# Jurnal Pendidikan Manajemen Perkantoran (JP Manper)

# Challenges and Practices of Conflict Management at Faculty of Education- Hantoub University of Gezira –Sudan

Ahmed Mansour Mohammad Gasmelseed [*]

Department of Curricula & Teaching Methods
Faculty of Education- Hantoub University of Gezira –Sudan

*Correspondence: E-mail: ahmednar77@gmail.com

| A B S T R A C T | A R T I C L E   I N F O |
|---|---|
| *The study's primary purpose is to identify the conflict management style of the Faculty of Education (Hantoub), University of Gezira – Sudan staff and to identify any significant difference in the conflict management style between the staff according to their academic ranking and age group. The study used a survey design, and the participants were 76 staff. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive (mean scores) and inferential statistics (one-way ANOVA). The findings suggest that Hantoub employees often support accommodating others in conflict, with cooperation and compromise as typical strategies. Avoiding or competing is less critical. There are no significant differences among the staff conflict management approaches based on age groups and academic positions. It is recommended that the Faculty of Education (Hantoub) leaders consider their staff conflict management style to facilitate the resolution of disputes during work.* | |
| | |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A few might contend that conflict is a typical event that occurs nearly every working day and is caused by individuals or groups with diverse demeanors, convictions, values, or needs (Jones, 2004). According to Karim (2015); Zhyvko., et al (2024), conflict management is what we do when identifying and dealing with conflict reasonably. Practical communication skills and negotiation are essential tools for managing conflict.

There are several types of conflict; the first type of conflict is Interpersonal conflict, which occurs between two individuals due to people being different. According to Ezekiel and Abdulraheem (2022), the second type is Intrapersonal conflict, which occurs within an individual. The meeting occurs in the individual's thoughts. As a result, a mental conflict could involve the person's thoughts, beliefs, standards, and emotions. Another type of conflict is intra-group conflict, which happens among team members—an intra-group conflict results from these individuals' mistakes and inconsistencies (Shahmohammadi, 2014). The last type of conflict, Inter-group conflict, occurs when a misunderstanding arises among different teams within an organization (Shahmohammadi, 2014).

According to Jones (2004), conflict comes in different types: goal conflict, which involves seeking a different outcome from others; cognitive conflict, which involves holding ideas that conflict with those held by others; affective conflict, which involves emotions, feelings, or attitudes that are incompatible with others; and Behavioural conflict, which involves acting in a way that others find unacceptable.

Numerous issues can lead to conflicts in educational institutions, including staff workload distribution, financial resources, classroom, and extracurricular teaching practices, rewards and punishments, assessment procedures, power abuse, tardiness, recess time, political beliefs, negative personal attitudes, passing grades and grading systems, legal concerns, student conduct, dress codes, staff assignments and deployment, and resource allocation (Göksoy & Argon, 2016).

Poor communication, rivalry for shared but limited resources, and conflicting objectives are potential causes of conflict (Ghaffar, 2009). For Plunkett and Atner, the sources of conflict include shared resources, differences in goals, differences in perceptions and values, disagreements in the role requirements, nature of work activities, individual approaches, and the stage of organizational development (Ghaffar, 2009)

Other reasons may include teachers seeming reluctant to obey the principals, not following the rules, accepting extra work, and needing to quickly get along with their principals (Ghaffar, 2009). One of the causes of school conflicts has been school structural factors. For instance, the size of the school correlates with the amount of disputes. The larger the school, the greater the number of differences and the higher the conflict intensity. (Okoth, & Yambo, 2016). In addition, there are many potential causes of conflict in the school: limited resources, poor communication networks, task interdependence, overlapping authority, role conflict, and inequitable treatment. (Isabu, 2017, p.149).

Furthermore, Specialization among staff can be a cause of conflict in colleges. Universities are staffed with experienced, long-serving staff and inexperienced young ones who have recently graduated from training with the most recent teaching ideas (Tshuma et al., 2016, p.33).

According to Göksoy and Argon (2016), conflict in educational institutions may initiate negative situations caused by differences of opinion and the formation of groups with like-minded people based on the inability to find common ground, disagreements, tension, unconformity, lack of communication, and ideological clashes.

Conflict-affected employees feel disappointed, insensitive, stressed, sad, uneasy, etc. They may also despise their jobs, be less motivated, have low morale, associate with like-minded others, and perform worse. When teachers encounter disagreements, they may react by fighting, running away, resorting to violence, or being silent (Göksoy & Argon, 2016, p. 197).

To avoid and deal with conflict, Lipsky et al. (2016) contend that workplace conflict can have destructive effects on both organizational levels and group and individual outcomes. Therefore, many academics and practitioners view conflict management as an essential organizational activity that can have transformational effects on firms, their employees, and other stakeholders. Some organizations deal with conflict by ignoring its presence, while other firms set up elaborate and sophisticated systems designed to manage and resolve conflicts and disputes. (Lipsky, et al., 2016, p.299). According to Msila (2012), managers need to understand what conflict management entails and need high conflict competence to be effective in their institutions.

Blake and Mouton were the first to present a grid for classifying the modes for handling interpersonal conflicts into five types: forcing, withdrawal, smoothing, compromise, and confrontation. The five modes of handling conflict were classified along two dimensions related to the manager's attitudes: concern for production and people (Afzalur et al., 1999).

Another way suggested by Pruitt provided some empirical evidence from laboratory studies is that there are four styles of handling conflict: yielding (obliging), problem-solving (integrating), inaction (avoiding), and contending (dominating). (Afzalur Rahim, Buntzman, & White, 1999; Ting-Toomey, Oetzel & Yee-Jung, 2001).

Follett identified three main ways of dealing with conflict–domination, compromise, and integration–and several secondary ways, including avoidance and suppression. (Afzalur Rahim, Buntzman, & White, 1999).

Mediators should adopt the following skills to handle conflict namely;

They must be able to establish working relationships with each of the conflicting parties, b. establishes a cooperative problem-solving attitude among the parties, c. develops a creative group process and group decision-making, and d. gather considerable substantive knowledge about the problems around which the conflict centers. (Ghaffar, 2009)

Reaction to conflict falls into three basic categories: firstly, avoidance; secondly, problem-solving; and lastly, confrontation. When dealing with conflict, it can be helpful to notice how the parties react to the situation, whether it is pupils, staff, parents, or others. It is helpful to monitor your reaction to conflict in various circumstances. A problem-solving approach has the best results. (Ontario Principals' Council, 2005)

Conflict management styles have generally been studied as individual characteristics or tendencies (Kuhn & Poole, 2000, p. 560). Also, when paired with other styles, integrating or problem-solving styles of handling conflict leads to more effective conflict management. (Afzalur Rahim, Buntzman, & White, 1999).

In the educational institution setting, negotiation may be an agreement to solve the problem, conciliation may be an agreement to settle differences as far as possible and to move forward, and mediation may involve a third party to offer shuttle diplomacy, establish positions, and look to common ground. (Ontario Principals' Council, 2005)

Göksoy and Argon (2016) suggested using mediation to deal with conflict. As head teachers may have to arbitrate while following an official procedure, it may be helpful to attempt the previous mediation stage using another mediator.

This study aimed to identify the conflict management style of the Faculty of Education—Hantoub University of Gezira –Sudan staff and to identify any significant difference in the

conflict management style between the staff according to their gender, academic ranking, and age group.

The research questions include:

1. What is the dominant conflict management style among Hantoubs' staff?
2. Are there meaningful differences in conflict management styles among Hantoubs' staff related to their academic ranking?
3. Are there meaningful differences in conflict management styles among Hantoubs' staff related to their age group?

## 2. METHODS

*Design*

The study employed a survey design in which researchers included all or most of the study population.

*Population and Sampling*

The education faculty has an extensive staff compared to the other facilities of the University of Gezira. According to the staff list obtained from the administration office, there are 120 faculty members. Of them, only 100 were available during the data collection stage of this research.

Of these participants, 56.6% were males (n = 43), while 43.4% were females (n = 33). 34.2% (n = 26) of the participants in their age group were from 30 to 40 and 41 to 50, respectively, and 31.6% were 51 and above (n = 24).

In terms of academic rank, 36.8% were associate professors (n = 28), 34.2% were assistant professors (n 26), and 28.9% were lecturers (n = 22).

**Table 1.** The Demographics Characteristics of the Study's Participants

| Variable | Characteristics | # | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 43 | 56.6 |
| | Female | 33 | 43.4 |
| Academic Ranking | Lecturer | 22 | 28.9 |
| | Assistant Professor | 26 | 34.2 |
| | Associate Professor | 28 | 36.8 |
| Age Group | 30-40 | 26 | 34.2 |
| | 41-50 | 26 | 34.2 |
| | 51- | 24 | 31.6 |

*Instrument*

The researchers used a conflict management style questionnaire by Johnson (1990); this instrument contained five items divided into five different styles (Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating, and Compromising). Each style had three items. The participants respond to these items on a five-point Likert scale, giving each a numerical value (1=Always, 2=Very often, 3=Sometimes, 4= Not very often, 5= Rarely, if ever.). Following reverse coding of the responses, mean scores were determined for each dimension; higher scores denoted a more robust application of the specific conflict management approach. One hundred academic staff members from the Faculty of Education (Hantoub) were provided the study instrument; 76 responded, yielding a 76 percent response rate.

*Data Analysis*

The data gathered from the research participants was analyzed using various techniques according to their unique traits. After being coded, the questionnaire was loaded into SPSS and subjected to quantitative analysis using one-way ANOVA, mean.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The most dominant conflict management style among Hantoub's staff was Accommodating (89.5%). The second dominant style was Collaborating with (86.6%) and then Compromising (82.9%). The less dominant conflict management styles were Avoiding (65.6%) and competing (52.6%).

It clarifies that Hantoub's staff conflict style relies most heavily upon Accommodating and the style they use least on Competing.

The result differs from Aritzeta et al.'s (2005); their results indicated that preference for conflict management style is related to dominating, integrating, and avoiding. It also differs from Stanley and Algert's (2007) results, where the study participants often used a compromising mode to manage conflict. The modes least often used were "avoiding" and "accommodating."

**Table 2.** One-way ANOVA results for Differences in Conflict management Style between Staffs of Different Academic Ranking.

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .45 | 2 | .022 | .107 | .899 |
| Within Groups | 15.360 | 73 | .210 | | |
| Total | 15.405 | 75 | | | |

The table displays the findings of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to determine if there are statistically significant differences in conflict management techniques across staff of various academic positions and age groups.

Regarding the variations in dispute resolution approaches amongst staff members of various academic levels:

0.107 is the computed F value. 0.899 is the statistical significance value (Sig.).

We accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in the conflict management styles of staff with varying academic rankings, as the statistical significance value is more significant than 0.05.

The result confirms Guiab and Miguel's (2023) findings, which revealed that the respondents' conflict management approach is unaffected by their academic rank.

**Table 3.** One-way ANOVA results for Differences in Conflict management Style between Staff of Different Age Groups

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 1.41 | 2 | .070 | .337 | .715 |
| Within Groups | 15.264 | 73 | .388 |  |  |
| Total | 15.405 | 75 |  |  |  |

Regarding the variations in conflict management approaches among staff of various ages, 0.337 is the computed F value, and 0.715 is the statistical significance value (Sig.).

We accept the null hypothesis and conclude there is no statistically significant difference in the conflict management styles of staff of different ages, as the statistical significance value is higher than 0.05.

The result confirms Guiab and Miguel's (2023) findings, which revealed no significant differences between the respondents' conflict management styles in different age groups.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The main goal of the study is to determine the conflict management style of the faculty members at the University of Gezira in Sudan's Faculty of Education (Hantoub) and to determine whether there are any notable differences in the conflict management styles of the staff members based on their gender or academic standing. The findings suggest that Hantoub employees often support accommodating others in conflict, with cooperation and compromise as typical strategies. Avoiding or competing is less critical. This implies that a workplace culture places a high value on collaboration and preserving goodwill, sometimes at the expense of not thoroughly addressing or resolving all issues. The lack of notable variances in conflict management approaches across age groups and academic positions also shows that conflict resolution is a constant organizational norm independent of seniority or experience.

It is advised that the Faculty of Education (Hantoub) leaders consider their staff conflict management style to facilitate the settlement of disagreements at work. The college leadership must also be concerned with finding the best ways to understand employees to facilitate the decision-making process in choosing the most appropriate method for resolving conflicts, the existence of which is inevitable so that they do not become an obstacle to achieving the institution's goals.

## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

## 7. REFERENCES

Afful-Broni, A. (2012). Conflict management in Ghanaian schools: a case study of the role of leadership of Winneba Senior High School. *International Journal of Educational Planning Administration, 2(*2), 65-76. https://www.ripublication.com/ijepa/ijepav2n2_02.pdf

Afzalur Rahim, M., Buntzman, G. F., & White, D. (1999). An empirical study of the stages of moral development and conflict management styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 10(2), 154-171. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/eb022822/full/html

Aritzeta , A., Ayestaran, S., & Swailes, S. (2005). Team role preference and conflict management styles. *The International Journal of Conflict Management 16*(2), 157-182. DOI: 10.1108/eb022927

Ghaffar, A. (2009). Conflict in Schools: Its Causes & Management Strategies. *Journal of Managerial Sciences, 3*(2).212-227 . https://shorturl.at/v7ZNQ

Göksoy, S., & Argon, T. (2016). Conflicts at Schools and Their Impact on Teachers. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 4(*4), 197-205. DOI: https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v4i4.1388

Guiab, R. R., & Miguel, C. G. (2023). Conflict management styles of faculty and staff of a state university in Northern Philippines. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review, 6*(9), DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V6-i9-25.

Isabu, M. O. (2017). Causes and management of school related conflict. *African Educational Research Journal, 5*(2), 148-151. https://www.netjournals.org/pdf/AERJ/2017/2/17-027.pdf

Jones, J. (2004). Management Skills in Schools A Resource for School Leaders, Los Angeles: SAGE publications.

Karim, D. (2015). Managing conflict by school leadership: A case study of a school from Gilgit-Biltistan. *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Sciences, 2*(5), 340. https://shorturl.at/WiXxb

Kuhn, T. I. M., & Poole, M. S. (2000). Do conflict management styles affect group decision making? Evidence from a longitudinal field study. *Human communication research, 26*(4), 558-590. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2000.tb00769.x

Lipsky, D. B., Avgar, A. C., & Lamare, J. R. (2016). The evolution of conflict management policies in US corporations: From reactive to strategic. *In Reframing Resolution* (pp. 291-313). Palgrave Macmillan, London.14_10.1057/978-1-137-51560-5

Msila, V. (2012). Conflict management and school leadership. *Journal of communication, 3*(1), 25-34. DOI: 10.31901/24566586.2012/03.01.03

Mura, G., Bonsignore, V., & Diamantini, D. (2010). Conflict management among secondary school students. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences, 2*(2), 2402-2408. https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.345

Okoth, E. A., & Yambo, J. (2016). Determining causes of conflicts in secondary schools and their influence on students' academic achievement in Kisumu City, Kenya. *Journal of Harmonized Research in Management, 2*(2), 135-142. https://shorturl.at/vX6mT

Ontario Principals' Council (2005). *The Quick-Reference Handbook for School Leaders: A Practical Guide for Principals.* Corwin Press.

Shahmohammadi, N. (2014). Conflict management among secondary school students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 159*, 630-635. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.438

Stanley, C. A., & Algert', N. E. (2007). An exploratory study of the conflict management styles of department heads in a research university setting. *Innov High Educ (65),* 32-49. DOI 10.1007/s10755-007-9035-y.

Ting-Toomey, S., Oetzel, J. G., & Yee-Jung, K. (2001). Self-construal types and conflict management styles. *Communication Reports, 14*(2), 87-104. . https://doi.org/10.1080/08934210109367741

Tshuma, R., Ndlovu, S. & Bhebhe, S. (2016). Causes of conflict among school personnel in Gwanda District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe, *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21* (4) 32-41. DOI: 10.9790/0837-2104053241.

Zhyvko, Z., Mihus, I., Tkachuk, A., Holovach, T., Rodchenko, S., & Shehynska, A. (2024). Conflict management. *Estonia: Scientific Center of Innovative Research.*