



The Bilateral effect of Conflict Management styles and the Interpersonal Relationship

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Abstract

Most of the scholars believe that human is a Social Being which the social nature causes human to make relationships with others by which making relationships with various social aspects could be realized. Humans have to act based on the mental structure, upbringing conditions and the current situation of the environment in a range of communications which are available for them. Conflict is a phenomenon emerged in the organizations from many decades ago up to now which it is an unavoidable phenomenon in humans' life and it manifests in various forms. In fact, conflict is the individuals' inclination toward the communication which makes people compassionate toward each other – consequently they would think their interests are against with each other. In present paper, the observation about the Conflict management styles and the interpersonal relationship in Kerman University of Medical Sciences has been provided. The obtained results showed a significant difference exists between variables of conflict management styles and the interpersonal relationship with demographic variables.

Keywords: Conflict management styles, interpersonal relationship, mutual effect, relaxation, compulsion, lack of openness.

Introduction

The existence of the accurate communications in the organization is one of the important elements leading to the success in management filed. It has been proved that in case of no accurate communication in the organization, disorders could be resulted¹. Actually, communication is a true fact in any organization and it is reported that any manager spends his/her time to make communication². But in this relation it has to be stated that there are hedges in the communication field which the manager could gain information about them and identify them in a real world by which the accurate strategy to develop dynamism in the communication has been realized. The communications for a strategic and cohesive mechanism to improve the behaviors for the cooperation is particularly for solving the conflict which it has a positive effect on the ability of organizations to develop the effective interactions^{3,4}. The researchers declare the communication as the fundamental element of the conflict management⁵.

Generally, anything causes the disorder in transferring information between the sender and receiver is mentioned as the hedges in making communication⁶. According to the necessity of communication in the organizations, it is necessary for the managers to be informed of the hedges causing obstacles and disorders in their communication which they have to identify those hedges and try to void them⁷. The obtained results of the present paper is about the strategies of conflict management among the managers in the hospitals of Lorestan province showing a significant relationship between strategies of conflict management and the gender of individuals by which it is

reported that there is a significant relationship between the age of the individuals and the strategy of conflict management⁸.

Main body: The following characteristics put significant effect on the effectiveness of the interpersonal communications:

Transparency and Openness: In viewpoint of Samantha, Transparency and Openness mean what humans define about a special person verbally. The people who obsess with their daily work have low extent of the style "openness" which this leads to the conflict between them with others⁹.

Empathy: Empathy means both the receiver and sender of a message have a same feeling which they think they are in each other's shoes, so that in such a situation they could understand each other better. The humans with their emotional intelligence, consider their and others' emotions and feelings as the bases to adjust and control their relationships with others, and this characteristic leads to empathy by which people are encouraged to pay attention and consider other's interests⁵.

Support: An interpersonal relationship is such a relationship developed in a protective environment. The open and empathetic interpersonal communications could not continue for a long in an environment with threat and fear by which the discontinuity could be emerged eventually in this situation. If the staffs in low level be fired due to ignoring bans, in this case nothing would happen for the managers and it is reported that all the policies applied by the managers were deceptive policies causing the staffs get hopeless of support¹⁰.

It has been reported that a positive feeling about the general situation in communication filed is so vital and important for interaction between two or more individuals. In other words, lack of inclination by the individuals, or the sender of message leads to cancelation of the communication resulting the discontinuity¹¹.

Equality: The interpersonal communications are effective exactly while the equality realizes in the organizations. This does not mean that in the environment without index of equality, people could not communicate with each other¹². But to have such an effective relationship with others, a particular attention has to be paid on the index of equality and the common points.

Response and responsibility: In summary, the responsibility network orients the communications between the groups, as limits everything in the groups using the instructions. Generally, in the cultures which the responsibility is considered, the mutual relationships are observed more than unilateral relationships, and vice versa; in the cultures which the indices of response and responsibility are realized, the unilateral relationships are observed more than bilateral relationships¹³.

This is a reason showing the conflict as an unavoidable relationship with the job communications in the organizations¹¹.

The well deed behaviors include supporting others and considering their welfare, such behaviors expand the social protection and trust¹⁴.

Selfish people are desired to be admired and they like people respect them which this leads to the decrease of empathy among them and others¹⁵.

The selfish objectives are such effective elements resulting the conflict and aggression. In this relation, it has to be stated that well deed behaviors could be the reason for the change of the attitude toward the strategies based on self-respectfulness to the strategies which are based on empathy¹⁶. Personality influences the type of strategy for resolving the conflict among individuals through emotional, cognitive, and stimuli processes¹⁷.

Conflict management is conceptualized as the strategies involved in ending the conflict and it reduces the non-functional aspect and increases its functional aspects¹⁸.

The strategies of research: The strategies for conflict management in various situations: The first strategy is the strategy of competitiveness by which it is reported that if two persons or two groups desire to attain their demands with no cooperation, in this case they compete with each other. The second strategy is such a cooperation based on trust. This is in such a situation that people show good cooperation from themselves and they are desired to attain their demands, this strategy is such a win-win strategy. Here, all want to achieve

their demand and in this situation, the strategy of the cooperation based on trust is used¹⁹. The third strategy is the Avoidance strategy (loss-loss), actually loss is used in a situation while you are not inclined toward it and reaching to the demands which are not important for you, but anyway you are not intended to cooperate with each other. The fourth strategy is the strategy for resolving the conflict and it is called the compromise strategy (loss-win). Within the assumption of any difference, although the matter is not important for us, it is important for our opponent, and in such a situation we have to compromise to resolve the matter in favor of the opponent. Here we give opportunity to our opponent in order to make him/her prepared to conquer the deal in favor of us²⁰.

The fifth strategy is the strategy of conciliation (loss- loss or win-win). Conciliation is possible while each party gives score to another party, unless the problem would not be resolved. In case of conciliation, the cooperation is in an intermediate level which the people are desired to cooperate. Harold, Prince, and other colleagues mentioned the significant relationship between the communication and conflict systems¹⁷. Ashrafi et al in his research by the title of "the effect of organizational communication system on the conflict in the physical education offices in west Azerbayegan province", found out that the interpersonal conflicts in the physical education offices due to lack of freedom in making decision in making relationship and information is effective. For this, a necessary planning for implementing and substituting the accurate and effective organizational communication system has to be planned²¹.

Methodology

To peruse the hypotheses in present paper, a descriptive type of research was done. In this research, the questionnaire for the styles of conflict management was translated into Persian language and it was scrutinized by the specialists for several times, and then due to many questions in the main questionnaire, some of the questions were omitted from the questions of each style. To adjust the questionnaire for the interpersonal relationships, firstly most of the hedges in interpersonal relationships were identified and based on the literature mentioned in the articles, several questions represented which the accuracy and validity of such questions were perused by the professors in the management field, finally the questionnaire was distributed among the participants. The statistical society in present paper is involved of all the staffs and professors studied in the field of medical, dentistry and Paramedics in Kerman College. For sampling, 300 individuals and professors studied in the field of medical science were chosen which this was done under supervision of the health ministry. Within the method of cohesive class sampling and also based on the sampling formula ($n = \frac{z^2 s^2}{d^2}$), firstly a questionnaire was distributed among 50 staffs and professors randomly, and the standard deviation was determined 0.574 regarding the assurance level (95%) and error coefficient ($d=0.05$). As a result, 500 individuals were chosen for sampling.

For this, post several times distributing the questionnaires, 650 questionnaires were distributed which only a complete response was seen in 500 questionnaires showing 77% of questionnaires filled completely. It is reported that 41%, 29% of the participants were younger than 35 years old and 35-39 years old, respectively and the remained ones were all elder than 40 years old. 44% of them were male and the remained ones were female. 86.5% of the participants were staffs and the remained ones were member of broad, and 27.7%, 16.8%, and 20.9% of the participants, had less than 5 years, 5-9 years, 10-14 years and more than 15 years work experience, which the other participants had more than 15 years work experience. In this relation, 40.4% and 28.4% of the participants were member of medical and dentistry faculty and the others were working in Paramedics faculty. To peruse the effect of the variables like gender, age, work experience and/or the difference of the variables in the research among the staffs and members of broad, t-test has been used and ANOVA test has been used to peruse the significance of the difference in three faculties.

The conceptual framework of research (figure-1): i. The questionnaire of conflict management styles include the definitions like relaxation, compromise, avoidance, Coercion, encounter involving 25 items. ii. The questionnaire of hedges for interpersonal relationships include lack of protection, equality, lack of openness, lack of empathy, lack of response involving 22 items. iii. The coefficient of reliability for the questionnaires in table-1 and 2 has been shown:

Table-1
The questionnaire for the styles of conflict management

α chronbach	N of items
0.79	25

Table-2
The questionnaire for the hedges of interpersonal relationship

α chronbach	N of items
0.841	22

Results and Discussion

Findings: There is not a significant relationship between the variables of the research (the styles of conflict management and the hedges of interpersonal relationship) and demographic variables.

At 95% of assurance level using two-way t-test, the value of sig for none of the variables in the research had not any significant relationship with the variables like gender, age, the staff or the member of the broad (The statistical figures were avoided to be depicted here due to a large amount of the variables).

A significant relationship does not exist between the styles of conflict management and the hedges of interpersonal relationship by the participants in various faculties. For this, the homogenous test for variances about the variables in this research was done which the results are as following:

Table-3
Levene statistic, Df₁, Df₂, and Sig for all the styles of the conflict management

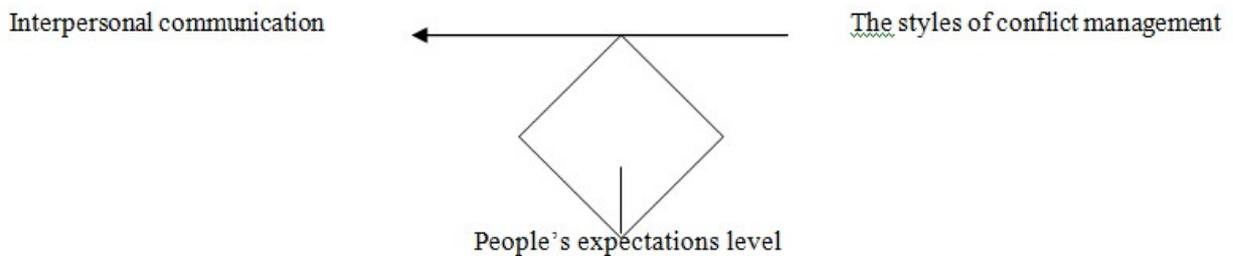
	Levene statistic	Df ₁	Df ₂	Sig
Lack of protection	0.772	2	497	0.463
Lack of Positivism	2.381	2	497	0.095
Lack of equality	1.278	2	497	0.281
Lack of openness	4.854	2	497	0.009
Lack of empathy	0.801	2	497	0.450
Lack of response	0.520	2	497	0.596
Coercion	3.333	2	497	0.038
Relaxation	3.737	2	497	0.026
Compromise	0.643	2	497	0.527
Encounter	0.736	2	497	0.480
Avoidance	2.277	2	497	0.105

As shown in table-3, three variables like lack of openness, coercion and relaxation do not have an equal variance, thus the test of Kruskal–Wallisoneway analysis of variance was done which its results are as following:

Table-4
The test of Kruskal–Wallis for three variables like lack of openness, coercion and relaxation

	Lack of openness	Coercion	Relaxation
χ^2	8.661	1.109	4.925
df	2	2	2
sig	0.013	0.574	0.085

Finally, it was clarified that only the variable of lack of openness was such a significant variable.



Thereafter, ANOVA test was done to peruse the difference in the variables of the research in three faculties which the results of it are as in table-5.

Table-5
ANOVA test for variables of the research in three faculties

	df	df	F	Sig
Lack of openness	In faculties	2	3.656	0.028
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		
Lack of equality	In faculties	2	3.504	0.021
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		
Lack of response	In faculties	2	4.165	0.217
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		
Lack of protection	In faculties	2	3.333	0.050
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		
Encounter	In faculties	2	3.034	0.050
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		
Lack of positivism	In faculties	2	3.412	0.013
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		
Avoidance of conflict	In faculties	2	4.414	0.001
	Among participants	497		
	Total	499		

The results of ANOVA test show that there is a significant difference between the seven variables like lack of openness, lack of equality, lack of response, lack of protection, Encounter, Lack of positivism, and avoidance of conflict in the faculties which a distinctive observation provided about each of these variables. Refer to following for this.

Table-6
The independent variable like lack of openness (Tam hane) regarding mean difference and sig

The independent variable: lack of openness (Tam hane)		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig
Faculty I	Faculty J		
Paramedics	medical, dentistry and Paramedics	-0.22137 -0.39316*	0.079 0.038
		-	-

Table-7
The independent variable like lack of equality (LSD) regarding mean and sig

The independent variable: lack of equality (LSD)		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig
Faculty I	Faculty J		
Paramedics	medical, dentistry and Paramedics	+0.22137* +0.39316*	0.037 0.030
		-	-

Table-8
The independent variable like lack of protection (LSD) regarding mean and sig

The independent variable: lack of protection (LSD)		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig
Faculty I	Faculty J		
Paramedics	medical, dentistry and Paramedics	-0.36083* -	0.027 -
		-0.38152*	0.001

Table-9
The independent variable: encounter (LSD) regarding mean and sig

The independent variable: encounter (LSD)		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig
Faculty I	Faculty J		
Paramedics	medical, dentistry and Paramedics	- +0.42170* +0.38164*	- 0.015 0.022

Table-10
The independent variable: lack of positivism (LSD) regarding mean and sig

The independent variable: lack of positivism (LSD)		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig
Faculty I	Faculty J		
Paramedics	medical, dentistry and Paramedics	-0.50110* - -0.43110*	0.000 - 0.001

Table-11
The independent variable: Avoidance of conflict (LSD) regarding mean and sig

The independent variable: Avoidance of conflict (LSD)		Mean difference (I-J)	Sig
Faculty I	Faculty J		
Paramedics	medical, dentistry and Paramedics	+0.36125* - -0.16084	0.040 - 0.345

According to table 6-11 at 95% of assurance level, the following conclusions could be attained:

The extent for the variable “lack of openness” in dentistry faculty is more than the extent of it in Paramedics faculty. The extent for the variable “lack of equality” in Paramedics faculty has a significant difference with the extent of it in medical and dentistry faculties. The extent for the variable “lack of protection” in dentistry faculty has a significant difference with the extent of it in medical and Paramedics faculties. There is a significant difference about the variable of encounter in medical faculties with dentistry and paramedics faculties. Here is a significant relationship about lack of positivism in dentistry faculty and paramedics and medical faculties. The estimation for avoidance of conflict in dentistry faculty has been reported more than the extent of it in medical faculty.

A significant correlation exists between the styles of conflict management and the hedges for the interpersonal relationships

by the participants in the faculty.

According to the obtained results of table-12, it could be perceived that there is a significant relationship in each of three faculties between the coercion style and all the hedges for interpersonal relationships. There is a negative relationship in each of three faculties between encounter style and all the hedges for interpersonal relationships. The relaxation style has not a significant relationship with lack of empathy, lack of equality, and lack of positivism in dentistry faculty, and in medical faculty, there is not a significant relationship between the compromise style and the hedges for interpersonal relationships and in paramedic faculty, there is a negative relationship between lack of protection and two other styles like lack of equality and lack of response. In this relation, it is reported that the compromise style in dentistry faculty has such a negative relationship with two other styles like lack of openness and lack of response²¹.

Table-12
Spearman correlation coefficients about the variables of research in any faculty

Spearman ranked correlation coefficient	Lack of protection	Lack of positivism	Lack of equality	Lack of openness	Lack of empathy	Lack of response	Coercion	Relaxation	Compromise	Encounter	Avoidance of conflict
Lack of protection	1.000 1.000 1.000	0.542* 0.612* 0.51*	0.302* 0.351** 0.513***	0.578* 0.656** 0.409***	0.671* 0.514** 0.715***	0.421* 0.674** 0.508***	0.317* 0.422** 0.266***	-0.309* -0.560** -0.213***		-0.479* -0.383** -0.295***	
Lack of positivism		1.000 1.000 1.000	0.712* 0.253** 0.680***	0.583* .714** 0.317***	0.761* 0.633** 0.642***	0.317* 0.444** 0.501***	0.336* 0.496** 0.305***			-0.463* 0.145**	
Lack of equality			1.000 1.000 1.000	0.545* 0.769** 0.340***	0.456* 0.665** 0.830***	0.450* 0.713** 0.416***	0.269* 0.583 0.289***	-0.297* -0.320*** -0.418***		-0.323* -0.478** -0.207***	
Lack of openness				1.000 1.000 1.000	0.638* 0.830** 0.619***	0.578* 0.801** 0.405***	0.291* 0.411** 0.185***	-0.306* -0.603** -0.236***		-0.523* -0.519** -0.314***	
Lack of empathy					1.000 1.000 1.000	0.554* +0.630** 0.328***	0.261* 0.363** 0.472***	-0.410* -0.424**		-0.693* -0.322** -0.407***	
Lack of response						1.000 1.000 1.000	0.237* 0.386**	-0.429 -0.680** -0.497***		-0.421* -0.612** -0.353***	+0.233**
Coercion							1.000 1.000 1.000	-0.327* -0.345** -0.382***		-0.169* -0.149** -0.232***	-0.435***
Relaxation								1.000 1.000 1.000	0.370* 0.362***	0.547* 0.563** 0.751***	0.344* 0.294***
Compromise									1.000 1.000 1.000	0.329* 0.623**	0.391**
Encounter										1.000 1.000 1.000	
Avoidance of conflict											1.000 1.000 1.000

Only the significant correlation coefficients are used, *: medical faculty, **: dentistry faculty, ***: paramedic:***

Table-13
The mean of each of the variables in the research in all three faculties

Variables of research	Medical faculty		Dentistry faculty		Paramedic faculty	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Lack of protection	202	3.2298	142	2.6670	156	3.8443
Lack of positivism	202	3.4487	142	2.0684	156	3.0635
Lack of equality	202	2.5654	142	2.8455	156	3.8538
Lack of openness	202	3.0684	142	3.4091		2.6865
Lack of empathy	202	2.9394	142	3.2487	156	3.2051
Lack of response	202	2.8718	142	3.1000	156	2.8974
Coercion	202	2.9004	142	2.9879	156	3.2051
Relaxation	202	2.8364	142	2.4045	156	2.9840
Compromise	202	3.3333	142	3.5528	156	2.8051
Encounter	202	3.3654	142	2.7909	156	2.9455
Avoidance of conflict	202	3.1487	142	3.9129	156	3.7692

According to table-13, it could be perceived that the most important styles for conflict management in medical faculty are such as encounter, compromise, and avoidance leading to the hedges in interpersonal relationships like lack of positivism, and lack of protection, which in dentistry faculty, the most important styles for conflict management are reported as avoidance, compromise, and coercion leading to the hedges in interpersonal relationships like lack of openness, lack of empathy and lack of response²². Finally about the paramedic faculty, it could be concluded that the most important styles for conflict management are like avoidance, relaxation, and coercion leading to the hedges in interpersonal relationships like lack of equality, lack of protection and lack of empathy²³.

In this relation, a hypothesis is represented whereby it could be stated that a significant relationship exists between the staffs' expectations and the styles of the conflict management as well as the hedges in making relationship²⁴.

According to table-17 and 18, it could be perceived that the mean for the staffs' expectations in paramedic and medical faculties is more than the mean for the staffs' expectations in dentistry faculty which this could be interpreted in a way that with the increase of staffs' expectations, the feelings like lack of positivism, lack of empathy and lack of equality have been increased in the medical and paramedic faculties, but in dentistry faculty, due to the fact that the staffs' expectations are so low, so that the variable for expectation has not brought about any hedge in communication²⁵. Also, it could be perceived that, however, staffs' expectations have been increased, their perception is in such a way that the styles like coercion and force have been used more to control conflict²⁶.

Table-14
The staffs' expectations in medical faculty

	Medical faculty			
	N	Mean	Max	Mean
High expectation	202	2.40	5.00	3.7654

Table-15
The staffs' expectations in Dentistry faculty

	Dentistry faculty			
	N	Mean	Max	Mean
High expectation	142	1.00	4.20	2.6624

Table-16
The staffs' expectations in Paramedic faculty

	Paramedic faculty			
	N	Mean	Max	Mean
High expectation	156	2.00	5.00	3.2500

Table-17
Spearman correlation coefficient for medical faculty

Spearman correlation coefficient		Lack of positivism	Lack of protection	Coercion and force
		High expectation	ρ	05.49
	Sig	0.001	0.035	0.005
	N	202	202	202

Table-18
Spearman correlation coefficient for paramedic faculty

spearman correlation coefficient		Lack of equality	Coercion and force
		High expectation	ρ
	Sig	0.000	0.023
	N	156	156

Conclusion

It seems that if the managers are interested in the styles like encounter and compromise and their ultimate goal be avoidance of conflict, this causes the staffs feel lack of positivism and lack of protection. It is stated that if managers beside the styles like compromise and avoidance, apply the two other styles like coercion and force in the conflict management, in such a situation the staffs would feel the hedges like lack of empathy, lack of openness and lack of equality in their relationship.

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