

## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY TEACHERS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Special education is an emerging field at national priority; it makes extensive demands on the teachers of the special children. We are aware that teaching the children with disabilities is the most challenging area of social concern. According to WHO 10% of the total population is considered to be suffering from disabilities. To train this large number of population, to make them useful members of the society, intelligent and consistent approaches are necessary. The active participation of the trained teachers in this endeavor is demanded at every level to ensure minimization of the hardships of the underprivileged and the handicapped by equipping them with proper education. Keeping in view the pressing demand of the society this study is an effort as a situational analysis for providing facilities to the teachers of the children with disabilities regarding management of conflicts. Teachers of special education face conflicts because of teaching people with different abilities. For this, researcher identified types, causes and conflicts management strategies adopted by teachers of special education. The population for the current study comprised of teachers of special education schools in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Random sampling technique was used to collect data. To identify conflict management strategies researcher used Farooqi Organizational Conflict Management Inventory (FOCI). Data was analyzed by using statistical methods. The beneficiaries of the will be study teachers, management parents and students with respect to special education.*

**Keywords:** Conflict Management, Teachers, Special Education

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In parent-child interaction and development of the child education plays a vital role. Parents of special children often fall behind regarding the special needs of their special children, often ignore classes, vaccinations and their clinical appointments consequently low quality relationships and do not avail enough opportunities to learn efficiently all these gaps supported and felt by parents to the same ratio. (Filmer, 2008)

Recent developments in diagnosis, treatment and schooling of students with a variety of diverse abilities have transformed the field of special education. Children with learning disorders are no longer ignored but provided opportunities to overcome their handicaps so that they could become self-supporting and productive members of society. Scholarly research on many broad fronts has contributed to transform special education into growing and useful discipline particularly of classroom teachers. Emerging trends in teaching methods, medical treatments and new assistive devices need to be disseminated widely among professional educators to enable them to provide better services to learning disabled and handicapped children. Conflict is a piece of regular day to day existence (Boulding, 1963).

Now and again the results from strife can make inventive arrangements; be that as it may, struggle left unchecked can bring about negative results. Peace making is a strategy joined to encourage a positive or if nothing else a pleasant result (Katz & Lawyer, 1993; Mauer, 1991).

The Need to Study conflicts in Special Education Conflict Special training has establishes in struggle. For a really long time, numerous uncommon youngsters were denied access to schools. This made clash eject between school division work force and guardians. At last, the contention over the privilege to training for a youngster with incapacities was settled with the help of Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) formerly sanctioned as the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act of 1975 (EACHA).

There is a need to dig all the more profoundly into the subject of refereeing in a custom curriculum at the school level. Data is accessible in regards to the formal components of a custom curriculum peace promotion, under the headings of intercession and due process. Be that as it may, as to the school setting field, data is inadequate. In a few investigations, principals have offered understanding into hierarchical refereeing, implanting data into their portrayals of general administration strategies in schools. Be that as it may, none of these procedures has particularly tended to a custom curriculum nor have others' suppositions been looked for at the school level aside from those of principals (Cascadden, 1998; Marshall et al., 1998).

Guardians of youngsters with handicaps live more strongly the experience of school initiation, in light of the fact that deficient data or conflicting backings from state foundations influence them to feel defenseless. The vast majority of these guardians need mainstreaming school mix and support for them as guardians yet in addition as first teachers (Gliga & Popa, 2010). The ignorance regarding the education of special child as his basic right is one of the significant factor.

Studies demonstrate that some of the nations are mounting early intervention gets ready for social administrations for youngsters with inabilities and their families by keeping in mind the end goal to expand the odds that these kids are instructively and socially incorporated. The part of the family in advancing early social and passionate mentalities and proper conduct is essential for animating the capability of youngsters with inabilities (Baily & Bruder, 2005). In this regard, some researches (Guimond, Wilcox & Lamorey, 2008) focused on the beliefs of parents regarding protective and educational interventions with respect to the role of the environment on regarding the development of the child.

### **Rationale of the Study**

The reason for this investigation was to create suggestions for peace promotion systems for the educators of a specialized curriculum. The proposed result of this request is to create proposals and suggestions for school-based peace promotion keeping in mind the end goal to influence exceptional youngsters to fulfill and autonomous in order to make special children satisfy and independent.

### **Need of the Study**

In order to get maximum output from the utilized resources in shape of money, man and material it is the need of the hour to decrease or remove the hurdles which influence the work productivity or intended outcomes due to conflicts. So the current study is regarded as a basic need in order to get maximum positive outcome to achieve intended learning outcomes in special education schools to make the children productive citizen.

## **Significance of the Study**

The current study will be helpful in identification of types of conflicts, causes of conflicts and the strategies used by working staff in special education schools to manage conflict. This will serve as a situational analysis in development of conflict management mechanism in special education schools. In this way special education schools can better meet the needs of working staff, parents and the special students.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Problems in Special Education Conflict Management**

A legitimate perspective was the point of convergence of a great part of the contention writing, both in an authentic and current setting. Research and analysis on a custom curriculum strife revolved around due process hearings and intervention. A couple of creators handled clash among grown-ups in the school setting, yet even less tended to a specialized curriculum particularly. A significant part of the critique adjusted general hierarchical clash to the school setting.

### **Defining Conflict and Conflict Management**

Conflict occurs everywhere in our life whether inside or outside the organization. Due to increase of conflict in and outside organizations it is catching attention of various academic scholars. (Cronin & Weingart, 2007; Gibson & Callister, 2010; Morris-Conley & Kern, 2003; Li, Chun, Ashkanasy, & Ahlstrom, 2012; Schotter & Beamish, 2011; Shelton & Darling, 2004).

Researchers added literature by conducting researches regarding positive consequences of conflict. (Rahim, 2011); on the other hand some studies showed negative consequences of conflict. (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011).

Particularly, positive or negative outcomes are not consequences conflict itself to organizations but greatly depends upon the personal awareness of the employee and the importance of conflict and conflict management tactics. (Rahim, 2011).

Fundamentally, it is said that conflict is not having undeviating connection to positive or negative outcomes. The positive consequences of conflict greatly depends upon the style or skill of managing conflict and negative consequences of conflict is the result of weak or low expertise in managing conflict. (Barki & Hartwick, 2001).

Conflict makes a positive contribution by the employees who showed high performance according to research studies, whereas the employees who showed low performance avoid conflict and a big reason of negative outcomes of conflict which consequently show less productive performance. (Desivilya, Somech, & Lidgoster, 2010; Lester, Parnell, & Carraher, 2010; Zhang, Cao, & Tjosvold, 2011).

### **Managing Special Education Conflict: The Teacher's Point of View**

Dyches, Thompson, Murdick, and Gartins (2002) research work was reviewed in answer to the reality that specialized encouragement for students arisen to a small degree in the parent interviews and to a small degree in the teacher workgroups. Also, the research studies did not shed light on work with respect to teachers and school-based special education conflict.

### **Objectives**

1. To identify demographics of the teachers of special education schools such as age, job experience, marital status etc.

2. To explore causes of conflicts.
3. To investigate types of conflicts.
4. To investigate conflict management styles adopted by the teachers of special education schools.

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. Integrating conflict management style is adopted by the teachers of special education schools.
2. Obliging conflict management style is adopted by the teachers of special education schools.
3. Compromising conflict management style is adopted by the teachers of special education schools.
4. Avoiding conflict management style is adopted by the teachers of special education schools.
5. Dominating conflict management style is adopted by the teachers of special education schools.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The focus of this research was to investigate the conflict management used by special education teachers. The portion of methodology is based on phases of current research study that phase one includes introduction, review of related literature, development of conceptual on the basis of theoretical framework, phase two was based on instrumentation and phase three includes data collection, data analysis, findings, conclusions and finally recommendations.

The current study was descriptive in nature and data was personally collected by researcher after permission through conflict management inventory that was based on a five point scale.

#### **3.1. Sample**

##### **3.1.1. Selecting the Participants**

Creswell (1994) expressed "the possibility of subjective research is to intentionally choose witnesses that will best answer the examination question". The members should reveal insight into the wonders of intrigue (Creswell, 1998).

Association did not happen crosswise over gatherings. The educator work bunches were hung on a particular date in a joint setting which permitted collaboration inside the gathering/gatherings of instructors. How the writing was chosen is firmly identified with the way toward choosing members. Ogawa and Malen (1991) and Gersten and Baker (2000) saw the information gathered from the writing combination as contribution from an extra arrangement of partners educated about the wonders of secrecy.

#### **3.2. Sampling Technique**

According to the nature of study, researcher used random sampling technique in which each and every individual in the population is having equal chance of participation.

#### **3.3. Instrument**

Farooqi Organizational Conflict Management Inventory (FOCI) as a tool of research was used to identify the conflict management styles of the academic staff of sampled universities. This inventory is based on 34 items under five conflict management strategies.

After the opinion of the experts five items out of 39 items of the described scale was shortlisted which h were showing low correlation with respect to intended standards. The Chronbach Alpha (co-relation value) analyzed was 0.83. Results of reliability analysis, Inter-factor correlation and factor analysis suggests that FOCI is reliable and valid inventory.

### 3.3.1. Permission from the Author of Instrument

Researcher used this inventory named as “Farooqi Organizational Conflict Management Inventory (FOCI)” for the purpose of data collection after seeking permission from the author of the inventory.

### 3.4. Data Collection

Researcher personally visited the sampled special education schools after seeking permission letter to collect data form the supervisor and after showing that permission letter to principals of sampled schools researcher was allowed to collect data for the current research study.

### 3.5. Data Coding

In order to enter collected data in SPSS24, researcher did codification to analyze data.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

According to the nature of the study data was analyzed by using frequencies, percentages and t-test.

## 5. FINDINGS

**Table 1. Demographic Variables**

<b>Age</b>	
	<b>%</b>
20-35 Years	47
36-50 Years	39
51-65 Years	12
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	18
Female	79
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single	37
Married	61
<b>Teacher’s Qualification</b>	
BA/B.Sc	17
M.A/M.Sc	71
M.Phil	11
<b>Current Location</b>	
Rural	10
Urban	84

Table 1 shows the demographic variables firstly with respect to age consisted of three categories. First category that was 20-35 years of age 44 and second category that was 36-50 years of age there were 37 respondents and 12 respondents ranging between 51-65 years of age. With respect to gender 17 respondents were male and 74 were female. Regarding

marital status 35 respondents were single at the time of data collection and 57 respondents were married. With respect to current location of the respondents 10 respondents belong to rural area and 79 belong to urban area.

**Table 2. Types Of Conflicts**

<b>1- Conflict between teaching staff and management</b>	
	%
Frequently	6.5
Rarely	59.1
<b>2- Conflict between non-teaching staff and management</b>	
Frequently	6.5
Rarely	59.1
<b>3- Conflict between students and management</b>	
Frequently	7.5
Rarely	57.0
<b>4- Inter-personal conflict among staff</b>	
Frequently	7.5
Rarely	57.0
<b>5- Inter-personal conflict among students</b>	
Frequently	9.7
Rarely	54.8
<b>6- Conflict between teachers and students</b>	
Frequently	6.5
Rarely	58.1
<b>7- Conflict between students and the community</b>	
Frequently	14.0
Rarely	52.7
<b>8- Conflict between teachers and parents</b>	
Frequently	10.8
Rarely	55.9

Table 2 shows the types of conflicts under two options that are frequently and rarely and 6 respondents reported frequently and 55 reported rarely conflict between teaching staff and management. Conflict between non-teaching staff and management is frequently reported by 6 respondents and rarely by 55 respondents. Conflict between students and management were frequently reported by 7 respondents and rarely reported by 53 respondents. Inter-personal conflict among staff is frequently faced by 7 respondents and rarely faced by 53 respondents. Inter-personal conflict among students was frequently faced by 9 respondents and rarely faced by 51 respondents. Conflict between teachers and students were reported frequently by 6 respondents and rarely reported by 54 respondents. Conflict between students and the community were frequently reported by 13 and rarely by 49 respondents. Conflict between teachers and parents frequently faced by 10 and rarely faced by 52 respondents.

**Table 3. Causes of Conflicts**

<b>1- Non-payment of salaries</b>	
	%
Agree	19.4
No View	22.6
Disagree	53.8
<b>2- Sudden change in school policies</b>	
Agree	29.0
No View	23.7
Disagree	45.2
<b>3- Imposition of decisions on employees by management</b>	
Agree	34.4
No View	16.1
Disagree	46.2
<b>4- Inadequate amenities such as electricity and water</b>	
Agree	18.3
No View	18.3
Disagree	61.3
<b>5- Denial of rights and privileges</b>	
Agree	33.3
No View	36.6
Disagree	26.9
<b>6- When government circulars on staff welfare are not implemented</b>	
Agree	31.2
No View	36.6
Disagree	28.0
<b>7- Strong allegations of corruption against management</b>	
Agree	19.4
No View	31.2
Disagree	46.2
<b>8- Communication gaps between the authorities and worker</b>	
Agree	30.1
No View	24.7
Disagree	41.9
<b>9- High handedness on the part of management</b>	
Agree	21.5
No View	30.1
Disagree	44.1
<b>10- Refusal of management to honor agreements reached with worker's union</b>	
Agree	19.4
No View	30.1
Disagree	48.4
<b>11- Discriminatory application of rules and regulations</b>	
Agree	30.1
No View	34.4
Disagree	33.3

Table 3 shows the causes of conflicts faced by teachers of special education schools firstly with respect to non-payment of salaries. About this cause of conflict 18 respondents were agree, 21 were having no view and 50 showed responses under the option disagree. 27 respondents were agree that sudden change in school policies is one of the causes of conflicts and 22 respondents showed no view whereas 42 respondents were disagree. 32

respondents were agreed that imposition of decisions on employees by management, 15 respondents reported no view and 43 showed their response under the response disagree. Inadequate amenities such as electricity and water as a cause of conflict 17 respondents were agree, 17 were having no view and 57 were disagree. 31 respondents were agreeing that denial of rights and privileges as a cause of conflict, 34 reported no view and 25 were disagreeing. 29 respondents agreed that government circulars on staff welfare are not implemented is also a cause of conflict, 34 respondents reported no view over this cause of conflict and 26 respondents were disagree. 18 respondents were agree that Strong allegations of corruption against management is a cause of conflict faced by them but 29 were having no view and 43 were disagree regarding this cause of conflict. Communication gaps between the authorities and worker as a cause of conflict was reported by 28 respondents whereas 23 showed no view over this cause of conflict and 39 were disagree. 20 respondents were agreeing that high handedness on the part of management is a cause of conflict, 28 respondents were having no view whereas 41 respondents were disagree. Refusal of management to honor agreements reached with worker’s union as a cause of conflict 18 respondents were agree, 28 were having no view and 45 were disagree. 28 respondents were agreed that discriminatory application of rules and regulations is also one of the causes of conflict whereas 32 were having no view and 31 respondents were disagreeing.

**Table 4. Conflict Management Strategies**

S. No.	Conflict Management Strategies	%
1	Integrating	33.67
2	Obliging	24.48
3	Compromising	26.53
4	Avoiding	7.14
5	Dominating	8.16

Table 4 shows the conflict management strategies to manage conflicts adopted by teachers of special education schools. Integrating conflict management strategy was adopted by 33 teachers so the hypothesis was accepted that integrating conflict management style was adopted by teachers of special education schools. Whereas obliging conflict management strategy was adopted by 24 teachers which rejected the stated hypothesis that obliging conflict management style was adopted by teachers of special education schools. On the other hand compromising conflict management strategy was adopted by 26 teachers which shows the stated hypothesis was rejected that compromising conflict management strategy was adopted by teachers of special education schools. With respect to avoiding conflict management strategy it was reported by 7 teachers which shows that the stated hypothesis was rejected that avoiding conflict management strategy was used by special education teachers whereas dominating conflict management strategy was reported by 8 teachers and rejected the hypothesis that dominating conflict management strategy was used by teachers of special education schools.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is concluded under the light of findings of the collected data that;

1. Most of the teachers are young in special education schools.
2. There is big difference between the ratio (17, 74) of male and female staff.
3. Most of the teachers of special education schools are having master’s degree.
4. Most of the respondents belong to urban area.



5. Most frequently conflict is between students and community, between teachers and parents and inter-personal conflict among students.
6. Most common causes of conflicts were; imposition y management of decisions on employees by management and denial of rights and privileges.
7. Most common conflict management strategy is integrating and compromising adopted by teachers of special education schools.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations are made under the light of the data of the study:

It is trusted that an investigation diving into a specialized curriculum peace promotion could give knowledge into hones that can possibly keep formal plan of action under control and could reveal insight upon those elements that lead guardians to look for formal response. Schools need to receive a more preventive way to deal with oversee clashes looked by educators in a specialized curriculum. Consideration must spotlight on the level where differences initially happen—the nearby school level—not at the level of state oversight intercession where contradictions have turned out to be progressively tense and ill-disposed.

Focal person involved in designing curriculum for special education should address problems reported by the respondents by inviting suggestions from the students, teachers and parents for healthy environment in order to produce productive citizens for the prosperity of the country.

## 8. IMPLICATIONS

This current study will serve as a situational analysis for the special education schools to develop conflict management guidelines at institutional and at program level in order to gain positive consequences of conflicts.

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