JOURNAL OF SOCIAL RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

www.jsrd.org.pk   editor@jsd.org.pk

THE NEXUS BETWEEN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FACULTY PERFORMANCE: TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP AS MEDIATOR

Sidra Kiran[1], Muhammad Moin[2] & Muhammad Wasim Shahzad[3]

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Al-Hamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan
[2]Head of Department (Education), Dar Ul Madina International University, Islamabad, Pakistan
[3]PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Al-Hamd Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Conflict Management, Faculty Performance, Transactional Leadership, University Level	This research aimed to determine relationship amid incorporating conflict management strategies and the faculty performance of a higher education institution facilitated by the transactional leadership style as a mediator variable. A descriptive survey design was used. Sample of 200 instructors was obtained via multi-stage random sampling technique. In this regard, three instruments (Farooqi Organizational Conflict Management Strategy (FOCI), the faculty performance survey and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were used in the study. Data were analyzed through AMOS. It was revealed that through implementing conflict management strategies in the institution, there is a direct impact on faculty performance. The results provide significant information in reaching the conclusion and making decision about research issues under consideration in the particular context. The research outcomes indicate that promoting the right conflict management and leadership behaviors in the higher learning faculty is dynamic for the higher performance of the individuals. There is a need for awareness about conflict-solving measures and encouraging constructive leadership.
ARTICLE HISTORY 	
Correspondence	Muhammad Moin
Email:	moinawan99@gmail.com
DOI	https://doi.org/10.53664/JSRD/05-02-2024-21-259-266

INTRODUCTION

The conflict is inevitable in any human relations, especially in organizations. The experiences in the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and inter-organizational levels, it particularly influences employees' behavior, job satisfaction, and performance (Tabassi, Abdullah & Bryde, 2019). Conflict is not always bad, but it has the potential to act as a source of growth for an individual and even an organization (Kay & Skarlicki, 2020). In different realms, whether the perspective may be class

discussions or individual interactions, disagreement characteristics are components of institutional life. The conflict management is the critical aspect of organizational dynamics, mainly in academic settings where diverse perspectives and high-stress environments can lead to conflicts. Approaches for handling the conflict are techniques that pursue to solve clashes and establish an atmosphere of constructive learning. Conflict is loaded in learning institutions, especially in colleges, and it brings about constructive or destructive results based upon how conflict is handled from ongoing learning, and attendance at workshops. Conflict management is significant factor that moderates leadership style and, by extension, the efficiency of universities (Rahim & Katz, 2020). Conflict management strategy has great standing. It is considered valuable for managing complicated problems to reach an acceptable outcome.

Integrating is suitable when one party alone cannot solve the issue, when commitment is required from others, for the long-range planning, and for tackling strategic issues related to organization's objectives (Rahim & Katz, 2020). According to Friedman, Tidd, Currall and Tsai (2000), it can be constructive when there is likely for joint benefits of parties as it generates a greater understanding of the parties' interests, making it easier to get an acceptable solution. They further explained that if this style is frequently utilized in organization, it reduces conflicts and aids in preserving or creating organizational assets (Friedman et al., 2000). Conflict management strategies have important effect on values of students. Conflict management creates the sense of psychological safety for discussion, sharing viewpoints, and taking intellectual tasks. For intellectual capability, the cognitive domain has been focused on quality of instruction, student engagement & learning outcomes. For cognitive development, order thinking skills have been focused on by many of studies in current literature related to policy documents, teachers' perspectives, and practices (Jamil, Aslam & Ali, 2024; Jamil, Bibi & Shahzadi, 2024; Jamil, Bokhari & Rafiq, 2024; Jamil, Mahmood & Masood, 2023; Jamil, Muhammad & Aslam, 2024; Jamil, Muhammad & Qureshi, 2021a, 2021b; Naseer, Muhammad & Jamil, 2022).

Furthermore, these are used to engage more in the learning and increase motivation to explore the complicated topics (Malik, Rana & Ashraf, 2023). Since universities are social institutions invested in knowledge (Chua & Jin, 2020), it is incumbent upon them to convey insights and standards. Ye, Liu and Gu (2019) noted that success of a university in fulfilling this mission is significantly hinged on the ability to manage and administer university's affairs. The insistence on character, in addition to performance recognized by the company, typifies value of education in colleges and universities as a complete learning process (Nwankwo, 2000). The effective conflict management strategies can enhance faculty performance, and the role of leadership, specifically transactional leadership, can serve as a mediator in this relationship. Leadership is a critical factor in institutional success, with Yukl (2013) thereby proposing three major approaches: Hofstede two-dimensional business culture context is a) economic, b) operational, and c) human and social. Leadership is seen as an important way of producing a good organization by encouraging the employees and making the workplace productive. Professors' professional development is crucial, and it is critical to enhance knowledge management theory because it becomes mandatory to put proper supervision in place to enhance faculty performance.

In this regard, it is crucial to admit that the contribution of faculties and leadership of universities in keeping the standards of education and culminating the potential of learners is still significant as the universities respond to global challenges (Bailey, Kaiser, Thomas, Dillingham, Norwood, Smith & Brown, 2022). For conflicts that do not have a means of recourse through the common grievance procedure in many organizations, leadership becomes paramount in tackling issues that otherwise affect productivity. Thus, the effective managers understand the strain between conflicts and their management and proper approach when adjusting and intervening (Cheung, Yiu, Leung & Chiu, 2008). Thus, they define an example of conflict-solving inside the organization (Chua & Jin, 2020). The standing of this study rests in its ability to offer practical and valuable insights for educational stakeholders, such as university administrators, policymakers, and faculty members. In this regard, by understanding the intricate relationship between conflict management, leadership styles, and faculty performance, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to foster a more supportive and productive educational environment. Effective conflict management and leadership practices can enhance the faculty performance, benefiting students and contributing to the institution's academic excellence and reputation.

Objectives of Study

1. To measure the existing performance levels of the university faculty in the particular context.
2. To analyze relationship between integrating conflict management strategies and faculty performance with the mediating role of transactional leadership style.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The negative terms like destruction, anger, and war normally refer to conflict. This negative view is intensified by scholars who link the conflict with abnormality or sickness that must not be tolerated (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018). Positive attitudes are not always assumed; other opinions have also been offered. There are three propositions highlighting helpful aspects of conflict: its natural appearance, its inability to be ignored or changed, and it is rooted in real differences between people. This view supports Rahim (2023) opinion that conflict is inherent in the interpersonal communication. These views mirror the subjectivity of conflict as a social process and, thus, the continuous discords in the scholarly discourse regarding its definition and effects. Conflict management strategies integration is necessary to address difficult issues in an organization. Thus, it can be used by individuals and an organization to solve problems requiring long-term planning and collaborative commitment. Also, earlier research by Friedman et al. (2000) focused on combining conflict management to support, identify, and reduce organizational conflicts. The performance of faculty is necessary in the higher educational institutions. It has a great impact on the learners as well as on the quality of education (Nakayama et al., 2021).

Performance evaluation and professional development are necessary to ensure quality education. Student satisfaction and career-oriented approaches of faculty members are effective performance measures. The transactional leadership has its roots in employing specific structures and systems of rewards and punishments to control employees' performance. Comp compelling evidence suggests that the organizational outcomes are positively affected by it. (Anderson & Sun, 2017) research by Nguyen et al. (2022) indicates that transactional leadership may moderate relationship between

conflict management styles and faculty performance, providing more favorable results. Islam views conflict as the natural part of human interaction that requires just and ethical resolution methods. Islamic teachings emphasize peace, reconciliation, and justice and provide guidelines for conflict resolution. In this linking, conflict management strategies significantly impact faculty performance. These principles align with modern conflict management strategies that advocate the fairness and understanding in resolving disputes. Different studies have been conducted on the topic in national and international contexts.

Nasra and Arar (2020) explored teachers' performance and leadership roles. In another study, the effect of perceived leadership style was observed with employee commitment to the mediating role of the conflict management (Hussein et al., 2022). The two leadership styles, i.e., transformational and transactional, were observed in performance of lectures, with mediating role in job satisfaction (Angriani et al., 2020). In another study by Jamali et al. (2022), the effect of leadership styles was observed with faculty performance moderating organizational culture in higher education. In the study, Akhtar and Syeda (2021) found that conflict management for the organizational commitment among the university teachers affects teaching faculty in managing the conflicts. Thus, ensures that institutional policies are followed, reducing the likelihood of conflicts arising from ambiguity. Sajid et al. (2022) study the effect of teachers' work-family conflict on children's performance. Similarly, in a study by scholars, Bukhari et al. (2021), the academic motivation of high-achiever students was investigated concerning hearing-impaired students of higher educational institutions. Leadership practices and supervision challenges were explored in different studies (Arif et al., 2023; Jamil & Rozina Sewani, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey research approach to determine conflict management approach and its outcome on faculty performance in higher learning institutions of Pakistan. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970), study sample consisted of 200 instructors. A multi-stage random sampling was employed to obtain a diverse sample that was sufficiently large and random (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Three instruments were utilized: the Farooqi Organizational Conflict Management Strategy (FOCI), faculty performance survey (Smith & Brown, 2022), and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass and Avolio (2004). Data collection techniques used were web-based questionnaires and interviews conducted with the respondents. Descriptive statistics for study were analyzed using computer software called AMOS for structural equation modelling and path analysis, as postulated by (Byrne, 2016).

Table 1 Reliability Analysis of Instruments

Instrument	Items	Mean	SD	CA
Integrating Conflict Management	8	3.50	1.10	0.71
Transactional Leadership Style	12	4.00	2.39	0.89
Faculty Performance	14	3.42	0.80	0.82

The reliability analysis shows that all instruments used in this study have acceptable reliability coefficients, with Cronbach's alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Tavakol &

Dennick, 2011). In this regard, this designates that the instruments are reliable for measuring the respective constructs.

RESULTS OF STUDY

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Faculty Performance

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Number of national publications	1.00	5.00	3.55	1.42
Number of international publications	1.00	5.00	3.35	1.35
Number of national seminars attended	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.39
Number of international seminars attended	1.00	5.00	3.53	1.52
Number of national training workshops attended	1.00	5.00	3.64	1.38
Number of international training workshops attended	1.00	5.00	3.02	1.58
Number of national conferences attended	1.00	5.00	3.62	1.39
Number of international conferences attended	1.00	5.00	3.55	1.48
Number of university-level awards	1.00	5.00	3.27	1.60
Number of national awards	1.00	5.00	3.47	1.55
Number of university projects participated	1.00	5.00	3.56	1.30
Number of commercial projects participated	1.00	5.00	3.44	1.59
Number of sessions chaired in conferences	1.00	5.00	3.02	1.58

The above table indicates that the faculty members perform well across various metrics, including national and international publications, seminar attendance, and awards. Thus, the mean scores for these metrics are consistently above the average, that suggesting a strong faculty engagement and achievement level.

Path Analysis

Table 3 Path Analysis Results

Path	Estimate	SE	CR	p
Integrating → Faculty Performance	0.448	0.045	9.956	<0.001
Integrating → Transactional Leadership	0.182	0.046	3.956	<0.001
Transactional leadership → Faculty Performance	0.319	0.041	7.780	<0.001
Integrating → Transactional Leadership → Performance	0.042	0.012	3.500	<0.001

The above table for path analysis reveals that the conflict management strategies significantly and positively affect faculty performance ($\beta = 0.448$, $p < 0.001$) as evident from the results of study. Moreover, transactional leadership meaningfully mediates this relationship ($\beta = 0.042$, $p < 0.001$), representing that transactional leadership improves the positive effect of conflict management on the performance.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study's results support previous literature on conflict management and leadership styles that affect performance in educational institutions. It was found that faculty performance progresses after conflict management strategies are incorporated into the performance, as research by Rahim

and Katz (2020) has same findings. The study findings suggest that conflict-management strategies have positive correlation with the performance of the faculty. So, proper conflict-solving measures are important in educational organizations. This finding is also according to Friedman et al. (2000) and Rahim and Katz (2020), who assert that the conflict management decreases conflicts and helps improve shared understanding among team members, aiming to increase their performance. Thus, results show that transactional leadership applies limited mediating outcome necessary to improve conflict management consequences. It is based on studies by Anderson and Sun (2017) and Nguyen et al. (2022) that discovered the significance of the transactional leadership style in achieving the organizational purposes.

Therefore, current study spreads the knowledge of leadership styles' effect on conflict management in educational backgrounds as mediated by moral climate. Subsequently, the results verify the role of recognizing leadership that can decrease the conflicts, increase efficiency in school environments, & propose practical knowledge for organized policy. Study results reveal that conflict management strategies improve the faculty's performance. On the other hand, the transactional leadership style plays a significant role as a mediating variable. It was investigated that faculty members performed well in diverse areas, like publications from national and international contexts, attending seminars and getting awards for their academic achievements. It showed faculty robust achievement toward their academic work. Furthermore, the path analysis showed that conflict management strategies have a significant and positive effect on the performance of the faculty, which also showed that the transactional leadership enhances the performance of the faculty members through diverse conflict management strategies.

Recommendations

1. The educational institutions should implement training programs upon conflict management strategies for faculty to equip them with skills to handle conflicts effectively.
2. Institutions should promote a supportive environment encouraging transactional leadership practices to enhance faculty performance.
3. Regularly evaluate and adjust conflict management and leadership practices to ensure they remain effective and aligned with institutional goals.
4. Encourage open communication and collaboration amid faculty members to foster a positive working environment and facilitate conflict resolution.
5. Establish inclusive policies to address & resolve conflicts promptly and effectively, ensuring that all faculty members are aware of and adhere to these guidelines.

REFERENCES

Anderson, M. H., & Sun, P. Y. (2017). Reviewing leadership styles: Overlaps and the need for a new 'full-range'theory. *International journal of management reviews*, 19(1), 76-96.

Angriani, M. R., Eliyana, A., Fitrah, H., & Sembodo, P. (2020). The effect of transactional and transformational leadership on lecturer performance with job satisfaction as the mediation. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11(11), 1263-1272.

Arif, R., Jamil, M., & Naseer, B. (2023). Challenges of instructional supervision faced by primary school heads. *Pakistan Journal of Analysis & Wisdom*, 2(3), 189-196.

Bailey, J., Kaiser, F., Thomas, C., Dillingham, S., Norwood, D., Smith, N., & Brown, A. (2022). The intersection of preparation and practice: School leadership learning through simulation. *NASSP Bulletin*, 106(3), 209-231.

Bukhari, S., Butt, S., & Muhammad, Y. (2021). Understanding academic motivation of high achieving students with hearing impairment in higher education: A qualitative study. *Global Sociological Review*, 6(2), 17-25.

Byrne, B. M. (2016). Basic concepts, applications, and programming. Structural equation modeling with AMOS.

Cheung, S. O., Yiu, T. W., Leung, A. Y., & Chiu, O. K. (2008). Catastrophic transitions of construction contracting behavior. *Journal of construction engineering and management*, 134(12), 942-952.

Chua, R., & Jin, M. (2020). Across the great divides: Gender dynamics influence how intercultural conflict helps or hurts creative collaboration. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(3), 903-934.

Friedman, R. A., Tidd, S. T., Currall, S. C., & Tsai, J. C. (2000). What goes around comes around: The impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(1), 32-55.

Hocker, J. L., & Wilmot, W. W. (2018). Interpersonal Conflict (Vol. 1). McGraw-Hill Education New York, NY.

Hussein, B., Ibrahim, M. S., & Ismael, F. (2022). The influence of perceived leadership Styles on employee commitment: The mediating role of conflict management. *International Journal of Humanities and Education Development* (IJHED), 4(1), 43-60.

Jamali, A., Bhutto, A., Khaskhely, M., & Sethar, W. (2022). Impact of leadership styles on faculty performance: Moderating role of organizational culture in higher education. *Management Science Letters*, 12(1), 1-20.

Jamil, M., Aslam, M., & Ali, S. (2024). Single national curriculum (SNC) for Social Studies (2020): Document analysis for development of critical thinking skills at the primary level. *Pakistan Journal of Law, Analysis and Wisdom*, 3(2), 67-74.

Jamil, M., Bibi, T., & Shahzadi, U. (2024). Critical thinking skills development among secondary school students: An analysis of Chemistry textbook grade X (2020). *Research Journal for Societal Issues*, 6(2), 1-11.

Jamil, M., Bokhari, T. B., & Rafiq, M. (2024). Critical thinking skills development for 21st century: An analysis of Biology curriculum (2006). *Voyage Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 127-138.

Jamil, M., Mahmood, A., & Masood, S. (2023). Fostering critical thinking in Pakistani secondary school science: A teacher's viewpoint. *Global Educational Studies Review*, 8(2), 645-659.

Jamil, M., Muhammad, N., & Aslam, M. (2024). Critical thinking skills development: An analysis of mathematics curriculum 2006 (Grade-wise). *Global Social Sciences Review*, 9(1), 22-29.

Jamil, M., Muhammad, Y., & Qureshi, N. (2021a). Critical thinking skills development: Secondary school science teachers' perceptions and practices. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research* (SJESR), 4(2), 21-30.

Jamil, M., Muhammad, Y., & Qureshi, N. (2021b). Secondary School Science Teachers' Practices for the Development of Critical Thinking Skills: An Observational Study. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 2(4), 259-265.

Jamil, M., & Rozina Sewani, N. M. (2024). Leadership practices of head teachers: Primary school teachers' perspective in public schools of Punjab. *Leadership*, 6(1), 83-92.

Kay, A. A., & Skarlicki, D. P. (2020). Cultivating a conflict-positive workplace: How mindfulness facilitates constructive conflict management. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 159, 8-20.

Malik, A., Rana, H., & Ashraf, R. (2023). Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution as a Predictor of Resilience in Rescue Workers. *Life and Science*, 4(3), 9-9.

Nakayama, M., Mutsuura, K., & Yamamoto, H. (2021). Impact of learner's characteristics and learning behaviour on learning performance during a fully online course. *Note taking Activities in E-learning Environments*, 15-36.

Naseer, H., Muhammad, Y., & Jamil, M. (2022). Critical thinking skills in pakistan studies textbook: Qualitative content analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 4(3), 744-755.

Nguyen, T.-M., Malik, A., & Budhwar, P. (2022). Knowledge hiding in organizational crisis: The moderating role of leadership. *Journal of Business Research*, 139, 161-172.

Nwankwo, S. (2000). Assessing the marketing environment in sub-Saharan Africa: opportunities and threats analysis. *Marketing intelligence & planning*, 18(3), 144-153.

Rahim, M. A. (2023). Managing conflict in organizations. *Routledge*.

Rahim, M. A., & Katz, J. P. (2020). Forty years of conflict: the effects of gender and generation on conflict-management strategies. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 31(1), 1-16.

Sajid, S. M., Jamil, M., & Abbas, M. (2022). Impact of teachers' work-family conflict on the performance of their children. *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, 5(1), 229-239.

Tabassi, A. A., Abdullah, A., & Bryde, D. J. (2019). Conflict management, team coordination, and performance within multicultural temporary projects: Evidence from the construction industry. *Project Management Journal*, 50(1), 101-114.

Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(1), 77-100.

Ye, Z., Liu, H., & Gu, J. (2019). Relationships between conflicts and employee perceived job performance: Job satisfaction as mediator and collectivism as moderator. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 30(5), 706-728.

Yukl, G. (2013). Leadership in organizations 8th ed. In: Pearson Education, Inc.