



Journal of Applied Research and Multidisciplinary Studies (JARMS)

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1, Spring 2020

ISSN_(P): 2707-5087 ISSN_(E): 2707-5095

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JARMS>

Article: **Conflict Management Styles Used by Teachers at Public and Private Sector Universities of Lahore**

Author(s): Dr. Zahida Parveen
Javeria Iqbal
Zeba Latif

Online Published: Spring 2020

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jarms.11.05>

Article QR Code:



Zahida Parveen

To Cite Article:

Parveen, Z., Iqbal, J., & Latif, Z. (2020). Conflict management styles used by teachers at public and private sector universities of Lahore. *Journal of Applied Research and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(1), 63–76.

[Crossref](#)



A publication of the
School of Professional Advancement
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

Conflict Management Styles Used by Teachers at Public and Private Sector Universities of Lahore

Dr. Zahida Parveen^{1*}, Javeria Iqbal² and Zeba Latif²

¹University of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore, Pakistan

²University of Education, Township Campus, Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the most prevalent Conflict Management Styles (CMSs) among teachers at public and private sector universities of Lahore. For this purpose, a survey was conducted using Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory Roci-II form C. This inventory was pilot tested and its reliability was found to be 0.86. The sample comprised 446 teachers selected using two-stage random sampling technique from six public and private sector universities of Lahore. The findings revealed that managing conflicts through accommodating and collaborating styles were practiced by university teachers and these particular styles mostly prevailed among them. There was no meaningful difference found between teachers from public and private universities; however, some differences were found on the basis of other demographic variables such as gender, designation, age, and qualification of respondents.

Keywords: conflict management styles (CMSs), accommodating style, collaborating style, public and private universities

Introduction

Conflict refers to an existence of opposing interests, beliefs and disagreements among individuals and groups at the workplace. Conflict is considered as well-known social phenomenon in the context of business relation and mutual agreements. Although it may be helpful in managing different situations and problems, mostly people perceive the concept of conflict differently and consider it as the reason of disturbance (Singh, 2013). Conflict is an interactive process manifested in disagreement, incompatibility or dissonance between social entities such as individuals, groups, and organizations. People perceive it as a process or an action; although in some situations people use conflict in behavioral terms to achieve their goals by opposing each other (Rahim, 2010).

Mostly, conflict occurs due to the interaction of social entities and may cause disturbance at the workplace; however, it also promotes creativity and organizational success (Ustuner & Kis, 2014). In 2002, Rahim introduced the

*Corresponding author: zahidaparveendr@gmail.com

concept of conflict as an interactive process which manifests itself in the form of mutual disagreement and incompatibility between social entities. Exclusive social preferences of opposing parties can be the reason of conflict in organizations. According to Cacioppe and Mock (1984), conflict is a multidimensional phenomenon which is linked with scarce resources, perception of disharmony and circumstances of interdependence because it generates substantial contradiction regarding the handling of conflicts in the best way. There are some types of conflict which have both positive and negative dimensions and these are known as substantive and affective conflicts (Mantovani, 1999). Substantive conflict is concerned with task related or business issues involved in a given situation and affective conflict is associated with emotions and feelings of conflicting parties (Rahim, 1983).

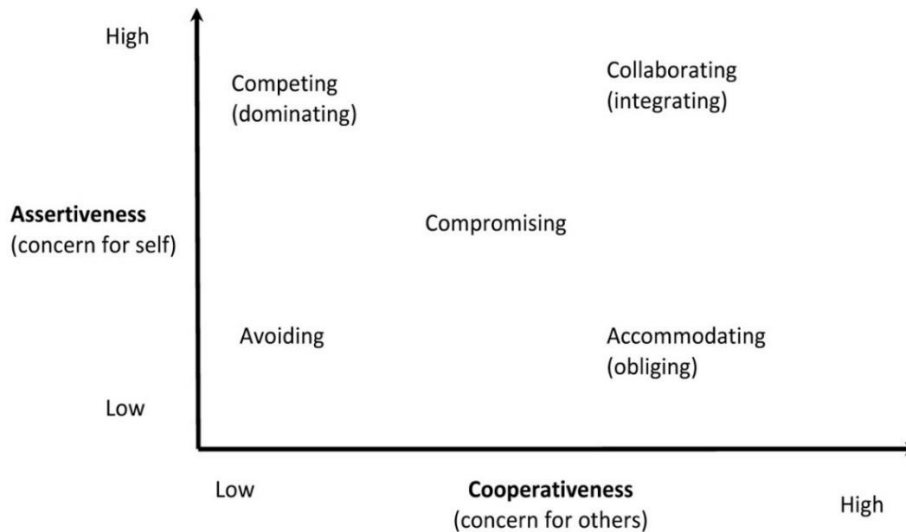
Conflicts may be categorized into intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, that is related to personal, group and organizational conflicts (Rahim, 2002). Intrapersonal conflict is about incompatibilities in which different subgroups oppose each other within an organization based on their desired goals and roles. On the other hand, interpersonal conflict depicts a situation in which two parties or organizational members oppose each other within groups. Needs, values, and attributes affect the organizational relationship causing interpersonal conflict (Jayatilleke, 1972). Intragroup and intergroup conflicts create problems, similar the case with intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. These conflicts are based on scarce resources and task dependence in order to achieve structural benefits related to goals (Simons & Peterson, 2000).

Conflict management is the technique used extensively in order to eliminate problems and disturbances, either in organizations or in personal relations. Most of the time, conflict is harmful for organizational structure; although occasionally conflict affects the relationship positively and constructively in order to enhance integration in relationship, parties, and organizations (Dogan, 2016). Conflicts with positive effects are labeled as functional conflicts and those with negative effects are labeled as dysfunctional conflicts (Ud Din, Khan, Rehman & Bibi, 2011; Cacioppe & Mock, 1984). According to Armstrong (2001), analytical and systematic steps are taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of managerial decisions which are helpful for managers to tackle their areas of conflict. In 1983, Bercovitch introduced conflict management to evaluate acceptable and satisfactory solutions for the resolution of conflicts. In Mantovani's (1999) point of view, conflict management deals with the attitudes or situations of parties and how they try to use different techniques and methods for the settlement of conflicts. Adkison (1979) said that successful, competitive and

cooperative coordination is important at the workplace to manage attitudinal and behavioral components fostering conflicts.

Figure 1

Conflict Management Styles



Rahim and Bonoma (1979) differentiated the styles of handling conflict on the basis of two basic dimensions. The first is the concern for self and the second is the concern for others. The first dimension is the degree to which a person focuses on his or her own concerns. Contrarily, the second dimension focuses on the degree to which a person satisfies the concern for others, as mentioned in Figure 1.

Researchers have studied conflict management styles in human perspective and five styles have been identified by different researchers (Rahim, 2002; Yu & Chen, 2008). The first is collaborating style in which people try to solve their problems through mutual collaboration and explore their differences to gain a productive solution. People share their concerns with each other to avoid miscommunication and solve problems in order to achieve strategic and constructive solutions (Ud Din, et al, 2011). Accommodating style is also known as obliging style in which people neglect their personal intentions, needs, and concerns to satisfy others. They strive to minimize dissimilarities and highlight the commonalities and common concerns to satisfy each other (Rahim, 2010). In this style, decisions are based on the personal interest of others because of more cooperation and less concern shown for self-interest (Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

It is assumed that competing style follows a pattern which is contrary to accommodating style because it focuses on personal concerns instead of others. Dogan, (2016), Yu and Chen (2008) stated that when people neglect the feelings and needs of others to satisfy their own personal desires, they are actually following the competing style of conflict management in order to manage their conflicts. Immediate actions and decisions are often based on the competing style; when people impose unnecessary decisions which may create conflicting situations to fulfill their own concerns without considering others' perspective. This is why this style is also known as forcing and dominating style.

Avoiding style is totally different in terms of managing personal concerns because this style allows people to escape conflicting situations. This style does not take into consideration any concerns, whether others' or personal concerns, for the reason that dissatisfaction or frustration occurs on the basis of avoiding the situation (Gross & Guerrero, 2000). Sidestepping situations or withdrawal is associated with this style; people try to postpone the problem until a better situation is provided (Singh, 2013).

When solutions to complex problems or well-organized replacements to these problems are required, then they focus on the compromising style in order to manage the conflict. This style focuses on others' satisfaction and may involve middle ground positions, swapping reductions and splitting changes (Ozgan, 2011). According to Su'udy (2009), this strategy is based on people's own orientation because it offers cooperation for the personal as well as others' interests. The current study is beneficial for teachers, administrators, and supervisors to manage their conflicts at the workplace as well as in their interpersonal relations.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore the most prevalent conflict management styles used by the teachers of public and private universities in Lahore
- To identify the differences in conflict management styles on the basis of demographic variables such as gender, university sector, designation, experience and qualification.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to meet the objectives:

Ho1. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles of male and female faculty members.

- Ho2. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles of government and private sector university teachers.
- Ho3. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of designation.
- Ho4. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of teaching experience.
- Ho5. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of qualification.
- Ho6. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of age.

Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature and a survey was conducted to explore the use of conflict management styles among university teachers in Lahore. The population of the study was limited to three private and three public sector universities. Based on the two-stage random sampling technique, 446 teachers were selected from both public and private universities. In the first stage, six universities were selected and in the second stage, ten percent of teachers from each university were selected as sample.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) form C (Rahim, [1983](#)) was adapted to obtain information regarding conflict management styles of university teachers. The instrument was pilot tested on 30 public and private sector university faculty members. Reliability coefficient was calculated and the value of Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.86 for ROCI-II. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the inventory determined the alpha value of each style, which was 0.68 for collaborating style, 0.71 for accommodating style, 0.60 for competing style, 0.63 for avoiding style, and 0.70 for compromising style. After data collection, descriptive and inferential statistics were computed during data analysis through SPSS and *t*-test and ANOVA were applied.

Analysis

Table 1

Frequency Distribution

Characteristics of Faculty		Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	151	42.3
	Female	206	57.7
Sector	Public	230	64.4

Characteristics of Faculty		Frequencies	Percentage
Department	Private	127	35.6
	Arts group	290	81.2
	Science group	43	12.0
	Business group	24	6.7
Designation	Lecturer	157	44
	Assistant Professor	138	37.8
	Associate Professor	62	18.2
Qualification	PhD	121	33.9
	MPhil	179	50.1
	MA	57	16.0
Age	Below 30	183	51.3
	31-40	124	34.7
	41-50	38	10.6
	Above 50	12	3.4

Table 1 displays the frequency distribution of university teachers.

Figure 2

Average Mean Scores of CMSs

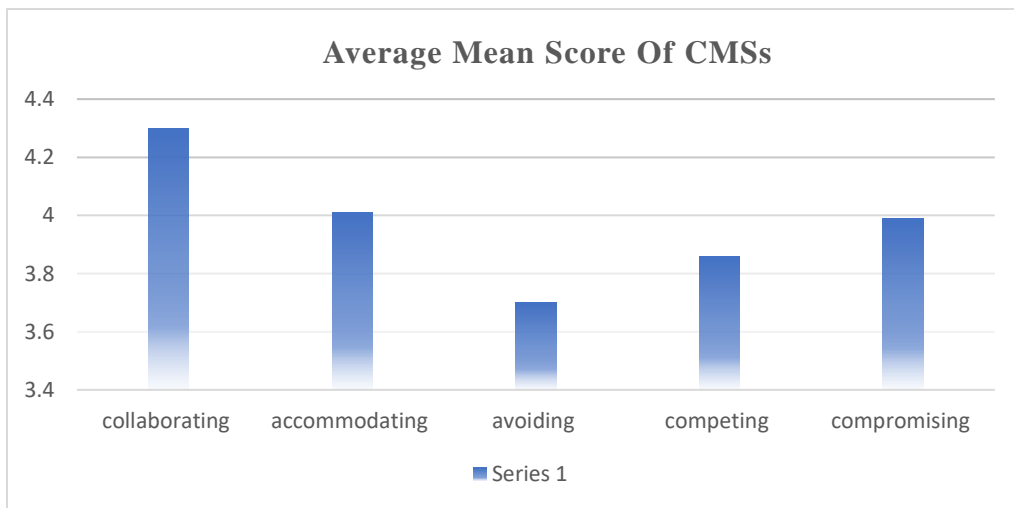


Figure 1 shows the results of conflict management styles on the basis of average mean scores. Collaborating style has the highest mean score, followed by the accommodating, compromising, avoiding and competing styles.

Table 2*t-test on the Basis of Gender*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- value	p- value
Collaborating	Male	151	29.10	2.73	355	.684	.49
	Female	206	29.30	2.72			
Accommodating	Male	151	24.02	2.84	355	.600	.54
	Female	206	24.20	2.69			
Competing	Male	151	18.45	3.89	355	.277	.78
	Female	206	18.58	4.72			
Avoiding	Male	151	22.94	3.36	355	1.14	.14
	Female	206	23.46	3.33			
Compromising	Male	151	15.77	2.06	355	1.74	.08
	Female	206	16.14	1.90			

Ho1. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles of male and female faculty members.

Table 2 intends to showcase the mean score difference between male and female faculty members. Independent sample *t*-test was applied to calculate the difference between male and female faculty members in term of their conflicts. Null hypothesis was accepted because there was no significant difference found on the basis of gender. Hence, the results showed that females were not different from males in using conflict management styles to manage problematic situations. The magnitude of differences in mean was very small.

Table 3*t-test on the Basis of University Sector*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- value	p- value
Collaborating	Public	230	29.3	2.60	355	1.30	.19
	Private	127	28.9	2.92			
Accommodating	Public	230	24.3	2.65	355	1.90	.05
	Private	127	23.7	2.91			
Competing	Public	230	18.2	4.12	355	1.42	.155
	Private	127	18.9	1.79			
Avoiding	Public	230	23.4	3.39	355	1.29	.195
	Private	127	22.9	3.26			
Compromising	Public	230	16.0	1.96	355	.477	.633
	Private	127	15.9	2.02			

Ho2. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles of teachers from both public and private sector universities.

According to Table 3, independent sample *t*-test was applied to explore the mean score difference between the teachers of public and private sector universities in their use of conflict management styles. Based on the results, null hypothesis was accepted for collaborating, competing, avoiding and compromising styles because the mean score difference was not significant for public and private sector universities. The spread of scores shows that only the use of accommodating style was different in public sector universities. Overall, the magnitude of mean difference was very small.

Table 4

Comparison of Conflict Management Styles and Designation

		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Collaborating	Between group	17.0	2	8.5	1.15	.31
	Within group	2630.4	354	7.4		
Accommodating	Between group	4.96	2	2.4	.32	.72
	Within group	2703.0	354	7.6		
Competing	Between group	89.8	2	44.9	2.35	.09
	Within group	6751.0	354	19.0		
Avoiding	Between group	56.5	2	28.2	2.54	.08
	Within group	3937.7	354	11.1		
Compromising	Between group	7.95	2	3.9	1.01	.36
	Within group	1393.9	354	3.9		

Ho3. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of designation.

Table 4 reveals the ANOVA results of conflict management styles on the basis of the designation of the respective faculty members. University teachers were divided into three groups according to their designation (group 1: lecturer; group 2: assistant professor; group 3: associate professor). There was no significant difference found between the three groups based on designation and the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, all the designated faculty members used the same style to manage their conflicting situations.

Ho4. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of teaching experience.

Table 5 shows the application of ANOVA to explore the relationship between teaching experience and conflict management styles. Faculty members of universities were divided into five groups as per their experience (group 1: 1-5; group 2: 6-10; group 3: 11-15; group 4: 16-20; group 5: above 20). Null hypothesis was rejected for competing and avoiding styles because a significant difference was found for these styles. The results showed that more experienced teachers used competing and avoiding styles. However, null hypothesis was accepted with reference to collaborating, accommodating and compromising styles because there was no significant difference found with reference to these styles.

Table 5

ANOVA on the Basis of Teaching Experience

Styles		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Collaborating	Between Groups	14.8	4	3.7	.49	.73
	Within Groups	2632.6	352	7.4		
Accommodate	Between Groups	6.26	4	1.5	.20	.93
	Within Groups	2701.8	352	7.6		
Competing	Between Groups	188.6	4	47.1	2.4	.04
	Within Groups	6652.2	352	18.8		
Avoiding	Between Groups	135.9	4	33.9	3.1	.01
	Within Groups	3858.3	352	10.9		
Compromising	Between Groups	6.854	4	1.7	.43	.78
	Within Groups	1395.1	352	3.9		

Ho5. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of qualification.

Table 6 indicates the significant mean score difference between faculty members on the basis of the relationship between qualification and conflict management styles. ANOVA was applied to explore the hypothesized relationship. Faculty members of universities were divided into three groups as per their qualification (group 1: PhD; group 2: MPhil; group 3: MA). Null hypothesis was accepted because there was no statistically significant difference at $p < .05$ for the three designated groups of faculty members in different universities.

Table 6*ANOVA on the Basis of Qualification*

Styles		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Collaborating	Between Groups	15.5	2	7.78	1.04	.352
	Within Groups	2631.9	354	7.43		
Accommodating	Between Groups	7.5	2	3.75	.492	.612
	Within Groups	2700.5	354	7.62		
Competing	Between Groups	11.7	2	5.86	.304	.738
	Within Groups	6829.1	354	19.2		
Avoiding	Between Groups	13.1	2	6.59	.586	.557
	Within Groups	3981.1	354	11.2		
Compromising	Between Groups	2.5	2	1.26	.319	.727
	Within Groups	1399.4	354	3.9		

Table 7*ANOVA Application on Age*

Styles		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Collaborating	Between Groups	87.3	3	29.1	4.01	.008
	Within Groups	2560.1	353	7.2		
Accommodate	Between Groups	16.5	3	5.5	.724	.538
	Within Groups	2691.5	353	7.6		
Competing	Between Groups	203.3	3	67.7	3.60	.014
	Within Groups	6637.5	353	18.8		
Avoiding	Between Groups	60.2	3	20.0	1.80	.146
	Within Groups	3934.0	353	11.1		
Compromising	Between Groups	19.6	3	6.56	1.67	.172
	Within Groups	1382.2	353	3.91		

Ho6. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles on the basis of age.

Table 7 shows the results of ANOVA application to explore the effect of age on the conflict management styles of university teachers. Faculty members of universities were divided into five groups according to their age (group 1: below 30; group 2: 31-40; group 3: 41-50; group 4: above 50). Null hypothesis was

rejected because the results showed that university teachers significantly differed in their use of collaborating and competing styles. The results also showed that young teachers were more collaborating as compared to old teachers and people above 40 were more competitive. However, null hypothesis was accepted with reference to accommodating, avoiding and compromising styles used by the faculty members of public and private sector universities.

Findings and Discussion

The findings revealed that managing conflicts through collaborating and accommodating styles were the first priority of university teachers. This is also confirmed by Farooqi, Faridee, Batool, and Yahya, (2016), who uncovered the use of these styles among teachers for resolution the conflicts. Findings also revealed that female faculty members were not different from male faculty members in using conflict management styles at university level. However, according to Ud Din, Khan, and Bibi (2012), male and female teachers differ in using obliging and dominating strategies. According to them, male teachers use the obliging style and female teachers are more likely to use the dominating style.

Furthermore, it was found that the use of accommodating style to resolve conflicts was more common among public sector university teachers as compared to private sector teachers. This may be supported by Markovits, Davis, Fay, and Dick's (2013) argument that public and private sector employees work under different employment conditions and organizational contexts and these differences directly or indirectly influence their professional attitude. It is assumed that teachers use different styles according to the situation or problem, they faced as they are not bound to follow any style to deal with other people. Moreover, these styles directly affect their organizational performance (Farooqi et al., 2016).

Designation was not found to have any effect on faculty members' choice of using various conflict management styles. However, differences in the use of avoiding and competing styles on the basis of designation were reported by Ud Din, Khan, and Bibi (2012). Regarding the teaching experience of faculty members, a significant difference was found in the use of competing and avoiding styles. Experienced faculty members mostly used avoiding and competing styles of conflict management. This finding is supported by Ud din, Khan, Rehman, and Bibi (2011). No significant difference was found in the use of conflict management styles on the basis of the qualification of faculty members. Regarding the age of faculty members, a significant difference was found only in the use of collaborating and competing styles. Young faculty members were

found to be more collaborating and competing as compared to aged faculty members. This is also confirmed by Ud Din, Khan, & Bibi (2012).

References

- Adkison, J. A. (1979). Conflict and stress in interorganizational structures. *Interorganizational Structures*, 19(7), 100–170.
- Armstrong, M. (2001). *A handbook of management techniques: The best-selling guide to modern management methods*. London: Kogan Page Publishers.
- Bercovitch, J. (1983). Conflict and conflict management in organizations: A framework for analysis. *Hong Kong Journal of Public Administration*, 5(2), 104–123.
- Cacioppe, R., & Mock, P. (1984). A comparison of the quality of work experience in government and private organizations. *Human Relations*, 37(11), 923–940.
- Dogan, S. (2016). Conflicts management model in school: A mixed design study. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(2), 200–219.
- Farooqi, M.T.K., Faridee, B.A., Batool, S. & Yahya, R. (2016). Relationship of conflict management styles with teachers professional commitment. *Science International*, 28(2), 1543–1549.
- Gross, M. A., & Guerrero, L. K. (2000). Managing conflict appropriately and effectively: An application of the competence model to Rahim's organizational conflict styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(3), 200–226.
- Jayatileke, R. (1972). *Human relations in the classroom: An annotated bibliography* (ERIC-IRCD urban disadvantaged series, no. 28). New York: Columbia University.
- Mantovani, K. D. (1999). *Seventh-Grade students' attitudes toward conflict before and after applying a conflict resolution curriculum*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Markovits, Y., Davis, A.J., Fay, D., & Dick. R. V. (2013). The link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment: Differences between public and private sector employees. *International Public Management Journal*, 13(2), 177–196.
- Ozgan, H. (2011). The relationship between organizational justice, confidence, commitment, and evaluation the manager and the perceptions of conflict

- management at the context of organizational behavior. *Educational Science: Theory & Practice*, 11(1), 241–247.
- Rahim, M. A. (2002). *Managing conflict in organizations*. California: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Rahim, M. A. (2010). *Managing conflict in organizations*. US: Transaction Publishers.
- Rahim, M. A. (1983). *Rahim organizational conflict inventory*. United States: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Rahim, A., & Bonoma, T. V. (1979). Managing organizational conflict: A model diagnosis and intervention. *Psychological Reports*, 3(44), 1327–1344.
- Simons, T. L., & Peterson, R. S. (2000). Task conflict and relationship conflict in top management teams: The pivotal role of intragroup trust. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(1), 102.
- Singh, K. (2013). *Organizational behavior*. New Delhi: Pearson Education.
- Su'udy, R. (2009). *Conflict management styles of Americans and Indonesians: Exploring the effects of gender and collectivism/individualism*. Kansas, US: University of Kansas.
- Ud Din, S., Khan, B., & Bibi, R. R. Z. (2011). An investigation of conflict management in public and private sector universities. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(16), 69–81.
- Ud Din, S., Khan, B., & Bibi, Z. (2012). An inquiry into conflict management strategies: study of higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Research Journal of Social Sciences & Management*, 5(2), 2251–1571.
- Ustuner, M., & Kis, A. (2014). The relationship between communication competence and organizational conflict: A study on head of educational supervisors. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 5(56), 1–24.
- Yu, T., & Chen, G.-M. (2008). Intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in cross-cultural organizational situations. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 17(2), 149–161.