



RESEARCH PAPER

Relationship between Principal's Collaborating and Accommodating Conflict Management Styles with Academic Achievement: A Correlational study

Ruqaya Naseem

Assistant Professor, Higher Education Department, Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author: ruqayazia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research study was aimed at determining the relationship between principal's conflict management styles (collaborating and accommodating) with academic achievement of the students at college level. Despite the crucial role of principals in shaping college culture and academic performance, limited research has explored the specific relationship between principals' conflict management styles and academic achievement. This study aims to investigate the correlation between principals' collaborating and accommodating conflict management styles and academic achievement, shedding light on a critical aspect of educational leadership. Present research study followed positivist research paradigm and correlational research method was used to conduct the study. Population of the study was comprised of all the public degree colleges at Sialkot and Narowal districts of the Punjab in Pakistan. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to draw the sample of the study. Conflict management styles inventory ROCI-II was used to collect the data. **Results:** The analysis of the data revealed that there is a strong positive relationship ($r=0.519$, $p=.002$) between collaborating conflict management style and academic achievement. A moderate positive relationship was found between accommodating conflict management style ($r=0.448$, $p=.001$) and academic achievement. Collaboration as a method for resolving disputes in colleges may be effective for principals and staff irrespective of the districts. Moreover, a qualitative study may be conducted to get a deeper understanding of principals' conflict management styles and the factors behind it.

KEYWORDS Academic Achievement, Accommodating, Collaborating, Conflict Management

Introduction

Colleges play a vital role in fostering knowledge and contributing to community development by providing skilled workers. However, conflicts between managers, teachers, students, and professors are increasingly common, emphasizing the need for effective conflict management strategies that prioritize transparency and efficiency. Poor conflict management in school administration can lead to disciplinary and academic deficiencies (Yildirim, Akan & Yalçin, 2015). Moreover, educators' conflict mediation styles often underutilize teacher expertise.

Therefore, developing a new concept of conflict management practices focused on mutual understanding and college success is crucial for enhancing college leadership potential. While the role of principals is essential, their conflict management capacities are critical in enhancing academic performance, particularly in critical areas. Hence, college leaders must review and develop effective conflict management strategies (Ugbor, Fredrick, & Paul, 2018). Successful conflict mediation promotes shared understanding, commitment to equity, and collaborative decision-making, leading to

positive outcomes. However, conflict management approaches are complex and require consideration of field knowledge and individual preferences (Larasati & Raharja, 2020).

To address university management problems, college managers should be aware of potential conflicts, react promptly, use collective decision-making, and assess their capabilities and those of their opponents to manage disputes effectively (Hallinger, 2018). Ultimately, university administration should be transparent and reasonable in its decision-making processes, considering both benefits and drawbacks. Academic achievement is a measure of educational success attained by students and teachers in educational institutions, reflecting the extent to which students meet institutional standards. Academic success encompasses not only students' engagement with their studies but also how instructors manage multiple assignments (Hashmi, Altaf, & Kiyani, 2019). It involves the ability to learn, retain, and communicate knowledge effectively. Assessing academic achievement is crucial to evaluate student performance and compare it with peers. Research has identified four significant factors contributing to variations in academic achievement among students: institutional environment, conflict management styles, instructor attributes, and student behavior.

These factors include the quality of academic resources (textbooks, libraries, and laboratories), leadership and conflict management styles of principals (school administration and management), instructor characteristics (training, certification, professional engagement, expertise, and transition index), and student traits. Studies have shown that conflicts in institutions can deplete resources, social support, and teacher integration, leading to increased problems and negatively impacting academic outcomes (Deligiannidou, Athanailidis, Laios, & Stafyla, 2020). Conflicts can escalate into more severe issues, such as workplace violence, aggression, and decreased academic success, underscoring the critical role of college stakeholders in addressing these challenges and promoting effective conflict management strategies.

Soomro, Saraih and Ahmad (2023) developed a conceptual framework of five conflict management styles based on a manager's dual concerns for people and productivity. The styles include competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Thomas extended this work by identifying two fundamental dimensions of conflict management: assertiveness and cooperativeness. They built on Thomas's work, categorizing five conflict management styles based on concern for self and others: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising.

The effectiveness of a college system is largely dependent on the leadership and conflict management style of its principal. A principal's ability to manage conflicts and tensions efficiently is crucial in creating a conducive learning environment, which in turn affects academic achievement. Despite high scores, colleges in Punjab have been struggling with subpar academic performance. This research aims to investigate the conflict management strategies employed by college principals and their impact on academic achievement. Effective conflict management is a vital skill for leaders, as it enhances their overall competence and reputation within the organization. By exploring the link between conflict management styles and academic achievement, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for college principals to improve their leadership and conflict resolution skills, ultimately enhancing the overall performance of their institutions.

Literature Review

Conflict is a natural and inevitable social phenomenon that arises when parties have varying values, beliefs, or goals. It can be unpleasant, distressing, and frustrating, but it is also an opportunity for growth and improvement (Bean, 2019). Colleges play a crucial role in developing knowledge and providing skilled workers to the community. However, conflicts between managers, teachers, students, and professors can arise, and poor conflict management can lead to academic and disciplinary deficiencies. Effective conflict management is essential for academic achievement and can be achieved through various strategies, including compromise, staff development, efficient leadership, and constructive conversation (Goddard & Miller, 2010).

Conflict management is crucial in colleges as it promotes a positive learning environment, improves academic achievement, and enhances the overall performance of the institution (Okello, 2018). Principals play a vital role in conflict management, and their leadership styles and conflict management strategies can significantly impact the academic performance of their students. Principals use various conflict management styles, including avoidance, competition, compromise, collaboration, and accommodation. The choice of conflict management style depends on the circumstances and personal preferences of the principal. Effective conflict management requires a combination of these styles, and principals should be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in managing conflicts (Noermijati, Sunaryo & Ratri, 2019).

Researchers have found that administrators employ various conflict management styles, with compromising, accommodating, and competing being the most commonly used (Farooqi, Arshad, Khan, & Ghaffar, 2016). The collaborating style, which seeks innovative solutions that satisfy both parties' needs, is considered the most effective in promoting loyalty, trust, and partnership growth. However, overuse of the competing style can lead to decreased creativity, empowerment, and negative impacts on academic achievement.

In contrast, the accommodating style prioritizes harmony and relationship maintenance, which can lead to a false sense of solution and decreased imagination (Larasati, & Raharja, 2020). The collaborating style is suitable for team environments and promotes active discussion, equal work distribution, and creative problem-solving. Studies have shown that collaboration is positively linked to job satisfaction, performance, and organizational outcomes. However, overuse of the accommodating style can lead to negative consequences, including poor academic achievement (Lloyd & Dominic, 2017). Effective conflict management styles should be tailored to facilitate academic achievement and promote a positive learning environment. Research has extensively examined the key conflict management approaches employed by educational leaders. Aqqad, Obeidat, Tarhini and Masa'deh (2019) investigated the relationship between secondary school leaders' conflict management styles and school climate, staff growth, and teacher engagement, surveying 30 principals and 150 students. The study utilized the ROCI-II and a school community survey tool, revealing no significant correlation between principals' conflict management styles and cultural variables.

Irfan (2021) explored the connection between conflict management and interpersonal communication among 64 elementary school principals, employing the ROCI-I and an interpersonal relationship assessment. The results showed no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of principals' conflict management styles and school environment or interpersonal communication skills. However, a statistically significant correlation was found between principals' conflict management styles and school environment in one internal conflict measure and one communication maturity level.

Okello (2018) analyzed the conflict management styles of 195 high school assistant principals, using the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE instrument, and found no significant differences in conflict management scores based on gender, age, school size, or income. The study revealed a low average competitive mode score for both male and female principals, indicating limited use of this style in conflict situations. Reed (2015) investigated principal emotional intelligence, leadership, and transparency in 67 elementary schools, using the Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee emotional intelligence inventory. The study found that conflict resolution was the area where principals ranked lowest in relationship management.

Farooqi, Arshad, Khan and Ghaffar (2016) compared conflict management styles used by public and private high school heads, finding that both schools employed various styles except for the collaborating style, which was more prevalent in private schools. Public school heads preferred the dominating style, while private school heads preferred the accommodating style. Boucher (2018) applied mixed methods to analyze the conflict management styles and university culture of college administrators in South Carolina, finding that leaders strongly preferred the integrating conflict management style. However, no significant correlation was found between principal conflict management style and school environment indicators.

Muindi, Elizabeth, Jonathan, Joseph and Metet (2017) examined the impact of primary leadership skills on secondary education intellectual capital, finding a significant relationship between leadership skills, teacher organizational citizenship behavior, and intellectual capital. The study proposed a theoretical model integrating primary leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, and intellectual capital. They also investigated the conflict management styles employed by institutional heads and their effect on secondary academic achievement in NWFP, providing a framework for developing Pakistan's education system.

Material and Methods

This research study employed positivist research paradigm as it deals with the quantitative numbers and values. Correlational research method was used to carry out the study and it was purely quantitative in nature. Population of the study was comprised of all the public degree colleges at Sialkot and Narowal districts of the Punjab in Pakistan.

Table 1
Population of the Study

Gender	District Sialkot		District Narowal	
	Public colleges(principal)	Teachers	Public colleges (Principal)	Teachers
Male	12	72	05	25
Female	18	126	06	42
Total	30	198	11	67

In Sialkot district 12 male colleges' principals and 72 male teachers were present whereas from the female wing 18 female colleges' principals and 126 female teachers were there. On the other side, in Narowal district, 5 male public colleges' principals and 25 male teachers were present whereas from female wing 06 female public degree colleges' principal in Narowal district and 42 female teachers were working at the time of the research. All the principals and teachers in both districts were the population of

the study. The information was obtained from the official website of Director office (colleges) Gujranwala division.

Sample and Sampling Technique

To draw the sample of the study multi-stage sampling technique was used. At first stage the researcher selected the colleges by using simple random sampling technique. At second stage by using proportionate sampling technique equal proportion of teachers from male and female wing colleges was selected. At third stage the researcher used convenient sampling technique in order to get data from the teachers and principals. Hence from district Sialkot 20 college principals out of 30 colleges and 90 teachers out of 198 were selected. Whereas from district Narowal 7 college principals out of 11 and 33 teachers out of 67 were selected as sample of the study. Moreover the sample size of the study was 27 college principal and 123 college teachers. Sample size from both districts was according to their proportion.

Instrumentation

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between Principal's conflict management styles and Academic Achievement in public colleges. For this purpose, two instruments were adopted for data collection. A closed ended items was consisted on a five point Likert scale as 1= strongly Disagree (SDA), 2= Disagree (DA), 3= Undecided (UD), 4= Agree (A), and 5= Strongly Agree (SA).

Principal's Questionnaire . Public degree college Principals from two districts Sialkot and Narowal filled conflict management styles questionnaire. Conflict management styles inventory ROCI-II was consisted of 28 items developed by Rahim (2001) on mentioned styles as collaborative and accommodating.

Teacher's Questionnaire . The second instrument was also used to examine the teachers' views about the Principal's conflict management styles. For this purpose, Rahim's (2001) ROCI-II inventory was used which was consisted on 28 closed ended items.

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). ROCI-II is a 28 sentence questionnaire to classify the methods for resolution: incorporation (IN), obligatory (OB), dominant (DO), avoidance (AV) or compromise (CO). Researcher done pilot testing of the instrument and used coefficient of Alpha reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha for ROCI-II was found 0.80 and for teachers questionnaire it was found 0.82 which showed fair reliability analysis. Researcher personally visited the colleges and collected data from the respondents.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

After the development of the questionnaires researcher validated this from the field experts. Three profound researchers of education have checked and validated the questionnaire. In the light of their suggestions some items were deleted, rephrased and omitted. After validation of the instruments it has been pilot tested on 30 teachers and 15 principals. The results of the pilot testing helped in reliability analysis. Table 2 is describing the reliability of the questionnaires.

Table 2
Reliability of Questionnaires for Principals and Teachers

Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability
Principal's Questionnaire	0.82
Teachers Questionnaire	0.80

Table 2 reports the reliability of two questionnaires used to collect data from principals and teachers. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the measures used to collect data. Principal's Questionnaire refers to the questionnaire administered to principals. The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.82, indicating a high level of reliability. This means that the questions in the principal's questionnaire are consistent and reliable measures of the constructs being measured. While Teachers Questionnaire refers to the questionnaire administered to teachers. The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.80, also indicating a high level of reliability. This means that the questions in the teacher's questionnaire are also consistent and reliable measures of the constructs being measured.

Ethical Considerations

Following ethical considerations were adopted during the data analysis.

- Participants were fully informed about the data collection process, its purpose, and how their data will be used and protected.
- Researcher ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' personal information and data.
- The researcher strived to minimize bias in data collection and analysis, and be aware of potential sources of bias.
- Researcher has been mindful of the time and effort required from participants and ensures that it is reasonable and respectful.

Results and Discussion

Table 3
Relationship between Collaborating Conflict management reported by Principals and Academic Achievement

Principal' Self-report	Academic Achievement (Results 2022, 2023)		
	R	n	P
Collaborating Conflict Management Style	0.519	27	.002

Table 3 displays the correlation between Principals' use of Collaborative conflict management and Academic Achievement. A Pearson correlation coefficient analysis revealed a strong and significant positive correlation ($r = 0.519$, $n = 27$, $p = 0.002$) between the two variables. This indicates that Principals who employ Collaborative conflict management tend to have higher Academic Achievement in their colleges.

Table 4
Relationship between Collaborating Conflict management reported by Teachers and Academic Achievement

Teacher' reported	Academic Achievement (Results 2022,2023)		
	r	n	P
Collaborating Conflict Management Style	0.32	123	.004

Table 4 presents the findings on the correlation between the extent to which teachers report the use of Collaborative conflict management and Academic Achievement. To investigate this relationship, a Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted. The results revealed a significant and moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.32$, $n = 80$, $p = 0.001$) between Collaborative conflict management and Academic Achievement. This indicates that as teachers' use of Collaborative conflict management increases, so too does the Academic Achievement of their students. In other words, the more Principals employ Collaborative conflict management, the better their college's Academic Achievement tends to be. This suggests that Principals' conflict management approaches have a notable impact on academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of effective conflict management in educational settings.

Table 5
Relationship between Accommodating Conflict management reported by Principals and Academic Achievement

Principal' Self-report	Academic Achievement (Results 2022,2023)		
	R	n	P
Accommodating Conflict Management Style	0.448	27	.009

Table 5 displays the findings on the correlation between the extent to which Principals report the use of Accommodating conflict management and Academic Achievement. To examine this relationship, a Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted. The results revealed a significant and moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.519$, $n = 27$, $p = 0.002$) between Accommodating conflict management and Academic Achievement. This indicates that as Principals' use of Accommodating conflict management increases, so too does the Academic Achievement of their students. In other words, the more Principals employ accommodating conflict management, the better their college's Academic Achievement tends to be. This suggests that Principals' willingness to accommodate and yield to others' perspectives and needs has a notable positive impact on academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of effective conflict management in fostering a supportive and productive educational environment.

Table 6
Relationship between accommodating Conflict management reported by Teachers and Academic Achievement

Teacher' reported	Academic Achievement (Results 2022,2023)		
	R	n	P
Accommodating Conflict Management Style	0.317	123	.005

Table 6 presents the findings on the correlation between the extent to which teachers report the use of Accommodating conflict management by Principals and Academic Achievement. To investigate this relationship, a Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted. The results revealed a significant and moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.32$, $n = 80$, $p = 0.001$) between Principals' use of Accommodating conflict management and Academic Achievement. This indicates that as teachers report Principals' increased use of Accommodating conflict management, there is a corresponding increase in Academic Achievement. In other words, when Principals are more likely to accommodate and yield to others' perspectives and needs, their college's Academic Achievement tends to be higher. This suggests that Principals' conflict management approaches, as perceived by teachers, have a notable impact on academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of effective conflict management in fostering a

supportive and productive educational environment. By adopting an accommodating approach to conflict management, Principals can create an environment that promotes collaboration, respect, and academic success.

Table 7
Comparison of Principals and teachers on Conflict Management Styles

Conflict Management Styles	Principals		Teachers		Independent samples t-test		
	M	SD	M	SD	t	df	P
Conflict Management	3.79	0.41	3.93	0.39	0.399	109	0.691
Collaborating	4.34	0.57	4.36	0.43	0.399	109	0.691
Accommodating	4.00	0.63	4.01	0.54	0.054	109	0.957

Table 7 presents a comparative analysis of the conflict management styles employed by Principals and teachers. To determine whether significant differences exist between the two groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results revealed no significant difference in the overall scores of conflict management, Collaborating, and Accommodating conflict management styles ($p > 0.05$). However, a notable trend emerged, with teachers tend to score higher than Principals in all three categories.

Specifically, the mean scores for Principals ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.41$) were lower than those for teachers ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.39$) in overall conflict management. Similarly, the mean scores for Principals on the Collaborating style ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.57$) and Accommodating style ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.63$) were slightly lower than those for teachers on the Collaborating style ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.43$) and Accommodating style ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.54$). While the differences are not statistically significant, they suggest that teachers may be more inclined towards collaborative and accommodating approaches to conflict management compared to Principals.

Table 8
Comparison of Male Principals and Female Principals on Conflict Management Styles

Conflict Management Styles	Gender of Principal				Independent samples t-test		
	Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	t	df	P
1. Conflict Management	3.63	0.33	3.97	0.27	-2.814	25	0.009
2. Collaborating	4.27	0.46	4.62	0.31	-2.311	25	0.029
3. Accommodating	3.54	0.38	4.31	0.33	-5.291	25	0.000

Table 6 presents a comparative analysis of the conflict management styles employed by male and female Principals. To determine whether significant differences exist between the two groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results revealed significant differences in two conflict management styles: Collaborating and Accommodating. Notably, female Principals scored significantly higher than male Principals in the Collaborating style ($t(109) = 2.311$, $p = 0.029$), with a mean score of 4.62 ($SD = 0.31$) compared to 4.27 ($SD = 0.46$) for male Principals. This suggests that female Principals tend to employ a more collaborative approach to conflict management, seeking to find mutually beneficial solutions and engaging in open communication.

Furthermore, a significant difference was found in the Accommodating style ($t(109) = 5.291$, $p < 0.001$), with female Principals scoring significantly higher ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.33$) than male Principals ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.38$). This indicates that female Principals

are more likely to adopt an accommodating approach, yielding to others' perspectives and needs, and prioritizing harmony and relationships.

Discussion

The main goal of the study was to determine the relationship between Principals conflict management style and the academic achievement of public colleges in Sialkot and Narowal districts. Conflict management styles have been found to have a significant impact on academic achievement. The results of this study indicated that the college officials used different conflict management strategies and the frequencies used by those strategies from a maximum to a minimum. The cooperation between conflict management and academic achievements has strong relationships.

Noermijati, Sunaryo and Ratri (2019) studied the relationship between management styles of the heads with academic achievement. The results of his study support the findings of the present study. According to their study, the correlation between management styles and the academic performance of colleges was positive. Similarly this research also found that a significant strong positive relationship is found between collaborative management style and academic achievement. This finding has implications for the professional development of Principals and teachers, highlighting the importance of effective conflict management in educational settings. By exploring and addressing the nuances in conflict management approaches between Principals and teachers, schools can foster a more collaborative and productive environment, ultimately benefiting students and the wider school community.

Research has consistently shown that effective college leadership is crucial for enhancing student achievement (Bean, 2019; Goddard & Miller, 2010). A study by Aqqad, Obeidat, Tarhini and Masa'deh (2019) found that secondary school heads preferred an integrating leadership style, which aligns with the findings of Lloyd, Maunjiri and Uzhenyu (2017) who reported that compromising and collaborating were the most preferred conflict management styles among principals. This study reveals that principals in public colleges in Sialkot and Narowal districts predominantly employ a collaborative conflict management style, which positively impacts college achievement. The results support Irfan (2021) who argue that collaboration is ideal for team environments and enhances performance. Effective conflict management is influenced by leaders' personalized qualities, attitudes, and practices (Soomro, Saraih & Ahmad, 2023). Therefore, efficient leaders should focus on empowering others to enhance participation in decision-making and improve education quality. The findings suggest that collaboration and accommodating conflict management styles are positively correlated with academic achievement, supporting Larasati and Raharja, (2020) and UNESCO (2014). The results imply that principals require continuous training in conflict management skills, such as leading consensus and collaborative problem-solving, to promote professional learning initiatives and improve achievements (Hallinger, 2018). These findings have important implications for leadership development and conflict management training in educational settings, highlighting the value of gender diversity in leadership roles and the potential benefits of collaborative and accommodating approaches to conflict management.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings Principals in public colleges in the districts of Sialkot and Narowal predominantly employ the collaboration style as their preferred conflict management approach, with a greater inclination towards this style compared to

the accommodation style. Notably, the collaborative conflict management style was found to have a profound impact on the Academic Achievement of colleges, exhibiting a strong and positive correlation. Specifically, the academic achievement of colleges under the collaborating style was significantly superior to that of other styles, indicating the effectiveness of this approach in fostering a productive and supportive educational environment.

Moreover, the study revealed no significant difference between Principals' conflict management styles and the views reported by teachers regarding the collaborating and accommodating styles. This suggests that both Principals and teachers share a similar perspective on the importance of collaborative and accommodating approaches to conflict management, highlighting the potential for a cohesive and collaborative school community.

These findings have significant implications for the professional development of Principals and teachers, emphasizing the importance of effective conflict management in promoting academic achievement and fostering a positive school culture. By adopting a collaborative approach to conflict management, educational leaders can create an environment that encourages open communication, mutual respect, and academic success.

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of the study following are the recommendations of the study.

1. Collaboration as a method for resolving disputes in colleges may be effective for principals and staff irrespective of the districts.
2. Principals must be careful while using any method of conflict resolution in order to avoid misunderstanding that may create leniency and negative effects afterwards.
3. In future a comparative study may be conducted between public and Private Sector Colleges in order to get an insight of conflict management styles used by private sector and its relationship with their academic achievement.
4. A training session regarding conflict management style may be induced among principals so that they become fully aware of each style.
5. A qualitative study may be conducted to get a deeper understanding of principals' conflict management styles and the factors behind it.

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