



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Conflict happens everywhere, at any time and is inherent in all societies. Schools are prone to conflicts and if they are not controlled in a practical way, it is bound to prevent them from reaching their goals and will have a negative impact on the school's climate. The general objective of the study was to assess conflict handling mode of school students in terms of their gender and locale. The sample consisted of 200 secondary school students of Jammu & Kashmir. Conflict styles has been measured using the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument which measures the five dimensions namely competing, collaborating compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Results had shown that there was no significant difference in conflict handling mode of secondary school boys and girls in terms of competing, but a significant difference was found in collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating dimensions of conflict handling mode. No significant difference was found among secondary school students in compromising and avoiding dimensions of conflict handling mode locale wise. However, a significant difference in conflict handling mode of urban and rural students was found in terms of competing, collaborating and accommodating dimensions.

Keywords: *Conflict management, School students, Gender, Locale.*

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

Conflict is described as a social situation where two parties struggle with one another due to incompatibilities in perspectives, beliefs, goals, or values; this struggle impedes the achievement of predetermined goals or objectives. Sagimo (2002) stated that conflict is a stressful, distressing, depressing, unhappy, annoying and frustrating state of affairs. Conflicts

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arises due to insecurity, clash of values and priorities, frustration, individual differences, ideological differences, propaganda which is deliberate misinformation as a weapon which leads to distortion of intentions, interest and perceptions. It breeds enemy image that contributes to hostility prejudices and hatred. A healthy outlook towards conflict is viewing it as an opportunity for growth and understanding. If conflict is handled intelligently, it allows for understanding each other's perspective and reflects on ones' mistakes, thereby enhancing the ability to handle future conflicts in a better way. Hoy and Miskel (2005) opined that conflict situations need to be objectively studied, effective communication ought to be developed, dialogue and deliberation must be encouraged, and members of any community need to be helped to recognize conflict as part and parcel of life. The ability to deal with conflict is important for peace building in society and for oneself. Dealing with conflict without getting stressed requires us to understand its nature and develop appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills to deal with it.

In school system conflicts apparent in various forms. Incidents of violence, which occurs as a result of unresolved conflicts, and which usually affect the youth, are said to be on the increase. Pines et al. (2012) remarked that conflict management requires establishing learnable behaviors through education programmes. Conflict management processes helps students to socialize by using various conflict management and peer-meditation programs that might be initiated by the school. Sweeny and Carruthers (1996) suggested that conflict management skills should encourage a commitment to enhance perspective taking abilities, to help and care for others, improve communication and problem solving skills. Turnuklu et al. (2009) stressed that schools and colleges should be places where vital life skills like interpersonal conflict resolution skills are introduced and acquired.

3.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Wilson and Power (2004) studied the conflict resolution styles among 131 Australian Christians and Muslim participants. The results had shown that practicing Christians resolved their conflicts through collaborator style whereas practicing Muslims adopted compromise style. On the other hand non practicing Christians also used collaborative style while non-practicing Muslims adopted collaborative style. Hence, two conflict resolution styles featured strongly in the participants' responses and these were collaborative and compromise style. Hong (2005) compared conflict management strategies between 300 Koreans and 300



American subjects. The results had shown that Koreans preferred an avoidance strategy and a cooperative orientation, whereas Americans preferred a competition strategy and an assertive orientation. Sabo (2006) studied cultural influences on conflict management styles between Americans and West Africans. Results had shown that Americans used the competing style more often than West Africans and West Africans were more prone to use the collaborative style.

Poitras and Tareau (2008) explored the influence of conflict management on conflict at work. A total sample of 148 post graduate students was taken. The cluster analyses identified three styles of conflict resolution pattern—interest-based, based on controlled power, and power based- and three different organizational dispute states: harmony, dissonance, and conflict. Su’udy, (2009) studied conflict management styles among 271 Indonesians and 243 Americans. The results had shown that Americans preferred the integrating, compromising, dominating, emotional expression, and obliging styles significantly more than Indonesians. Furthermore, Indonesians preferred the avoiding style significantly more than Americans and also preferred the third party help style equally. Hossein and Hassanzadeh (2010) studied conflict management styles among 57 Iranian and 25 Swedish engineering students. Findings indicated that both Iranian native engineers and experienced engineers mostly preferred avoiding style of conflict. They also showed a lack of interest in competing mode. However the gaining experience intensified the interest to avoid and disinterest to competing mode. The Swedish students preferred assertiveness while Iranian students preferred cooperative mode. It was also found that the difference between the Iranian and the Swedish public preference was justified by their cultural dimensions.

Kipkemboi and Kipruto(2013) assessed the factors influencing conflicts management among 200 participants in Kenya. Results had shown that religious differences were the major factor that influenced management conflicts in the church sponsored public secondary schools. Also lack of adequate physical and financial resources was another major factor that influenced management of conflicts. Ozgan (2016) studied the sources of conflict between teachers and students, their management and also their effect on students. It was the qualitative study thus the case study method, participatory observation technique and semi-structured interviews were used. Findings indicated that the main reasons for the conflict between teachers and their students were the existence of poor and insufficient communication between them and also teacher dominance in such interactions. It was also found that students’ psychology, social behavior and their academic success was negatively affected by inappropriate conflict solving



strategies. Bazezew and Neka (2017) assessed interpersonal conflicts and styles of managing conflicts among 340 undergraduate students at Bahir Dar University. Results had shown that the chief most sources of conflicts were ethnic differences, sexual abuse, religious diversity, theft and insulting. The compromising, avoiding and collaborating conflict management styles were frequently used by students. Bruck et al. (2019) examined the effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on various education outcomes for 138,135 Palestinian high school students in the West Bank during the second intifada (2000-2006). Findings indicated that conflict reduced the probability of passing the final exam, the total test score and the probability of being admitted to university. It was also found that the effect of conflict varied with the type and the timing of the violent events the student was exposed to and it was not significant for students in the upper tail of the test score distribution.

3.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Many schools, particularly in the study area – Jammu and Kashmir -- are affected as much by conflicts that alienate students from their study and teachers from their professional work. Conflict is not always destructive but can also be a useful tool in stimulating creative solutions to problems. Conflict management plays an important role everywhere, at school and even in our personal lives of students. It avoids conflicts to a great extent and thus also reduces the stress and tensions of the students and teachers. Snodgrass and Blunt (2009) assert that unmanaged conflict can create dysfunctional schools which deprive learners of their rights to citizenship through free and equal education. In schools conflict management goes a long way in strengthening the bond among the students and teachers, also half of the problems automatically disappear. It helps to find a middle way, an alternative to any problem and successful implementation of the idea. The management of conflicts is very important because it is always wise to prevent a fight at the first place rather than facing its negative consequences. The conflict management styles presents the opportunity to acquire peace-making skills for dealing with conflict in our personal lives and make us aware of the processes of peace making at national and global levels.

3.4 OBJECTIVES:

- To study conflict handling mode of school students in relation to gender
- To study conflict handling mode of school students in relation to locale

3.5: HYPOTHESIS:



- There will be no significant difference in conflict handling mode of male and female school students
- There will be no significant difference in conflict handling mode of urban and rural school students.

3.6: SAMPLE:

The present study was conducted on a sample of 200 secondary school students studying in class 10th of Anantnag district from Jammu & Kashmir State.

3.7: TOOL:

- Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (2010) was used in the present study.

3.8: RESULTS:

1. Conflict handling mode of school students in relation to their gender

The mean and SD of Conflict handling mode scores of male and female school students along with t-value testing significance of mean difference are given in table 1.

Table 1: Conflict handling mode of school students in relation to their gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Competing	Boys	100	5.93	1.90	0.44
	Girls	100	6.05	1.97	
Collaborating	Boys	100	6.87	1.83	5.39**
	Girls	100	5.47	1.84	
Compromising	Boys	100	4.6	1.34	2.75**
	Girls	100	5.21	1.77	
Avoiding	Boys	100	5.94	1.79	3.02**
	Girls	100	5.22	1.58	
Accommodating	Boys	100	6.66	1.99	5.04**
	Girls	100	8.05	1.91	

** significant at 0.01 level

The table shows that the mean score of conflict handling mode of boys for competing is 5.93(SD=1.9) as compared to mean score of girls 6.05(SD=1.97). The mean scores of boys for collaborating is 6.87(SD=1.83) while the mean scores of girls for collaborating is 5.47(SD=1.84). The mean scores of compromising conflict handling mode of boys is 4.6 with SD 1.34 whereas the mean scores of girls for compromising is 5.21 with SD 1.77. For avoiding the mean score of male boys is 5.94 with SD 1.79 and in girls the mean score for avoiding is



5.22 with SD 1.58. Finally the mean score for accommodating conflict handling mode of boys is 6.66 with SD 1.99 whereas the mean score of girls for accommodating is 8.05 with 1.91. From the above findings it can be concluded that mostly used conflict handling mode by boys is collaborating and the least used conflict handling mode by them is compromising followed by competing, avoiding, and accommodating. In case of girls the mostly preferred conflict handling mode is accommodating but the least preferred conflict handling mode by them is compromising followed by avoiding, collaborating and competing. The t-value testing the significance of mean differences between boys and girls on competing dimension of conflict handling mode came out to be 0.44, which is not significant at 0.05 levels. This means that there is no significant mean difference between secondary school boys and girls on competing dimension of conflict handling mode. Similarly the t-value testing the significance of mean differences between boys and girls on collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating dimensions of conflict handling mode came out to be 5.39, 2.75, 3.02 and 5.04 at 0.01 levels. This means that there is significant mean difference between secondary school boys and girls on collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating dimensions of conflict handling mode of secondary school students.

2. Conflict Handling Mode of School Students In Relation To Their Locale

The mean and SD of Conflict handling mode scores of urban and rural school students along with t-value testing significance of mean difference are given in table 2.

Table 2: Conflict handling mode of school students in relation to their gender

Variable	Locale	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Competing	Urban	100	6.63	2.07	4.95**
	Rural	100	5.35	1.55	
Collaborating	Urban	100	6.85	1.86	5.21**
	Rural	100	5.49	1.83	
Compromising	Urban	100	4.87	1.67	0.31
	Rural	100	4.94	1.52	
Avoiding	Urban	100	5.47	1.54	0.91
	Rural	100	5.69	1.88	
Accommodating	Urban	100	6.18	1.6	9.76**
	Rural	100	8.53	1.8	

**significant at 0.01 level



The table shows that the mean score of conflict handling mode of urban students for competing is 6.63(SD=2.07) as compared to mean score of rural students 5.35(SD=1.55). The mean scores of urban students for collaborating is 6.85(SD=1.86) while the mean scores of rural students for collaborating is 5.49(SD=1.83). The mean scores of compromising conflict handling mode of urban school students is 4.87with SD 1.67 whereas the mean scores of rural students for compromising is 4.94 with SD 1.52. For avoiding the mean score of urban school students is 5.47 with SD1.54 and in rural students the mean score for avoiding is 5.69 with SD 1.88. Finally the mean score for accommodating conflict handling mode of urban students is 6.18 with SD 1.6 whereas, the mean score of rural students for accommodating is 8.53 with SD 1.8. It is clear from the above results that the mostly used conflict handling mode by urban students is collaborating and their least used conflict handling mode is compromising followed by avoiding, accommodating and competing. As for as rural students are concerned the mostly preferred conflict handling mode by them is accommodating but the least preferred conflict handling mode is compromising followed by competing, collaborating and avoiding. The t-value testing the significance of mean differences between urban and rural secondary school students on competing, collaborating and accommodating dimension of conflict handling mode came out to be 4.95, 5.21 and 9.76 which is significant at 0.01 levels. This means that there is significant mean difference between urban and rural secondary school students on competing, collaborating and accommodating dimension of conflict handling mode whereas, the t-value testing the significance of mean differences between urban and ruralsecondary school students on compromising and avoiding dimensions of conflict handling mode came out to be 0.31 and 0.91, at 0.05 levels. This means that there is not significant mean difference between secondary school students on compromising and avoiding dimensions of conflict handling mode.

3.9: CONCLUSION:

There is no significant difference in the competing dimension of conflict handling mode in relation to gender. But, significant gender difference exists among secondary school students in collaboration, compromising, avoiding and accommodating dimensions of conflict handling mode in relation to gender. There is significant difference in competing, collaborating and accommodating dimensions of conflict handling mode among secondary school students in relation to their locale. But no significant difference is found among secondary school students in compromising and avoiding dimension in relation to locale.



3.10: RECOMMENDATION:

The school administrators should endeavor to meet with the parties involved in the conflict situation at the different point in time and thereafter bring the parties together for the total reconciliations. They should be very careful while reconciling the conflicting parties, so that their actions may not be seen to be biased in their judgments. Administration should institutionalize the practices and principles of conflict resolution, social and emotional learning and inter-group relations into the culture and policies of the school. Conflict resolution concepts, skills and values should be infused into the day to day activities of the classroom, including teaching strategies, teachable moments.

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