

Indication of Connection Between Conflict Resolution Styles and Mental Wellbeing of Educators'

Prangya Paramita Biswal and Lucy Sonali Hembram

Utkal University

ABSTRACT

Increasing specialization and professionalization, coupled with the high degrees of work, independence over the past years, have increased the conflict budding in every sector. Conflict, if not properly managed, can lead to "stress, frustration, dissatisfaction and poor work performance. Poor mental health impacts individuals overall health, relationship with others, societal cost related to unemployment, poor work place productivity and many more. Teacher's mental health issues are important because that not only have a detrimental influence on them but also directly affect classroom outcomes. The main aim of the study was to examine the relationship between conflict resolution styles on mental wellbeing of educators. It also aimed to find out the significant predictors of Educators' mental wellbeing. The sample consisted of fifty subjects. The Rahim's scale for interpersonal conflict-handling style and Psychological Well-being Scale were used. The statistical tools used in this study were Correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results indicated significant relationship between conflict resolution style and mental wellbeing of Educators' and two sub scale of conflict resolution style namely compromise and collaboration were found to be the significant predictors of mental wellbeing. Results were discussed in the light of previous studies done in this area.

Keywords; Conflict Resolution Style, Mental Wellbeing, Collaboration, Compromise.

Addressing mental health is gradually being recognized as an important developmental issue, especially in the case of conflict-affected countries. Mental health is more than the absence of disease or disorder. It is defined as a state of complete mental wellbeing including social, spiritual, cognitive and emotional aspects. Mental health and wellbeing describes our mental state – how we are feeling and how well we can cope with day-to-day life. Mental health is defined by the WHO, as a state of mental and psychological wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Mental health is determined by a range of socioeconomic, biological and environmental factors.

Although there is no universal definition of conflict (Cox, 2001; Katielidou et al., 2012; Kelly, 2006), it can be described as "a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party" (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010, p. 373). In psychological literature the definition of conflict is "the process that begins when one party perceives that the other party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that he or she cares about" (Thomas, 1992). Although conflict can be destructive, it can also be beneficial when used as a source of renewal and creativity. Unmanaged or poorly managed conflicts create problems for the person or the group and generate a breakdown in trust. Hence, conflict management is one of the significant life skills. In other words, conflict resolution or conflict-handling is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently. Since conflicts are a natural part of the social life processes, it is important that people should understand conflicts and know how to resolve them. There are five significant ways to handle conflict namely accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising and competing (Rahim, 1983).

The accommodating style of conflict-handling is called 'I lose, you win' the fundamental premise of this strategy is that working toward a common purpose is more important than any of the peripheral goals and to appease others by downplaying conflict, thus protecting the fragile relationships. The accommodating strategy essentially entails giving the opposing side what it wants. The avoidance strategy seeks to put off conflict indefinitely. It is also called the 'No winners, no losers' strategy. The strategic philosophy of this style is to avoid conflict by withdrawing, sidestepping, or postponing. By dealing or ignoring the conflict, the avoider hopes that the problem gets resolved itself without a confrontation. Those who actively avoid

conflict frequently have low self-esteem or hold a position of low power. The collaborating style of conflict handling is also called the 'I win, you win' style. The fundamental premise of this style is that teamwork and cooperation helps everyone achieve their goal while also maintaining relationships. The philosophy of this approach is that the process of working through differences leads to creative solutions which will satisfy both parties' concerns. The compromising strategy typically calls for both parties of conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. It is also called the 'You bend, I bend' strategy. The fundamental premise of this strategy is winning something while losing a little is OK.

Continued conflict results in stressed employees. Consequently, "interpersonal conflict has been noted as one of the major sources of stress for nurses" (Rowe & Sherlock 2005, p. 243). Research shows that stressed people have less ability to focus, memory lapses, slow healing, and diminished nutritional uptake (Forte, 1997). Stress can produce psychosomatic illnesses such as stomachache, headache, depression, and anxiety. Conflict educes fear, repugnance, and irritability (Almost, 2006). It can eventually undermine an individual's self-esteem and confidence level (Almost, 2006; Kelly, 2006). Some specific conflict consequences may involve failing to return telephone messages or emails from patients or colleagues, tendency to isolate oneself, charting by wrote to avoid criticism, taking everything personal, and victim portrayal (Forte, 1997). Ahmad (2014) studied the work stress experienced by the teaching staff of university of Punjab in Pakistan. The study tended to examine the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity and attitudinal outcomes of the job The findings of the study suggested that there is a positive and significant relationship between role stress i.e. role conflict and role ambiguity and work stress however work stress is negatively and significantly associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the teaching staff of the university.

We are now in 2019, where every organization is running for maximizing their productivity while ignoring the mental health of employees. But a mentally unhealthy person neither beneficial for himself nor for the organization. So promoting mental health and wellbeing is important for individual, society, and the productivity of organization. Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon for every organization. To work in an organisation is to be in conflict and to take advantage of joint work requires conflict management. Conflict, if not properly managed, can ruin any organisation or institution. It can lead to "stress frustration, dissatisfaction and poor performance among employees and affect individual's overall performance. This is because poor mental health impacts individuals' overall health, their ability to work productively (if at all), their relationships with others, and societal costs related to unemployment. In teaching profession the impact of mental wellbeing can affect both the educators as well as the student. Very few research studies have done on the area of conflict resolution styles and mental wellbeing of educators so to get a clear picture on the above factor the present study examined the relationship between conflict resolution style and mental wellbeing of Educators. It also tried to find out the significant predictor/s of mental wellbeing.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1- To examine the relationship between conflict resolution styles and mental wellbeing of Educators'.
- 2- To find out the significant predictors of mental wellbeing of Educators'.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted correlational design and multiple regression analysis with independent variable being the Conflict resolution style and the dependent measure was the mental wellbeing.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 50 Educators' in the age group of 25-40 years. For selection of participant's purposive sampling method was used. Out of 83 responses 50 completed questionnaires were obtained. All educators' have more than one year of teaching experience in their respective teaching institutions.

TOOLS

Two questionnaires were used in this research. One was for conflict resolution styles and another was for mental wellbeing. In addition to this, the researcher also collected demographic information about the customers such as their name, gender, age and years of job experience.

Two tests were:-

- 1- The Rahim's scale for interpersonal conflict-handling style (Rahim & magner, 2011)
- 2- Psychological Well-being Scale. (Sahoo, 2000)

The Rahim's Scale for interpersonal Conflict-handling Style (Rahim & Magner, 2011) was used for the assessment of interpersonal conflict-handling style of different professionals. The scale consists of 25 items in the form of statements which are to be responded by the respondents. In the scale, there are 5 items each for assessing avoidance, competing, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating styles of handling interpersonal conflict. Subjects are required to respond to each item on a 5-point scale. The scale points are about the degree of agreeability of the subject with the statement indicated by never, seldom, sometimes, often and always which are scored as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

The Psychological wellbeing scale was developed by Fakir Mohan Sahoo (2000). It had 14 dimensions of well-being namely, Competence, physical health, freedom from anxiety, trust, social support, perception of control, happiness in family, effective coping, job involvement achievement and spiritual fulfilment. It was a seven point rating scale and the value of scores ranged from 1 to 7 for each dimension. All the items are scored on a reverse direction (like 7 becomes 1 and so on). The scale had been pilot tested and validated. Its reliability and validity were found to be satisfactory. The split half Cronbach alpha ranged from .85 to .92. The congruent validity was 0.87.

PROCEDURE

The researcher took prior permission and established adequate amount of rapport before administering the questionnaires. To collect data, the instruments, which had 14-item in mental wellbeing, 25-item in conflict resolution styles, and demographic form were administered (in English) on the subjects. Then the scoring was done. The total scores was the summation of all the positive and negative item scores. After the scoring was completed, the data were statistically analyzed by using SPSS, Correlation and multiple regression has been conducted to analyze the data.

Table-1 (Correlation between conflict resolution and mental wellbeing among Educaors')

		Mental wellbeing	Conflict resolution
Mental wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1	.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Conflict resolution	Pearson Correlation	.594**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50
**p<0.01(2-tailed).			

Table-1 shows the correlation between conflict resolution and mental wellbeing among Educators'. The analysis reveals that conflict resolution has significant positive co-relation with mental wellbeing ($r=.594$, $p<0.01$).

Table-2 (Inter-correlation among the measures of conflict resolution styles and mental wellbeing of educators').

		mentalwellbeing	avoidance	competition	compromise	accommodation	collaboration
mentalwellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1	.064	.019	.800**	.101	.790**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.660	.896	.000	.487	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
avoidance	Pearson Correlation	.064	1	-.064	.168	.321*	-.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.660		.660	.243	.023	.956
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
competition	Pearson Correlation	.019	-.064	1	.047	.092	-.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.896	.660		.745	.524	.846
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
compromise	Pearson Correlation	.800**	.168	.047	1	.130	.677**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.243	.745		.369	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
accommodation	Pearson Correlation	.101	.321*	.092	.130	1	.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.487	.023	.524	.369		.340
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50
collaboration	Pearson Correlation	.790**	-.008	-.028	.677**	.138	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.956	.846	.000	.340	
	N	50	50	50	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table-2 shows the inter-correlation between sub-scales of conflict resolution styles (Avoidance, competition, compromise, accommodation, collaboration) and mental wellbeing among Educators'. The analysis reveals that 2 sub-scales of conflict resolution styles (collaboration and compromise) has a significant and positive co-relation with mental wellbeing ($r=.790$, $r=.800$, $p<0.01$, $p<0.01$, respectively).

Table-3				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.869 ^a	.755	.727	6.88014
a. Predictors: conflict resolution style				

Table-3 shows the Regression results. The correlation of coefficient is .869, the R square is .755. Thus the result reveals that Conflict resolution style can explain about 75% of total variance in mental wellbeing.

Table-4 Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-32.309	9.289		-3.478	.001
	avoidance	-.022	.286	-.006	-.078	.938
	competetion	.038	.271	.011	.142	.888
	compormise	2.213	.472	.492	4.684	.000
	accomodation	-.122	.381	-.026	-.320	.751
	collaboration	2.002	.452	.462	4.427	.000

a. Dependent Variable: mental wellbeing

The coefficient table shows that two subscale of Conflict resolution styles namely compromise and collaboration are significant predictors of mental wellbeing. Compromise and collaboration has positive significant relationship with CL at 0.01 level that explains 49% and 46% respectively.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the relationship between conflict resolution styles and mental wellbeing of Educators' and to find out the significant predictors of mental wellbeing. The result revealed that conflict resolution is positively and significantly correlated with mental wellbeing. This indicated that people who are able to resolve their conflicts in an effective manner have better mental wellbeing than those who are unable to handle their conflict effectively. This may be due to the fact that conflict if not resolved properly give rise to the factors like, stress, anger, mental pressure, depression, aggression, argument with others, it may also hamper interpersonal relationships, which influences individuals mental wellbeing in a negative manner, and vice-versa. This finding supports the earlier findings done in this area by Sanaya (2017). The result also revealed that in case of Educators' 2 subscales of conflict resolution styles (collaboration & Compromise) has significant and positive co-relation with mental wellbeing. This might be due to the fact that in teaching profession they think about the betterment of both parties. The compromising strategy typically calls for both parties of conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. It is also called the 'You bend, I bend' strategy. The fundamental premise of this strategy is winning something while losing a little is OK. In teaching profession, Educators' are more of equal status, they are equally committed to goals, and they want their time to be saved by reaching intermediate settlements of complex issues and when goals are moderately important for both the parties. The study revealed that two subscales of conflict resolution style significantly predicts mental wellbeing.

According to research findings conflict resolution style has significant positive relationship with mental wellbeing. The stronger the educators' Conflict resolution the better is their mental wellbeing. Two subscales of conflict resolution styles namely collaboration and compromise were found to be the significant predictors of mental wellbeing.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The general finding of this study are important from the theoretical as well as applied point of view. Theoretically the result explicates factors such as different style of conflict resolution styles that could be studied more systematically in a framework of cause and effect relationship. Possible causal links can be hypothesized and rigorous experimental situations can be investigated later. In applied terms, specific feedbacks can be communicated for developing interventions to promote mental wellbeing in workplace and proper conflict resolution styles can be used by the educators' in order to resolve conflict and improve mental wellbeing and productivity. In academic sense this research will provide scientific literature about the relationship between conflict management and mental wellbeing.

In order to build a positive mental wellbeing the following conflict resolution styles can be used by educators'. They should use compromise and collaboration style of conflict handling. The collaborating style of conflict handling is also called the 'I win, you win' style. The fundamental premise of this style is that teamwork and cooperation helps everyone achieve their goal while also maintaining relationships. The philosophy of this approach is that the process of working through differences leads to creative solutions which will satisfy both parties' concerns. The compromising strategy typically calls for both parties of conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. It is also called the 'You bend, I bend' strategy.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

1. The sample size for the research was relatively small (N=50), due to the constraint of time and incomplete questionnaire.
2. The study was conducted by taking only one factor, conflict resolution style. Other factors, such as; gender, family support, support from colleagues and salary might be playing significant role in influencing mental wellbeing which could not be explored with the limited scope of the present study.
3. The samples were collected from a few schools and collages of urban areas only.

DIRECTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. In order to have a more authentic and objective result, a larger sample can be taken into consideration.
2. To get clearer picture other factors like gender, family support, support from colleagues and salary can also be taken up in future research to arrive at a more detailed picture on mental wellbeing.

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