

IMPACT OF PRINCIPAL'S AGE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Aim of this research study was to determine impact of principal's age and experience on conflict management style at secondary school level. Total 100 principals were selected from public sector schools and private sector schools as sample of the study. Reginald Adkins (2006), Conflict Management Style Questionnaire was used for data collection. Regression Analysis, t-test and Mean score comparison was used for data interpretation. Result shows that there was insignificant relationship of the principal's age and experience with conflict management styles. Collaborating conflict management style was most dominant style of conflict resolution while avoiding conflict management style was less preferred. There was significant difference between public school principals and private school principals regarding most preferred conflict management styles. On the basis of findings, several recommendations are given to improve teaching and learning environment in schools.

Keywords: Principal's age, conflict management style, administrative experience

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership needs fundamental and critical skills to resolve conflict in the organization. Those leaders who are able in managing conflicts in effective way are perceived to be more competent and productive (Gross & Gurerro, 2011). Lack of competency in conflict management skills tend to have detrimental impact on organization productivity. Conflict management is defined in different ways. According to Stermanan (2010), conflict management is a process through which parties which are in dispute resolve their differences and come to an agreement. Conflict arise in situation where there arise differences in opinions regarding some issue or problem.

The term "Conflict management" gained it importance from the Black & Mounton (1964) leadership theory of Managerial Grid. Managerial grid divide leadership in two broad categories, one is concern for people and the second is concern for production. According to managerial grid, an individual can be rated on scale of one to nine according to their concern for people and for production (Janet Wagude, 2015). Those individuals who are inclined towards concern for production indicates a strong desire to accomplish personal objectives and goals. Those persons who are inclined towards concern for people shows desire to build and maintain strong personal relationship. Managerial grid has identified five type of conflict management styles. These are (1):

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Smoothing (low concern for people and high concern for production), (2): withdrawing (low concern for people and production), (3): compromising (medium concern for people and production), (4): problem-solving (high concern for both people and production), and (5): forcing (low concern for people and high concern for production). An effective leader may possess one of these conflict management style to resolve issues in the organization (Janet Wagude, 2015).

Conflict is the art of coming into clash or collision with other person. It is the situation where a person feel to be in opposition or in variance with other people. It is also regarded as a tension which is experienced when people feel that their needs and desires are ignored or denied in the organization. Conflict is the state of disharmony which arise as a result of differences in attitude, impulses, desire, and needs. It is form of disagreement between two parties or persons (Vivar. 2006). Conflict does not always has bad effect on the performance of organization. Sometime conflict has sound influence on the development of interpersonal relationship in the organization or at work place. It is due to conflicting issues that managers make sure maintaining interpersonal relationship in the organization. Managing conflict in constructive manner and developing effective procedures for conflict resolution encourages development of social values, knowledge, attitude, and civic standard in the organization. Conflict has both positive and negative consequences in the organization. So it is essential for leader to analyze conflict and mange it most effectively (Fogler, et al. 1997).

Different researchers have identified two major type of conflict at work place. These conflict generally based on task or effect. Task conflict is also known as cognitive conflict and it is related with issues that emerge as a result of disagreement among team members that focus on the attainment of common objectives and common organizational goals (Ababakar, 2005). The second type of conflict which is affect conflict is also described as interpersonal conflict. It is related to issues that emerge as a result of personality clashes or emotional interaction among team members in the organization (Adeyemi. 2009). Conflict may be intrapersonal and interpersonal. Intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual himself especially when he feels frustration in accomplishing his goals and objectives. Conflict is interpersonal if it occurs among different individuals in the organization (Akinnubi, et al. 2012).

Educational institutions also experience conflicting situations. Conflict management is not only restricted to school setting but it can also be linked to many other disciplines. It is essential for school principal to take active role in filed practice in order to embrace effective management skills that are needed for smooth running of school and effective teaching and learning process. It is imperative for school principal to recognize conflict at first hand and take strong initiative for its resolution. Principals should take collective judgment in order to overcome his personal biases. It is also important for principal to accept his realistically his strength and weaknesses for conflict management. Effective principal accept conflict as part and parcel of all social organization. An effective school principal has artistic insight and technical skills for conflict management in the school. Such principal offers timely assistance to his subordinates in resolving conflicting situation (Ghafar, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is regarded as significant and powerful tool of change in any organization. It depends on the existing situation whether it has positive or negative result. School is an important social organization of the society and it is also replete with conflict. Conflict generally emerges between teachers and principal and some time among teachers. This study explores how principal's age and administrative experience impact his conflict management style. This research also determines to find out significant difference between public school principals and private school principals regarding conflict management styles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main objectives of this research study were

1. To determine significant relationship between principals' age and conflict management styles.
2. To determine significant relationship between principals' teaching and administrative experience and conflict management styles.
3. To find out dominant conflict management styles among secondary school principals.
4. To find out significant difference between public school principal and private school principal regarding conflict management styles.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- H1:** There is significant relationship between principals' age and conflict management styles.
- H2:** There is significant relationship between principals' administrative experience and conflict management styles.
- H3:** There is significant difference between public school principal and private school principal regarding collaborating conflict management styles.
- H4:** There is significant difference between public school principal and private school principal regarding competing/authoritative conflict management styles.
- H5:** There is significant difference between public school principal and private school principal regarding avoiding conflict management styles.
- H6:** There is significant difference between public school principal and private school principal regarding accommodating conflict management styles.
- H7:** There is significant difference between public school principal and private school principal regarding compromising conflict management styles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The type and nature of conflict that occurs in organization is different from the conflict of other organization. This difference in the occurrence of conflict is due to the nature and structure of the organization and also the conflict management skills of the leader. Conflict is essential for change in the organization (Whetten, D. A., Cameron, K. S., & Woods, M., 2000; Vivar, 2006). In educational institution, the common type of conflict

is that emerges between staff members and school principals. Sometime conflict may also occurs among teachers in the school and it also needs principal's management skills in resolving issues among teachers. According to Okorie (2002), principal's personal characteristics play significant role in developing his management skills. Principal's age, his teaching and administrative experience, academic qualification, and sex cannot be divulge from the manner and ways that principal's adopt for running and managing school effectively (Hallinger, P., Bickman, L., & Davis, K., 1996; Taiwo, 2010). Those principals who have vast teaching and administrative experience perform better in motivating the teaching staff and non-teaching staff members for accomplishing school goals and objectives (Ike, 2000; Kember, D, 2016.).

Conflict is also a part of school life because different teachers are serving in school. These teachers belong from different background and they have varying ideas and opinions. Teachers have vast individual differences and it often result in conflicting situation in the school. These individual differences among teachers and principal sometime cause great damage to the smooth running teaching and learning process in the school. It is essential for school principal that he must have conflict management skills. In managing conflict effectively, it is necessary for school principal to know the reason behind conflict and how conflict will influence school system (Albert, 2001). Conflict management styles of school principal indicates that how principal interact with other teachers. Different principals have different styles of conflict management in the school. Research study of Kumar, (2012) indicated that principal's conflict management styles are related to efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness in the school system.

In a research study, Ziaee (2012), concluded that in primary school principal, accommodating style of conflict management is most effective while competing style of conflict management has least efficiency. He also concluded that applying compromising and collaborative conflict management style in training institutions showed better result in resolving conflicting issues. It was declared in the research study of Rajabi (2012) that accommodative conflict management style was the dominant styles among school principals. In the research study of Sterman (2010), it was concluded that collaborative management style of school principal create conducive environment in the school and it leads to achievement of learning objectives in effective way. It was also found that avoiding conflict management style of school principals had positive and significant relationship with school performance. Adeyemi (2011) concluded that conflict management styles of school principal has positive relationship with school effectiveness and school efficiency. However conflict management styles of principals vary according to their age, gender, and teaching and administrative experience.

A research study was conducted by Rahim, (1983) to examine relationship between principal's age and his conflict management styles on teachers' job performance. Result showed that compromising management style was the dominant conflict management style of secondary school principal while competing management style was less preferred conflict management style among secondary school principals (Cheng, 1994). It was also concluded in the research study of Janet (2015) that principals having different age had different dominant conflict management styles at secondary schools in

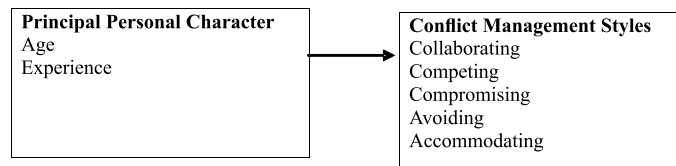
Nigeria. It was found in this research study that there was insignificant relationship between principal's age and his conflict management styles. When principals were asked about the effect of conflict on school progress, many respondents declared that it had significant influence on the daily management activities in the school (Hunts, 1992; Berger, R., Benatov, J., Abu-Raiya, H., & Tadmor, C. T, 2016.).

Conflict cannot be deviated in the social life. It plays significant role in school effective management. Conflict is considered as imperative for change in the school. It cannot be ignored in the school because it is experienced on daily basis in the learning and teaching process in the school. It is principal's duty to use his personal characteristics and skills to offer viable and plausible solution to the conflicting issues (Adeyemi, 2011). It is principal most important job to remove differences with teaching staff and also remove grievances among school staff (Ike, 2000).Principal's personal characteristics play significant role in the smooth running and effective management of school. No single strategy is enough to handle conflicting situation in the school. An appropriate approach should be adopted for resolving conflicts in the school because different strategies lead to different outcomes (Mosaddegh, 2011).

Literature review shows that school effective management is greatly attributed to principal's characteristics. Principal qualification is a good determinant of how school principal play its role in managing conflict in the school. Principals with high qualification showed better result in conflict management skills. Male principals were more effective in managing conflict in schools as compared to female principals.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

On the basis of literature review following conceptual model was developed for this current research study.



METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was adopted as research method for collecting data for this current research study. The study was carried out in public and private secondary schools. The aim of this study was to find out dominant conflict management styles of secondary school principals both in public and private sector schools. Another important objective of this study was to determine impact of principal's age and experience on conflict management style. All male secondary schools, both in public sector and private sector in District Karak, KPK were selected as population of the study. However it was not possible for the researcher to select all schools for data collection due to time and financial constraint. So 50 schools were selected from public sector and 50 schools were selected from private sector schools. Total 100 principals were selected as sample of the study. Convenient sampling technique was used due to remoteness of the areas. This study used Regninald Adkins (2006), Conflict

Management Style Questionnaire for data collection. This questionnaire assess five conflict management styles which are (a): collaborating, (b): competing, (c): avoiding, (d): accommodating, and (e): compromising. Reliability of the research instrument was checked through pilot testing. Reliability was found as .91. After calculating the reliability, questionnaires were delivered to selected principals. Data was analyzed through SPSS using t-test, regression analysis and mean score comparison to interpret and draw conclusion.

RESULT AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Frequency of Principals According to Their Age

Age-Group	N	%	Public	Private	Total
30-40 year	7	7%	4	3	7
41-50 year	30	30%	13	17	30
51-60 year	63	63%	33	30	63
Total	100	100%	50	50	100

Table 1 describes principals' frequency distribution according to their age. It is cleared from the result that maximum principals (63%) were above 50 years of age. Only 7% principals belonged to young age (30-40 year age group) and 30% principals belonged to middle age (40-50 year) group.

Table 2: Frequency of Principals According to Experience

Experience	N	%	Public	Private	Total
1-10 years	14	14%	5	9	14
11-20 years	40	40%	16	24	40
21 or more	46	46%	29	17	46
Total	100	100%	50	50	100

Table 2 represents result of principals' distribution according to their teaching and administrative experience. It is evident from the result that maximum principals (46%) had 21 or more years teaching and administrative experience. 40% principals had 11 to 20 year experience while only 14% principals had less than 10 year experience.

Table 3: School Wise Dominant Conflict Management Style of School Principals

School	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accommodating	Compromising
Public Mean	11.3	8.98	8.02	9.34	10.19
SD	2.96	1.83	1.83	2.35	3.01
Private Mean	9.16	10.31	9.09	8.77	9.47
SD	2.11	2.08	1.66	1.93	1.83
Total Mean	20.46	19.29	17.11	18.11	19.66
SD	5.07	3.91	3.49	4.28	4.84

Table 3 shows significant differences in the responses of public school principals and private school principals regarding conflict management styles. Result shows that public school principals have collaborating (Mean = 11.3) style as most dominant conflict management style while private school principals were more inclined towards competing (Mean = 10.31) as most preferred conflict management style. Avoiding (Mean = 8.02) was less preferred style of conflict management with public school principals while accommodating (Mean = 8.81) was the less preferred conflict

management style among private school principals.

Table 4: Age Wise Dominant Conflict Management Style of School Principals

School	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accommodating	Compromising
31-40 Mean	11.38	10.05	8.86	9.48	10.86
SD	4.30	1.15	1.37	2.71	2.96
41-50 Mean	10.40	9.84	8.76	9.30	9.58
SD	2.12	1.92	1.69	2.18	2.35
51-60 Mean	9.42	10.22	8.32	8.89	9.84
SD	2.86	2.19	1.93	2.10	2.53
Total Mean	31.2	30.11	25.64	27.67	30.28
SD	9.28	5.26	4.99	6.99	7.84

Table 4 describes age wise dominant conflict management styles of secondary school principals. Result indicates that principals of 30-40 years age group have collaborating (Mean = 11.38) as most preferred conflict management style and avoiding style was least preferred (Mean = 8.86). 41-50 years age group principals also indicated same responses about conflict management style. However principals having age between 51-60 years responded in favor of competing (Mean = 10.22) as most dominant style for conflict resolution in the school.

Table 5: Experience Wise Dominant Conflict Management Style of School Principals

School	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accommodating	Compromising
1-10 Mean	9.35	9.07	8.31	8.81	9.93
SD	2.84	2.25	1.89	2.08	2.31
11-20 Mean	10.45	9.18	8.80	8.94	9.62
SD	2.23	1.93	1.72	1.82	2.39
21 or more Mean	9.64	10.55	8.41	9.22	9.37
SD	3.18	2.21	1.89	2.46	2.67
Total Mean	29.44	28.80	25.52	26.97	28.92
SD	8.25	6.39	5.5	6.36	7.37

Table 5 shows experience wise result for dominant conflict management style. Result shows significant differences in principals' responses. Principals having 1-10 year experience responded in favor of compromising (Mean = 9.93) style as most preferred. Principals who had 11-20 year experience had collaborating (Mean = 10.45) as dominant conflict management style. Principals with 21 or more year experience declared competing or authoritative (Mean = 10.55) conflict management style as most preferred.

Table 6 Relationship between Principal's Age and Management Style Model Summary b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.081 ^a	.007	-.004	10.02	1.77

a) Predictors (constant) Principal's age

b) dependent variable: Management Style

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	64.59	1	64.59	.64	.42
Residual	9852.02	98	100.53		
Total	9916.62	99			

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	57.87	4.29		13.61	.00
Age	-1.29	1.61	-.08	-.802	.42

a) Dependent Variable: Conflict Management Style

Table 6 shows result of relationship between principal's age and conflict management style. R-square value is .007 which illustrates that principal's age explains 0.7% variance in principal's conflict management style. There is no issue of auto correlation as Durbin-Watson value is 1.77. P-value is 0.42 and it indicates that there is insignificant relationship between principal's age and conflict management style ($p > .05$). Our Hypothesis H1 which states that there is significant relationship between principal's age and management style is rejected.

Table 7: Relationship between Principal's Experience and Management Style Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.049 ^a	.002	-.008	10.04	1.757

a) Predictors (constant) Principal's Experience

b) Dependent variable: Management Style

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	23.35	1	23.35	.231	.63
Residual	9893.26	98	100.95		
Total	9916.62	99			

Coefficients					
Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	56.12	4.293.4		16.5	.00
Experience	-.704	1.46	-.049	-.481	.632

a) Dependent Variable: Conflict Management Style

Table 7 illustrates that p-value is .632 ($p > .05$). It declares insignificant relationship between principal's experience and conflict management style. R-square value is 0.002 which illustrates that principal's experience explains 0.2% variance in principal's conflict management style. Durbin-Watson value is 1.75 which shows no issue of autocorrelation in the data. Our hypothesis H2 which describes that there is significant relationship between principal's administrative experience and conflict management style is rejected.

Table 8: Result of Significant Difference between Public School Principals and Private School Principals Regarding Collaborating Style (CLBS)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	df	F	t-value	Sig
CLBS	Public	11.3	2.96	98	5.73	4.15	.00
	Private	9.16	2.11				

Table 8 shows t-test result of significant difference in the responses of public school principals and private school principals regarding collaborating conflict management style. Result shows that p- value is less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). It means that principals of both sector school responded differently regarding collaborating management style. It indicates that there is significant difference between public school principals and private school principals regarding collaborative conflict management style. Hence our hypothesis H3 is accepted

Table 9: Result of Significant Difference between Public School Principals and Private School Principals Regarding Competing Style (CPTS)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	df	F	t-value	Sig
CPTS	Public	8.98	1.83	98	.87	-3.37	.001
	Private	10.31	2.08				

Table 9 shows result of significant difference in the responses of public school principals and private school principals regarding competing or authoritative conflict management style. Result shows that p- value is less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). It means that principals of both sector school responded differently regarding authoritative conflict management style. It indicates that there is significant difference between public school principals and private school principals regarding competing or authoritative conflict management style. Hence our hypothesis H4 which states that there is significant difference between public school principals and private school principals at 0.05 confidence level is accepted.

Table 10: Result of Significant Difference between Public School Principals and Private School Principals Regarding Avoiding Style (AVDS)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	df	F	t-value	Sig
AVDS	Public	8.02	1.83	98	.262	-3.04	.003
	Private	9.09	1.66				

Table 10 indicates result of significant difference in the responses of public school principals and private school principals regarding avoiding conflict management style. Result shows that p- value is less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). It means that principals of both sector school responded differently regarding avoiding conflict management style. It indicates that there is significant difference between public school principals and private school principals regarding avoiding conflict management style. We accept hypothesis H5 which describes significant difference between public school and private school regarding avoiding conflict management style.

Table 11: Result of Significant Difference between Public School Principals and Private School Principals Regarding Accommodating Style (ACDS)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	df	F	t-value	Sig
ACDS	Public	9.34	2.35	98	.90	1.33	.186
	Private	8.77	1.93				

Table 11 that p- value is greater than 0.05 ($p > .05$). It indicates that there is insignificant difference in the responses of public school principals and private school principals regarding accommodating conflict management style. Hence our hypothesis H6 which states that there is significant difference between public school principals and private school principals, rejected at 0.05 confidence level.

Table 12: Result of Significant Difference between Public School Principals and Private School Principals Regarding Compromising Style (CMPS)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	df	F	t-value	Sig
CMPS	Public	10.19	3.01	98	14.80	1.45	.149
	Private	9.47	1.83				

Table 12 also illustrates that $p > .05$. It indicates insignificant difference between public school principals and private school principals regarding compromising conflict management style. Hence our hypothesis H7 is rejected.

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to determine the impact of principal's age and teaching and administrative experience on conflict management style at secondary school. This study aimed to find out most preferred conflict resolution style at secondary school level. Findings indicated significant differences between public school principals and private school principals regarding preferred conflict management approach. It was found that principals of public school use collaborating conflict management approach to resolve and settle conflicts in the school while private school principals resort to competing or authoritative conflict management style for settling conflicting issues in the school. Results of this study are inconsistent with the findings of Janet Waged (2015) who found accommodating style was mostly used by secondary school principals. Findings of this study are also inconsistent with the findings of Adeyemi (2011) and Rajabi (2012) regarding preferred conflict resolution approach.

An important aim of this study was to determine impact of principal's age on conflict management style. It was cleared from findings and results that there is insignificant relationship between principal's age and his conflict resolution approach. These findings are consistent with the findings of Janet (2015). He also found that there is no relationship between principal's age and conflict management style. It was also found that principal's teaching and administrative experience has insignificant relationship. Principal's experience does not play any role in conflict management style. However these findings are inconsistent with the findings of Akinnubiet al (2012). They found that principal's sex, teaching experience and qualification have direct influence on conflict resolution approaches. Smooth running of educational institution is attributed principal personal characteristics.

CONCLUSION

Total elimination of conflict cannot be thought of, it always exist in a working atmosphere. Society is itself conflict-inherent and the educational institution is no exemption. Conflict management in school is highly dependent on principal's personal characteristics. Conflict is a dynamic process and its presence in the organization results in organization effectiveness. Principal should not avoid conflict but manage it in

effective way. Principals have to make him-self aware about the causes of the conflict in the school and then use effective and appropriate strategies to resolve conflict. School effective management is greatly attributed to principal's characteristics. Principal qualification is a good determinant of how school principal play its role in managing conflict in the school. Principals with high qualification showed better result in conflict management skills. Male principals were more effective in managing conflict in schools as compared to female principals. It is essential for school principal to take active role in filed practice in order to embrace effective management skills that are needed for smooth running of school and effective teaching and learning process. It is imperative for school principal to recognize conflict at first hand and take strong initiative for its resolution. Principals should take collective judgment in order to overcome his personal biases. It is also important for principal to accept his realistically his strength and weaknesses for conflict management. Effective principal accept conflict as part and parcel of all social organization.

RECOMMENDATION

Managing conflict at any level is not an easy job. It requires knowledge and skills to resolve conflicting situation in the organization. School principal also face conflict resolution issues and it needs immediate attention. It is also recommended that principals should manage conflict and do not avoid it. It is also recommended that proper training of conflict management should be given to secondary school principals at regular interval. Principals should not restrict to one single conflict management style but change it according to situations. Another recommendation is that a committee may be set up comprising principal and some

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