

Analysis of Conflict Management Strategies: Enhancing the Social Value System

Mehmet Ekin Vaiz¹, Zehra Altınay² and Fahriye Altınay³

¹Near East University, Northern Cyprus, Mersin 10 Turkey

^{2,3}Faculty of Education, Societal Research and Development Center, Near East University,
Northern Cyprus, Mersin 10 Turkey

E-mail: ¹<mehmetekinvaiz@gmail.com>, ²<zehra.altinay@neu.edu.tr>,
³<fahriye.altinay@neu.edu.tr>

KEYWORDS Anthropology. Conflict Management Strategies. Education Management. Social Value

ABSTRACT The aim of this study, which is oriented towards determining the intentions of the scientific studies on Conflict Management within Education Management and Supervision Department, is to evaluate the studies on Conflict Management in terms of content analysis. This is a descriptive study based on a screening model. The data for this study was collected via conducting a document review. Thirty Masters' theses and three PhD theses published between 2008 and 2014 were accessed from the National Thesis Archive of the Higher Education Council and reviewed. It was found that the majority of the studies were at Masters level. They focus mostly on the Conflict Management Strategies of Managers during the period 2008-2009. They mostly carried out experimental studies using a quantitative method and scaled questionnaires are the preferred data collection tool. The focus of these studies relies on the themes of social values, conflict resolution, management strategies and self-concept.

INTRODUCTION

Healthy self-concept plays a great role in social values. In the development of the societies, it is crucial to acquire human development through value education. In this respect, conflict resolution strategies make societies understand the nature of value systems and become an opportunity to enhance the societal structure. Therefore, concentrating on conflict resolution strategies is an alternative way to make a value based systems in society. As social equity and national unity, democratic spirit, solidarity, equality makes a tolerance to resolve conflicts in enhancing personal integrity for the society. When the value system is established, conflict resolution in education becomes a medium for the quality of education (Baker 2015). There are a lot of different perspectives about conflict management but three main steps of successful conflict management can be summarized as knowledge, attitudes and skills (McCorkle and Reese 2016: 1). While all studies on conflict management deal with concepts related to the issue, they also emphasize the inevitability of conflict at individual or organizational level. Although literature studies pay attention on conflict management, this study puts forward to human development through value education as regards to the conflict management in terms of anthropological and sociological implications

within the society (Salomon 2006; Manatos et al. 2015).

Conflict is an inevitable concept in every context of human interaction (Karip 2013:1). In today's world, especially in big companies, a lot of problems occur between workers. These problems may occur in a "Cold war" manner, which can be defined as a situation of negative peace (Lutmar and Miller 2016: 9). There are various opinions and thought movements in regards to the definition of organization and its developmental process. Regardless of how an organization is analyzed, either through the Classical Organization Theory of Max Weber or via the Neo-classical Organization Theory, one can clearly see the existence of conflict as data. The common point, where various thought movements on organizations meet, is that conflict within organization should be kept at the lowest level and cooperation, harmony and productivity should be realized as organizational ideals (Aydin 2013:153).

Is it possible for any group to work in full harmony forever? If considering the long history of conflict the answer is clearly no. As J.C. Scott (1995) states in his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, an old Ethiopian proverb says, "Clever peasant kneel down on behalf of his grand master and farts quietly." When one mentions the term "conflict", one should be aware of how far one goes for the

beginning of this problem in the history of mankind. The idea, which accepts communication as a term, which stands in the center of conflict, there are a lot of different theories and practices for conflict management (Clarke and Peterson 2016: 2). Eventually, today's scientific perspective leads one not to hate conflicts and not to ignore them, but to lead them. "Is it possible for any group to work in full harmony forever?" The answer to this question will directly influence the perspective of the concept of organizational conflict. Employees of many organizations, including education institutions and companies, express their concerns regarding the incompatibility and negative energy within organizations and relate this mostly to their own unluckiness or bad career choices. Moreover, according to some resources, managers spend forty percent of their time trying to resolve the conflicts of their staff (Baskerville 1993; Karim 2013: Preface). In the circumstances of capitalist modernity, conflicts are also related to the psychology of individuals. "*Ruthless competition and avarice is very destructive for our serenity as a member of society, and almost everybody has fear, depression and lack of self-confidence in his or her life*" (Chomsky 2013: 37). Although humans are willing to think that education systems and schools are in a key position to manage conflicts in society and also for teaching conflict management skills to future generations, there are some writers like Ivan Illich who claim that education systems and schools are the main source of class conflicts and authoritarian mentality, which destroys free thinking and creativity (Illich 2014: 15). In the progress of education policymaking, writers like Illich can be found to be too much philosophical. "*It is unusual for philosophers to be directly invited to participate in processes of policymaking*" (McLaughlin 2000: 441; Winstanley 2013: 26). In the case of conflict management and education, the researchers believe that both philosophical ideas and policymaking should be used in order to improve conflict resolution and management in education and society.

Both concepts of organization and conflict can show differences according to their perspectives. According to Mayer, the concept of conflict in daily use involves meanings such as violence, destruction, grudges, fights and war (Mayer 1995). It is very natural for thought movements with different perspectives towards or-

ganizations to view conflict in organizations differently as well. The existence of conflict, from bureaucratic theory, is seen as proof of deterioration and downfall in organizations, and the failure of management at planning and controlling stages. Within human relations, however, it is thought of as the proof of failure and negativity when developing appropriate norms within a group (Aydin 2013: 153).

Henricks defines conflicts at three stages. The first stage is seen as daily routine problems. The opposition between parties' increases and it becomes more difficult to solve the problem at the second stage. At the third stage, opposing sides focus on doing physical or psychological harm rather than winning or become fully detached (Henricks 1991; Karip 2013: 11). Understanding the conflict and identifying which of these stages the conflict is at requires the assessment of the following, that is, problem resolution processes, problem resolution behavior, the relationship with the other party, communication, goals, approach to the other side, decision-making manner, the necessity for third parties involvement and possibility of interference, potential outcomes of the conflict, and the possibility of getting out of control during the conflict process (Karip 2013: 12).

The inevitability of conflict as a concept for an organization brought conflict management about as a methodology. Thus, conflict management, with its own goals for the sake of the organization and the systems within the organization, is natural. The important point here is that, different from Classical Organization Theory and Neo-classical Organization Theory, the contemporary approaches do not consider conflict as a pathological case to be prevented. Rather, they aim to benefit from the energy originating from the conflict for the interest of the organization. The significant point here is whether the participants of the conflict are motivated to work with the system or destroy it (Aydin 2013: 155).

The research has already mentioned that with the contemporary approach, the main purpose of conflict management is to orient conflict in a way that would benefit the organization rather than destroying the conflict. Perhaps the most important step to be followed towards this goal is to train organization members about conflict management before conflict arises, and thus, prevent conflict from escalating. It is important

for members of an organization to openly talk about conflict, discuss what it is and learn about the strategies and tactics that ameliorate it, in a way that would be beneficial for all members before it is needed (Aydin 2013: 158).

A movement called “A Possibility View” opposes the attempts that are motivated by drawing the borders of conflict. It argues that the suggested global qualified applications and principles for defining and managing conflict will be invalid on their own (Thomas and Bennis 1972: 20; Aydin 2013: 159).

An approach that defines conflict as a process requiring continuity with the mutual interaction of the units within or outside an organization was suggested by Kenneth Thomas. In this model, the event originates from the relationship between the parties. The party who believes that he or she is obstructed on any issue reacts in a vengeful way to the other party and this continues with chain-like reactions (Blake et al. 1964: 18; Aydin 2013: 160).

The “Constructive View” towards conflict defines conflict based on the conditions that influence human behavior. Communication problems arising from the bureaucratic relations between units within an organization can be in this category. Moreover, an individual’s personality features or positive and negative social norms, which may influence the productivity within the organization, can also be important factors of conflict (Aydin 2013).

While discussing conflict in organizations, the most significant point to be highlighted in the literature of conflict in organizations is the shift from the concept of “conflict to be avoided” towards the concept of “conflict to be managed”. Perhaps the organizations had to carry out certain assessments in light of their almost 100 years of experience in order to realize this shift. One of the most important of these is the inevitability of conflict in an organization. All organizations face conflict in certain conditions regardless of the organizational structure and the human material involved. Another significant finding is related to the possibility of orienting the concept of conflict, which is acknowledged as inevitable for an organization, rather than against it. From this point on, organizations are categorized not as places with “good conflict” or “bad conflict”, but rather as “organizations that manage conflict nicely” or “organizations that manage conflict badly”. At this

point, “Effective Conflict Management” creates, a whole methodology leading to parallel constructive approaches such as “Win-Win”, which in turn transforms conflict into a bonus for the organization from a risky, problematic issue.

Objective of the Study

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the studies on Conflict Management through content analysis. In this regard, helping to identify the categories of studies on Conflict Management, and revealing the dimensions of this issue are the main purposes of this study. In this respect, this content analysis creates a road map of diffusing value education and conflict resolution in primary schools in order to construct a model in society for anthropological and sociological implications from early ages.

METHODOLOGY

The current research is a descriptive study based on a screening model evaluating the studies on conflict management through content analysis (Cresswell 2005). Data for the research has been collected through a document analysis method. 30 Master and three PhD Theses published between 2008 and 2014 have been reviewed through the National Theses Archive of the Higher Education Council.

The studies reviewed in this research have been categorized based on their research type, topic areas, publication years, research models, methods used in research, data collection tools, and sample and population. The collected data was analyzed through descriptive statistical (percentage and frequency) methods. The following criteria have been considered while analyzing data, that is, publication type of the reviewed studies, distribution of studies based on topic areas, distribution of studies based on publication years, distribution of studies based on the universities published, distribution of studies based on method type, and distribution of studies based on data collection tools (Denzin and Lincoln 2002; Miles and Huberman 1994).

The study explores themes based on frequency and percentages as clustering. There is an aim of conducting a thematic analysis based on the ladder of analytical abstraction. The ladder of analytical abstraction becomes a framework in the methodology by summarizing and

packaging data, repackaging and aggregating the data, and developing and testing propositions within the explanatory framework. Verification of categories was done by shared cross checking of researchers' findings, and matrix analysis to establish validity and reliability (Miles and Huberman 1994).

This analysis created a base on how to diffuse value education and healthy self-concept in primary school context in order to construct model framework for the welfare of the society.

FINDINGS

Theses written at postgraduate level and publications on Conflict Management have been reviewed for this study in an effort to determine the research trends in the field. This section presents findings from the studies on Conflict Management in parallel to the aim of this study.

Findings Regarding the Publication Type of the Studies on Conflict Management

It can be seen from Table 1 that ninety percent of the studies are Master's theses, while ten percent are PhD theses. Hence, it is observed that studies on Conflict Management are mostly done at Masters level.

Table 1: Publication type of the studies

Type of publication	F	%
Master Thesis	30	90
PhD Thesis	3	10
Total	33	100

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Studies on Conflict Management based on Topic Areas

It can see in Table 2 that fifty-four percent of the studies on Conflict Management focus on the topic of the Conflict Management Strategies of Managers. The second trend is shown to be Conflict Management and Communication Skills. It is a common approach in the literature to evaluate the issue of Conflict Management through

Table 2: Distribution of studies based on topic areas

Topic areas	F	%
<i>Conflict Management Strategies of Managers</i>	18	54
<i>Conflict Management and Leadership Relationship between Conflict Management and Organisation Culture and Organisation Climate</i>	1	3
<i>Relationship between Conflict Management, Job Satisfaction, Self-Satisfaction and Gender</i>	2	6
<i>Conflict Management and Interpersonal Communication Skills</i>	2	6
<i>Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management on the basis of Managers</i>	4	12
Other	3	9
Total	33	100

managers. It can be easily observed that most researchers assume that the position of "Manager" is the key position in managing and solving the conflict.

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Studies on Conflict Management based on Publication Years

It can be seen from Table 3 that the highest number of studies on Conflict Management was carried out between 2008-2009. However, it is also possible to say that studies decreased numerically between 2011 and 2013.

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Studies on Conflict Management based on Published Journals

When Table 4 is reviewed, it is possible to say that the highest number of studies was done at Yeditepe and Maltepe University. It can be said that these two institutions are in leading positions as they have more publications. The reasons why specially these universities have the lead position in this area is not the subject of this article, but by regarding the importance of conflict management by means of education policies and institutional progress. The universities should be congratulated for such efforts.

Table 3: Distribution of studies based on the year of publication

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Issue	1	2	9	9	3	1	2	1	4
%	3	6	27	27	9	3	6	3	12

Table 4: Distribution of articles based on journals

<i>Name of journal</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
T.C. Maltepe University	5	15
T.C. Sakarya University	3	9
T.C. Usak University	1	3
T.C. Ege University	1	3
T.C. Yeditepe University	6	18
T.C. Beykent University	2	6
T.C. Mehmet Akif Ersoy University	1	3
T.C. Celal Bayar University	1	3
T.C. Firat University	1	3
Orta Dogu Teknik University	1	3
Gazi University	1	3
Eskisehir Anadolu University	3	9
T.C. Gazi Antep University	2	6
Yildiz Teknik University	1	3
T.C. Akdeniz University	1	3
T.C. Okan University	1	3
Total	33	100

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Studies on Conflict Management based on their Methods

It is an interesting finding that all of the studies on Conflict Management adopted quantitative methods, and that none of them adopted a mixed method approach. In this regard, it would be scientifically beneficial if future studies would at least adopt a different methodological approach (Table 5).

Table 5: Distribution of studies based on their methodological approaches

<i>Methodological approaches</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Quantitative method	33	100
Qualitative method	0	0
Mixed method	0	0
Total	33	100

All of the studies of this topic define themselves as descriptive studies, and they measure the relationship of certain data regarding Conflict Management (Table 6).

Table 6: Distribution of studies according to their methods

<i>Method</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Experimental study	0	0
Descriptive study	33	100
Methodological study	0	0
Literature review screening	0	0
Total	33	100

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Studies on Conflict Management based on Data Collection Tools

The researchers have already stated that studies on Conflict Management predominantly used quantitative methods, and it can be seen from Table 7 that scales are the most frequently used data collection tools followed by questionnaires.

Table 7: Distribution of studies according to data collection tools

<i>Data collection tool</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Scale	27	81
Questionnaire form	6	19
Semi-structured interview form	0	0
Personal information form	0	0
Observation form	0	0
Document	0	0
Achievement test	0	0
Problem scenarios	0	0
Total	33	100

DISCUSSION

If a short review was done, research can highlight the most significant issue in the literature of conflict in organizations as the shift from the concept of “conflict to be avoided” towards the concept of “conflict to be managed”. Perhaps organizations had to carry out certain assessments in light of their many experiences in order to realize this shift. One of the most important of these is the inevitability of conflict in the organization. All organizations face conflict in certain conditions regardless of the organizational structure and the human material involved. Another significant finding is related to the possibility of orienting the concept of conflict, which is acknowledged as inevitable, for the organization, rather than against it. From this point on, organizations are categorized not as places with “good conflict” or “bad conflict”, but rather as “organizations that manage conflict nicely” or “organizations that manage conflict badly” (Winstanley 2013). At this point, “Effective Conflict Management” creates a whole methodology leading to parallel constructive approaches, such as “Win-Win”, which in turn transforms conflict into a bonus for the organization, from a risky, problematic issue (McLaughlin 2000). This study has original value and contribution to create a framework on conflict management and resolu-

tion in order to integrate primary school context for diffusing healthy self-concept and value education for the welfare of the society (Danesh 2006).

CONCLUSION

This study is different from other studies in terms of conflict management with supporting a framework on conflict resolution and value education. Conflict management is definitely very important in all sectors but when one talks about education, one must also consider that within the education institutions there are two objectives by means of conflict management. First is to manage conflicts within the education institution as much as possible, and second is to teach better conflict management skills to the future generations. Without the first objective, actually it would not be possible to teach or learn anything effectively in education institutions. The second step will specifically improve and guarantee the future generations to deal, solve and use the energy of conflict positively for better raised education and generations.

REFERENCES

- Aydin M 2013. *Egitimde Örgütsel Davranis*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi.
- Baker FS 2015. Managing diversity in education: Language, policies, pedagogies. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 18(1): 127-130. DOI: 10.1080/13670050.2014.928102
- Chomsky N 2013. *Demokrasi ve Egitim*. Istanbul: Bgst Yayinlari.
- Clarke T, Peterson TR 2016. *Environmental Conflict Management*. California: Sage.
- Creswell JW 2005. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. New Jersey: Pearson.
- Danesh HB 2006. Towards an integrative theory of peace education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 3: 55-78.
- Denzin NK, Lincoln YS 2003. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.
- Illich ID 2014. *Okulsuz Toplum*. Istanbul: Sule Yayinlari.
- Karip E 2013. *Çatisma Yönetimi*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayinlari.
- Lutmar C, Miller B 2016. *Regional Peacemaking and Conflict Management*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Manatos MJ, Sarrico CS, Rosa MJ 2015. The integration of quality management in higher education institutions: A systematic literature review. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*. DOI: 10.1080/14783363.2015.1050180.
- Mayer RJ 1995. *Conflict Management, The Courage to Confront*. 2nd Edition. Columbus, Ohio: Battelle Press.
- McCorkle S, Reese MJ 2016. *Personal Conflict Management: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge Press.
- McLaughlin TH 2000. Philosophy and educational policy: Possibilities, tensions and tasks. *Journal of Education Policy*, 15(1): 441-457. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/026809300413446>.
- Miles MB, Hubermans AM 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: SAGE.
- Salomon G 2006. Does peace education really make a difference? *Journal of Peace Psychology*, 12: 37-48.
- Scott JC 1995. *Tahakküm ve Direnis Sanatlari*. Istanbul: Ayrinti Yayinevi.
- Smith R (Ed.) 2013. *Education Policy, Philosophical Critique*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell Press.
- Winstanley C 2013. Alluring ideas: Cherry picking policy from around the world. In: Richard Smith (Ed.): *Education Policy, Philosophical Critique*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell Press, pp. 12-33.