "conflict" can be applied on various situations with its variety of forms like gender, political, religious, ethnic and racial and different types including between two groups, within a group, between two individuals and within an individual etc. Conflict can occur in different places like war field, organizations and homes etc (Hartwick & Barki, 2004). Conflict is a natural phenomenon and is unavoidable. It is not possible to eliminate it permanently and its outcome is mostly negative (Peter, 2006). Tjosvold (2008) explained the term conflict as "the opposition

of individuals, or groups' interest, opinions or purpose" but on the other hand, conflict within the organizations cannot be defined as good or bad and crucial. McNamara (2007) explained as clash of opinions, values, interests and directions can give rise to conflict within the organizations like schools and workplace etc. Interpersonal conflict arises between two or more individuals of the different or same level within an organization. It also includes the ways of doing things and priorities of individuals. Intra-group conflict arises between the individuals associated with a group in different orientations and values. Inter-group conflict occurs when two groups working in an organization having inappropriate work assignments and shortage of resources for the maintenance (Wood, 2003).

Literature Review

Interpersonal conflict arises between two or more individuals of the different or same level within an organization. Gebretensay (2002) is of the view that the interpersonal conflict takes different shapes and can be overt at different levels. This consist of a clear and verbal argument or difference in opinion on any subject which will eventually give rise to a fight between university officials and students or between the students. Gaffar (2011) further explains the intrapersonal conflict between individuals and shows the presence of conflicting ideas, opposing and simultaneous activities and feelings within the individuals.

Olu and Abosede (2003) conducted their research studies on causes of interpersonal conflicts and reported that misinterpretation, clashes of personalities, sexual misuse and ineffective administration were the major causes of conflicts in educational institutions. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) concluded in their study related to causes of interpersonal conflicts that conflicts are arisen due to differences of capabilities of persons, culture and societal factor but in the present study it was concluded that personal antagonism, a lack of civility, intolerance among teachers, misinterpreted communication, incompatible goals, stressful environment, personal differences and strict deadlines of heads were the main causes of interpersonal conflicts in the secondary schools.

Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012) further explain the interpersonal conflict and added that this type of conflict can occur when beliefs, needs and wants of two or more than two groups or parties fail to match. This type of conflict is very common in our daily activities ranging from homes, through organizations to nations. Behari (2017)) explains the reason behind this type of conflict as the uncertainty due to lack of clarity and difference of role, value and belief is the most common phenomenon caused by unfair employee's selection associated with prejudice. In the context of Tanzanian education system, this will cause uncertainty for the teacher's role as they are unaware of their job description which creates lack of ability to perform their work efficiently and effectively.

Robbins (2000) explains it as interpersonal conflict has reasons which can be managed negatively or positively that is unconsciously or consciously. Achoka (1990)

describe the school structural factors one of the reason of school conflicts. For example, the number of disputes is correlated with the size of the school. If the school is large, then the differences number will also be greater and there will be high degree of conflict (Yambo 2012). The degree of specialization of the executives of the school is also correlated with the conflict.

According to Athiambo and Simatwa (2011) in the research on “assessment of conflict management and resolution in public secondary school in Kenya” found that not respecting the seniors, opinion difference, poor performance in academics, close relationships, unprofessional behavior of staff, teachers criticizing each other’s, communication gap, parents not depositing fee on time, student persuasion, below average performance of staff, financial issues and criticizing teachers are the main reasons behind the conflicts found in public secondary school in Nyakach.

Their research found that to deal with these types of conflict, the useful techniques are productive communication, collaboration, negotiation, trusted environment, reconciliation and arbitration. The study of Behari’s (2017) on “managing conflicts in multicultural secondary schools in the Newlands West Area, province of Kwazulu-Natal” show that usually lack of skills to deal with the issue of conflict also give rise to conflicts. A proper supporting program for serving teachers and trainees can help teachers to build a productive environment in schools.

Robbins (1974) were in support of specific strategies known as “resolution techniques”. He highlighted eight different methods including structural variables altering, human variable altering, commanding authority, negotiation, smoothing, avoiding, super ordinate goals and solving problems. It was also studied the strategies of conflict management by concentrating on usual strategies used in academic setting by the administration. It can have assumed that in a social system, conflict can be called a reality which offers contests for those involved in a conflict. Ladino (1997) points out different strategies of conflict management known as soothing, compromise, avoidance, change in structure and forcing strategy. Hodge (2014) in a similar research, highlighted strategies of conflict management including confrontation, rotation of job, democratic process, cooperation, intervention of third party, compromise, avoiding, smoothing and suppression.

In a similar study Ibukun (1997) highlighted the management strategies to resolve conflicts with in a group or organization as compromise, structural change of organization, command and authority usage, expressing resources and opportunities, avoidance and prevention, approach towards higher goals of organization and solving problem and found them effective. The five strategies for solving conflict highlighted by Blake and Mouton (1964) studyr are solving problem, withdrawal, forcing, compromising and smoothing. Balay (2006) in a research in Turkey focus on the strategies of conflict management for teachers and administrative staff and examined three strategies highlighted for conflict management including compromising, avoiding and competing (dominating).

Hypotheses

- HO1 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards personal antagonism as a cause of conflict.
- HO2 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards large size of an organization as a cause of conflicts.
- HO3 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards a lack of civility is a cause of conflicts.
- HO4 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards Intolerance among staff members is a cause of conflicts.
- HO5 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards misinterpreted communication is a cause of conflicts.
- HO6 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards incompatible goals is a cause of conflicts.
- HO7 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards Stressful environment of school is a cause of conflicts.
- HO8 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards inequality in distribution of responsibilities leads towards interpersonal conflicts.
- HO9 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards personal differences among teachers may be a cause of conflicts.
- HO10 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards the imposition of strict deadlines for activities by the heads is a cause of conflicts.
- HO11 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards accommodating strategy facilities in resolving conflicts.
- HO12 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards collaborating strategy helps in minimizing conflicts.
- HO13 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards compromising strategy creates equality there by resolve conflicts.
- HO14 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards competing is also a strategy of managing conflicts for showing the authority.
- HO15 There is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards Avoiding strategy helps in resolving conflicts in schools.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The design of the research study which was descriptive in nature.

Population

All the (388) Head teachers and (1300) Secondary School Teachers of public sector secondary schools of Rawalpindi were the population of the study.

Sampling Technique and Sample

The sample was taken through using random sampling technique. The (194) Head teachers and (260) Secondary school teachers of public sector secondary schools were taken as a sample through using random sampling technique for the study.

Instrument

Researcher developed a questionnaire according to the objectives of the study which were contained on 15 statements. After preparing first draft of questionnaire, five research experts were consulted for the purpose of validity. Amendments were brought in the observations of experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was ensured through pilot testing and 50 Head teachers and 50 teachers were selected for this purpose. The Cronbach's alpha was calculated 0.75 which was acceptable.

Data Collection

The two methods were adopted for collecting the data from Heads and SSTs. One was postal services and other was personal visits.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Data

The collected data were presented in frequency and analyzed by applying chi square

Table 1
Opinions regarding causes of interpersonal conflicts of teachers

Sr. No.	Statements	Variables	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	Personal antagonism may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	165	10	19
		SSTs (260)	220	15	25
2	A large size of an organization (school) may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	80	05	109
		SSTs (260)	110	50	100
3	A lack of civility may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	140	08	46
		SSTs (260)	200	30	30

4	Intolerance among teachers may cause conflicts.	Heads (194)	180	02	12
		SSTs (260)	190	10	60
5	Misinterpreted communication may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	175	05	14
		SSTs (260)	220	15	25
6	Incompatible goals might cause conflicts.	Heads (194)	150	10	44
		SSTs (260)	195	20	45
7	Stressful environment of school may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	185	0	09
		SSTs (260)	230	10	20
8	Inequality in distribution of responsibilities leads towards interpersonal conflicts.	Heads (194)	180	0	14
		SSTs (260)	240	0	20
9	Personal differences among teachers may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	160	05	29
		SSTs (260)	215	10	35
10	The imposition of strict deadlines for activities by the heads may be a cause of conflicts.	Heads (194)	150	10	34
		SSTs (260)	220	15	25

Table 1 row 1 revealed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards personal antagonism may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (165) and teachers (220) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards personal antagonism as a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =0.0817, P-value more than 0.05 did not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 2 exposed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards a large size of an organization (school) may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (100) and teachers (109) disagreed with the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards large size of an organization as a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =33.054, P-value smaller than 0.05 supported to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 3 presented that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards a lack of civility may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (140) and teachers (200) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards a lack of civility is a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =28.74, P-value smaller than 0.05 supported to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 4 indicated that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards Intolerance among teachers may cause conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (180) and teachers (190) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitude towards intolerance among staff is a

cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =28.601, P-value smaller than 0.05 supported to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 5 disclosed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards Misinterpreted communication may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (175) and teachers (220) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards misinterpreted communication is a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =3.7132, P-value larger than 0.05 did not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 6 revealed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards non compatible goals might cause conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (150) and teachers (195) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between Heads and SSTs attitudes towards incompatible goals is a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =2.79, P-value higher than 0.05 did not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 7 presented that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards Stressful environment of school may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (185) and teachers (230) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards Stressful environment may be a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =9.7637, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 8 indicated that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards inequality in distribution of responsibilities leads towards interpersonal conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (180) and teachers (240) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards inequality as a cause of interpersonal conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =1.242, P-value bigger than 0.05 did not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 9 displayed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards personal differences among teachers may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (160) and teachers (215) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards personal differences may be a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =1.242, P-value more than 0.05 did not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 1 row 10 exposed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards the imposition of strict deadlines for activities by the heads may be a cause of conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (150) and teachers

(220) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards the imposition of strict deadlines by the heads may be a cause of conflicts. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =11.48, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis

Table 2
Opinions regarding management strategies of conflicts

Sr. No.	Statements	Variables	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi Square
1	Accommodating strategy facilities in resolving conflicts.	Heads (194) SSTs (260)	170 190	0 10	14 60	27.58
2	Collaborating strategy helps in minimizing conflicts.	Heads (194) SSTs (260)	185 220	0 10	09 30	15.05
3	Compromising strategy creates equality there by resolve conflicts.	Heads (194) SSTs (260)	80 190	0 20	114 50	81.94
4	Competing is also a strategy of managing conflicts for showing the authority.	Heads (194) SSTs (260)	180 90	0 10	14 160	162.013
5	Avoiding strategy helps in resolving conflicts in schools.	Heads (194) SSTs (260)	170 220	0 10	24 30	7.641

Table 2 row 1 indicated that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards accommodating strategy facilities in resolving conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (170) and teachers (190) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers attitude towards accommodating strategy. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =27.58, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 2 row 2 revealed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards collaborating strategy helps in minimizing conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (185) and teachers (220) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards collaborating strategy. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =15.05, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 2 row 3 exposed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards compromising strategy creates equality there by resolve conflicts. Majority of the heads teachers (80) and teachers (190) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards compromising

strategy creates. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =81.94, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 2 row 4 exposed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards competing is also a strategy of managing conflicts for showing the authority. Majority of the heads teachers (90) and teachers (180) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards competing strategy. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =162.013, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 2 row 5 displayed that the result of the analysis of the attitude of head teachers and teachers towards avoiding strategy helps in resolving conflicts in schools. Majority of the heads teachers (170) and teachers (220) were found to be in favour of the statement. Chi square was used for testing the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between heads and teachers' attitude towards avoiding strategy. The result of chi-square (2, N=454) =7.641, P-value smaller than 0.05 rejected the null hypothesis.

Discussion

The study was designed to explore the major causes of interpersonal conflicts of teachers in public sector secondary schools and to examine the styles of managing conflicts in secondary schools. The findings of the first objective of the study regarding major causes of interpersonal conflicts were in line with the studies of Ungari (2010), Ramani and Zhimin (2010), Olu and Abosede (2003), Ungari (2010) concluded in his study that interpersonal conflicts in an organization or institution are caused by inequity, unfairness, injustice and incompetence of the employees. Olu and Abosede (2003) identified in their studies that misinterpretation, clashes of personalities, sexual misuse and ineffective administration were the major causes of conflicts in educational institutions. Ramani and Zhimin (2010) concluded in their study that conflicts are arisen due to differences of capabilities of persons, culture and societal factor but in the present study it was concluded that personal antagonism, a lack of civility, intolerance among teachers, misinterpreted communication, incompatible goals, stressful environment, personal differences and strict deadlines of heads were the main causes of interpersonal conflicts in the secondary schools. The findings of the second objective of the study related management strategies were in line with the studies of Yalen (2007) and Shahmohammadi (2014), Yalen (2007) conducted the study on managing strategies of conflicts and reported that mediating, avoiding, compromising and dominating were the managing strategies of interpersonal conflicts. Shahmohammadi (2014) showed the results of his study and pointed out that threatening letters, censures, punishment and removal were the management strategies in the different institutions but in the present study it was stated and recommended the strategy of accommodating, strategy of collaborating, strategy of competing and strategy of avoiding for handling the interpersonal conflict in the secondary schools.

Conclusion

On the basis of findings the conclusion was drawn that majority of the Head teachers favoured the statements regarding the causes of interpersonal conflicts that personal antagonism, a lack of civility, intolerance among teachers, misinterpreted communication, incompatible goals, stressful environment, personal differences, inequity and strict deadlines of heads were the main causes of interpersonal conflicts in the secondary schools and majority of the head teachers did not favour that a large size of an organization or school may be a cause of conflicts. According to the opinions of Secondary School Teachers it was concluded that majority of the teachers also favoured regarding the statements of causes of interpersonal conflicts that personal antagonism, a lack of civility, intolerance among teachers, misinterpreted communication, incompatible goals, stressful environment, personal differences, inequality and strict deadlines of heads were the main causes of interpersonal conflicts in the secondary schools. Majority of the Head teachers acknowledged regarding the statements of managing strategies of interpersonal conflicts that the strategy of accommodating, strategy of collaborating, strategy of competing and strategy of avoiding for handling the interpersonal conflict in the secondary schools but did not agree with the applying of compromising strategy and majority of the teachers agreed regarding the statements of managing strategies of interpersonal conflicts that the strategy of accommodating, strategy of collaborating, strategy of compromising and strategy of avoiding for handling the interpersonal conflict in the secondary schools but did not agree with the applying of competing strategy.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made;

1. Training of head teachers and subordinate teachers may be conducted on approaches of conflict resolution.
2. All the staff members of educational institutions may be engage as team members for sharing their ideas on different matters.
3. Head teachers may be involved the staff members in decision making process of institutions.
4. Head teachers may be create a spirit of team work among the teachers for an ideal teaching learning process.
5. Personality traits may be developed in head teachers and subordinate teachers of secondary schools for minimizing the interpersonal conflicts.

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