

Studying the Relationship between Conflict Management Style and Worker Performance (Clarity, Ability and Motivation)

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at investigating the relationship between conflict management style and workers' performance (clarity, ability and motivation). With regard to the goals, it is of applied research type using descriptive correlational methods. The statistical population includes 320 workers of Iran Insurance central offices in Lorestan province. To determine sample size, 174 individuals were selected out of total 320 workers based on Kerjesy-Morgan table. Two questionnaires with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.827 and 0.749 have been applied to assess workers' performance and conflict management, respectively. Multivariate regression, Beta coefficients, t and F significance tests were utilized to analyze data inferentially. Results indicate that competing management style is correlated with workers' performance namely ability, clarity and motivation. If managers select competing management style, the workers' performances change. Collaborating management style has the highest correlation with performance clarity and on the other hand, it is also correlated with motivation. Accommodating management style is only correlated with motivation. Compromising management style has correlations with ability and motivation. Avoiding management is associated with ability.

KEYWORDS: Conflict Management, Clarity, Ability, Motivation, Workers' Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon of organizational life which can be of two-faceted nature and negatively or positively affect the workers' performance very similar to many behaviors and events. If conflict can motivate, it improves the quality of decision making, solves organizational problems, prevents stagnation and pacification, increases the innovation and creativity, reduces stress and tensions, enhances group performance, stimulates individual growth and maturity and finally, changes the organization; therefore, it will be efficient and constructive. But if conflict leads to struggle, threat, stagnation, tension, incoordination and reduction of organizational performance, it will be considered as a destructive and inefficient conflict (YazdanAbadi, 1993, p. 6).

All these conflicts are originated in the organization or individual feelings (internal) and functions (external). Managers will be more successful, in case they can decrease the conflict feelings and direct the functional ones in a qualified manner. They should be aware of conflicts' origins and nature to apply appropriate management styles. Among human resources of educational units, teachers are considered as the most fundamental basis and infrastructure in the organization and play crucial roles in training man and achieving educational goals. Their success in doing educational tasks in schools to a large extent depends on how to behave while encountering different situations. If the teacher does not feel assured of him/herself, his/her job and manager, (s)he will not considerably pay attention to the teaching quality which leads to drop in performance level (Joam, 1983, p. 25).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Conflict results from intense incoordination of interests so that any feeling of satisfaction and success may be considered as dissatisfaction and failure of the other party (YazdanAbadi, 2000, p. 9). When two or more comments are expressed contrary to each other, personal conflicts are created.

From the viewpoint of human relationship theorists, the most important reason of conflict is the insufficiency of communication systems. In other words, individuals become incorrectly aware of the others' intend and feelings due to communication faults and as a result, misunderstanding and disparity appear.

Weber identified conflict as a problem which happens in large organizations and governments and stated that sometimes; conflict is created because of such displeasing tempers as cowardliness, inequity, stupidity, confusion, and greediness (YazdanAbadi, 2000, p. 31). Griffin specifies the conflict management as a process to solve and

remove the current understanding obstacles to reach an agreement. According to Griffin, it is a process for recognizing the suitable role of conflict among groups and applying the techniques sufficiently to stimulate the organizational efficacy (Moorehead and Griffin, 1995, p. 215).

Conflict management style: It refers to a behavioral pattern the manager shows while encountering and directing the conflict in the organization. This pattern involves the following styles.

Competing management style: It shows the win-lose situation in which the manager applies his/her own power to suppress the opposite party. This style is effectively utilized in emergency situations to communicate the rules in which people are not interested but they are of high importance for the organization and stop the individuals who misuse their own position against the organization goals.

Avoiding management style: When the manager does not pay attention to the others and their ideas, (s)he seems to be indifferent to the conflict and tries to ignore it. The style is appropriate if conflict is partial or manager intends to reduce the individuals' excitement.

Accommodating management style: The manager tries to remove the conflict through negotiation and exchange of privileges. It can be applied when the opposite party is of equal power or solving the complicated problems needs a temporary but quick solution.

Compromising management style: The manager or one of parties tries to satisfy the wants and benefits of opposite party even if (s)he sacrifices his/her own wishes and interests for this purpose. Members cooperate and account each other's interests for finding a common solution.

Collaborating management style: It is an indicative of organization maturity and growth. Manager and opposite party use their forces to reach an appropriate solution which presents a combination of both parties' ideas and comments.

From the perspective of human resources, performance management is identified as a process to create and direct the optimal and suitable conditions for effective factors and influential variables in current situation. Then, their situation is planned and re-evaluated for suitable applications of human resources in order to achieve the desired goals and finally, necessary practices are performed through corrective measures (Ainsworth & Smith, 1996, p.38).

Performance factor is divided into seven scopes including ability, support, clarity, motivation, evaluation, credit, and environment. The focus of current study is on three elements of clarity, ability and motivation.

Clarity (understanding): refers to complete awareness of work purposes and priorities and understanding of nature acceptance, how to do work affairs and workplace.

Motivation (incentive): shows a process to stimulate the individual to work practically for achieving organization and members' goals.

Ability: indicates the individual capabilities to do practices successfully involving knowledge and related experiences.

NaserHosseini (2003) studied the effects of strategic planning (conflict-solving techniques) on the performance improvement of Education Organization's experts in Chaharmahale Bakhtiari province and reported that experts' views on the conflict are applicable and they have accepted the conflict as a natural and inevitable event in the organization. But they are not of accurate awareness in practice for facing with the conflict and recognizing it correctly and they take actions based on their own taste in this regard. The experts were not successful in applying the positive results of organizational conflict.

Moharami (2003) investigated the relationship between conflict management styles and managers' performance and found that there is no relationship between lack of confronting and managers' performance and as utilizing the solution-based style increases, managers' performance improves. The increase in applying control style reduces their performance and no difference is observed between the performances of males and females.

Through studying the relationship between managers' perception on conflict and utilizing management style in the institutions of Kerman province, Hamidereza Mabodian argues that a significant relationship exists between managers' conflict perception and their management style at $\alpha=0.5$. There are meaningful relationships between completely positive conflict perception and collaborating management style, positive conflict perception and compromising style, interstitial perception and accommodating management and negative conflict perception and avoiding style.

Narges Ghazanfar Nemati (2000) reviewed the extent to which managers' conflict-solving techniques influence the teachers' performance in elementary schools of first and second regions of Arak and presented that in schools where managers employ compromising management style, teachers are less likely to face such problems as dissatisfaction of emotional feelings and nervous strains and they enjoy more tranquility and emotional peace. For this reason, they have higher levels of work efficiency and less absence as compared to other methods.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In current research, descriptive correlational method was applied. At first, theoretical framework and questions were determined by analogy method. On the other hand, questions were accepted or rejected through observing the realities or social conditions. The study is purposely an applied survey using descriptive and correlational methods with the subject of conflict management during a given period. Statistical population consists of totally 320 workers of Iran Insurance central offices including 182 females and 138 males in Lorestan province. To determine the sample size, 174 individuals have been selected out of 320 workers based on Kerjesy-Morgan table. Research questionnaires have been designed by the means of Likert scale (very high, high, average, low and very low or always, often, sometimes, rarely and never) involving 60 five option questions. To evaluate the questionnaire validity, content validity was applied; namely, a variety of sources was first studied and after consulting with scholars and professors, final questionnaires have been written.

In order to measure the questionnaire reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.827 and 0.749 have been computed for workers' performance and conflict management, respectively. Multivariate regression, Beta coefficients, t and F significance tests were utilized for inferential analysis of data.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Relationship between conflict management styles and teachers' performance (clarity)

Conflict management style and clarity performance	t	Degree of freedom	Significance level	mean	Confidence level (minimum)	Confidence level (maximum)
value	115.862	173	0.000	8.860	8.709	9.011

According to above table, there is a relationship between conflict management and teachers' clarity performance because calculated t (t=115.862) at confidence level (p<0.05) and Degree of freedom of 173 are more than coefficient of critical table. Therefore, we conclude with regard to 95% confidence level that a non-accidental relationship exists between managers' conflict management style and teachers' clarity performance.

Table 2: Multivariate Regression Analysis of Conflict Management Styles and Teachers' Clarity Performance Related to Step-by-Step Method

variables	Beta	Non-standardized Standard deviation	standard Beta	T	Significance level
Collaborating style	0.572	0.050	0.685	11.512	0.000
Competing style	0.221	0.056	0.236	3.973	0.000
Constant value	1.283	0.135	-	9.483	0.000
Multivariate correlation	Coefficient of determination		F value		F significance
0.885	0.783		309.407		0.000

As displays in table 2, there is a correlation between conflict management styles (collaborating and competing) and clarity performance. Correlation coefficient of 0.885 has been computed for dependent and independent variables indicating that a linear relationship exists between variables. Moreover, variations of dependent variable have been calculated as 0.783 using independent one that is an indicative of model appropriateness. Furthermore, F (F=309.407) is meaningful at 95% confidence level so that the relationship between variables of competing and collaborating management styles is not accidental. As a result, H₀ is rejected.

By adding one unit to competing and collaborating management styles, Beta coefficients of clarity performance changes to 0.236 and 0.685, respectively. The relationship is not accidental since t coefficients (t=3.973 and t=11.512) computed at 95% level for both of them are significant.

Graph1: Relationship of collaborating and competing management styles and clarity performance

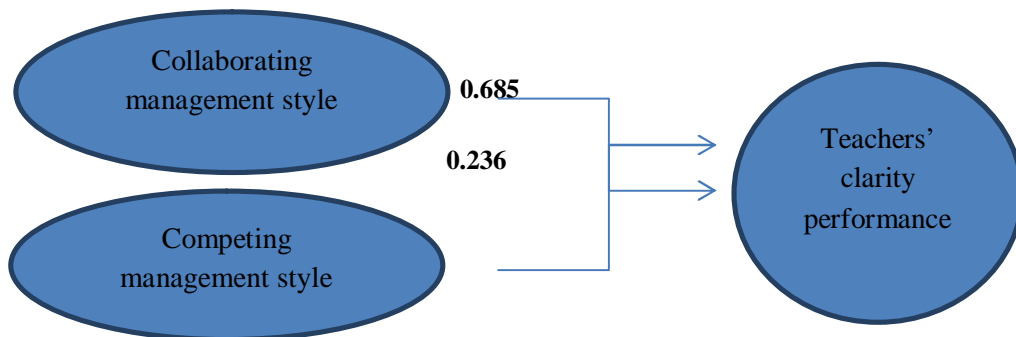


Table 3: Relationship between conflict management styles and teachers' performance (ability)

Conflict management style and ability performance	t	Degree of freedom	Significance level	mean	Confidence level (minimum)95%	Confidence level (maximum)95%
value	119.062	173	0.000	8.498	8.357	8.639

Based on table 3, there is a relationship between conflict management and ability performance, because t coefficient computed at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$) with Degree of freedom of 173 is bigger than correlation coefficient of critical table. Considering 95% confidence level, it can be concluded that the observed relationships are statistically meaningful.

Table 4: Multivariate Regression Analysis of Conflict Management Styles and Teachers' Ability Performance Using Step-by-Step Method

Variables	Beta	Non-standardized Standard deviation	Standard Beta	T	Significance level
Avoiding style	0.620	0.045	0.763	13.861	0.000
Compromising style	0.228	0.045	0.298	5.079	0.000
Competing style	-0.127	0.051	-0.134	-2.482	0.014
Constant value	1.163	0.124	-	9.359	0.000
Multivariate correlation		Coefficient of determination		F value	F significance
0.914		0.835		286.325	0.000

Regression analysis was used to present a model of relationship between one or more variables with each other. Multivariate step-by-step regression has been utilized in which partial variables are removed and effective ones are analyzed. Then, variables of collaborating and accommodating management styles have no relationship with teachers' ability performance but avoiding, competing and compromising styles are correlated with ability performance. Correlation coefficient of 0.94 shows a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables. Moreover, coefficient of determination calculated as 0.835% of variance determines total variation of ability performance showing the appropriateness of model.

On the other hand, coefficient of F ($F=286.325$) computed at 99% confidence level is meaningful; so, the relationship between dependent and independent variables is a non-accidental one. Through adding one unit to avoiding, competing and compromising management styles, coefficients of 0.134, 0.763 and 0.298 can be predicted for variance of teachers' ability performance, respectively. Calculated t coefficients of 13.861, 5.079 and -2.484 are meaningful at 95% level for avoiding, competing and compromising management styles indicating a linear relationship between these three variables and ability performance. Consequently, hypothesis of accidental relationship is not confirmed.

Graph 2: Relationship of management style and ability performance

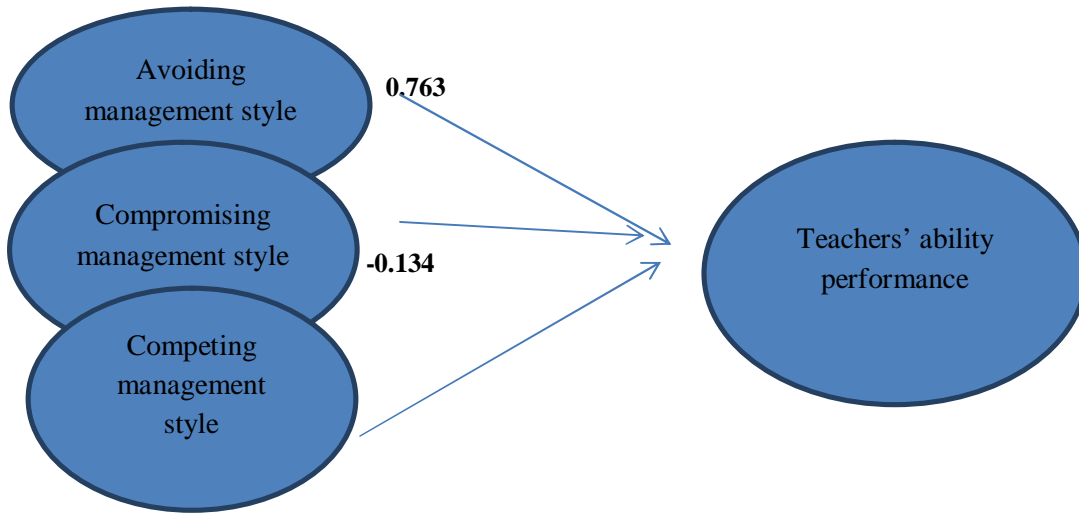


Table 3: Relationship between conflict management styles and teachers' performance (motivation)

Conflict management style and motivation performance value	t	Degree of freedom	Significance level	mean	Confidence level (minimum)95%	Confidence level (maximum)95%
	101.686	173	0.000	8.411	8.248	8.575

As table3 shows, a correlation was found between managers' conflict management style and teachers' motivation performance, since t (t=101.686) at 95% confidence level ($\alpha=5\%$) and degree of freedom of 173 is bigger than correlation coefficient of critical table; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is strongly confirmed regarding data. With regard to 95% confidence level, it can be concluded that managers' conflict management style is correlated with teachers' motivation performance. Then, their relationship is not accidental but rather statistically meaningful.

Table 4: Multivariate regression analysis of conflict management styles and teachers' motivation performance using step-by-step method

Variables	Beta	Non-standardized Standard deviation	standard Beta	T	Significance level
Accommodating style	0.525	0.049	0.730	10.748	0.000
Compromising style	0.425	0.080	0.612	5.339	0.000
Collaborating style	-0.232	0.088	-0.303	-2.625	0.009
Competing style	-0.129	0.061	-0.151	-2.125	0.035
Constant value	1.582	0.131	-	12.103	0.000
Multivariate correlation		Coefficient of determination		F value	F significance
0.881		0.776		146.722	0.000

According to table 4, accommodating, compromising, collaborating, and competing management styles are correlated with motivation performance. Correlation coefficient of above-mentioned variables is 0.881 which refers to a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables. Coefficient of determination is 0.776 meaning that the sum of independent variables determines 0.776% variance of total variations in ability performance. Observed F calculated as 146.722 is statistically significant. Multivariate regression demonstrates that accommodating, compromising and collaborating variables are predictable, while changing teachers' motivation performance considering Beta coefficients of 0.730, 0.612 and -0.303, respectively.

Graph 3: Multi-correlation

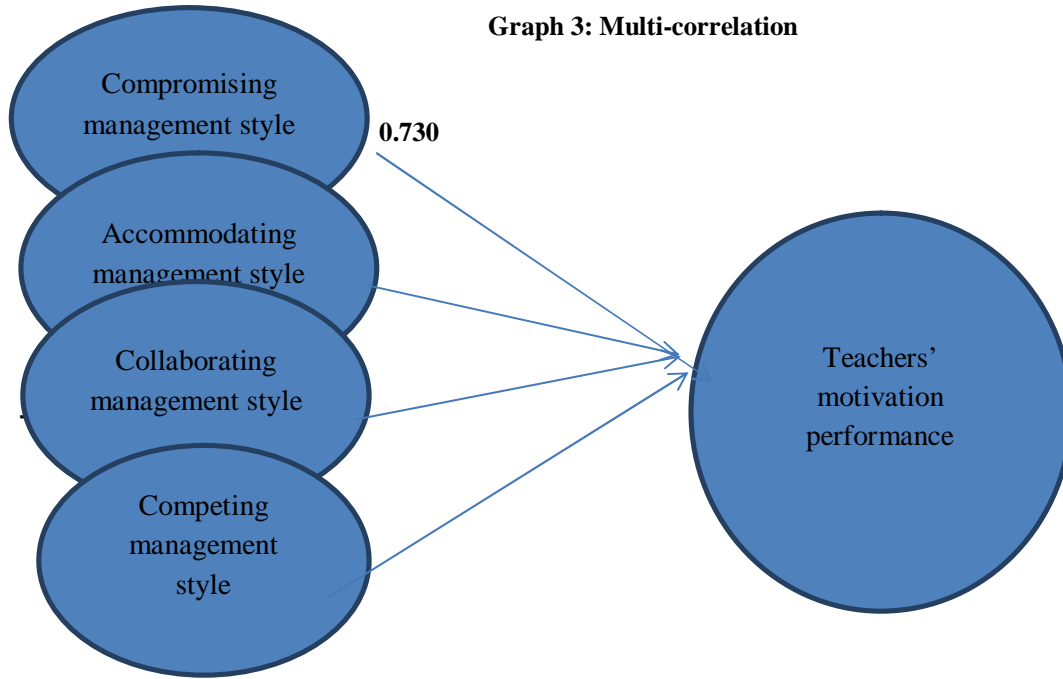


Table 5: Beta coefficients of management styles and performance variables

Management styles & teachers' performance	Ability	Clarity	Motivation
Competing style	-0.134	0.236	-0.151
Avoiding style	0.736	-	-
Compromising style	-	-	0.730
Collaborating style	-	0.685	-0.303
Accommodating style	0.298	-	0.612

Comparing Beta coefficients obtained in multivariate regression, it is found that competing management style and workers' performance involving ability, clarity and motivation are correlated. If managers choose competing management style, workers are changed. Collaborating style has the highest correlation with clarity and a relatively correlation with motivation. Accommodating management style is only correlated with motivation performance. Compromising one has a correlation with ability and motivation but avoiding management style is correlated just with ability.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between conflict management style and workers' performance (clarity, ability and motivation). With regard to the goals, it is of applied research type using descriptive correlational methods. The statistical population includes 320 workers of Iran Insurance central offices in Lorestan province. To determine sample size, 174 individuals were selected out of total 320 workers based on Kerjesy-Morgan table.

Results indicate that competing management style is correlated with workers' performance namely ability, clarity and motivation. If managers select competing management style, the workers' performances change. Collaborating management style has the highest correlation with performance clarity and on the other hand, it is also correlated with motivation. Accommodating management style is only correlated with motivation. Compromising management style has correlations with ability and motivation. Avoiding management is associated with ability.

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