



Investigating the elementary school teachers' practices regarding classroom conflict management at Federal government educational institutions

NailaZarar, PhD Scholar, University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan, naila.zarar10@gmail.com

Muhammad Shahid Zulfiqar Ali, PhD Scholar, University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan, shahidzac@yahoo.com

Dr. Ghazal Khalid Siddiqui, Assistant Professor, University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan, ghazalkhalid@ue.edu.pk

Abstract- This study aimed to investigate the Elementary School teachers' practices regarding classroom conflict management at Federal Government Educational Institutions (cants/ Garrisons) - FGEI's (C/G). This was quantitative research that has been conducted under the Positivist paradigm. There were 150 male whereas 150 female teachers selected conveniently as sample. The data was collected by using the self-developed 5 point Likert rating scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree comprising 30 items. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) have been used to analyze the data regarding the demographic detail whereas the Mann Whitney U test has been applied to the data so to find out the difference among the teachers' practices regarding classroom conflicts on the basis of their gender. It is concluded that the teachers deal with "*Interpersonal Conflicts*" and "*Organizational Conflict*" appropriately. They also do appropriately regarding "*Conflict Management*".

Keywords: Classroom conflict, conflict management, FGEI's, conflict resolution

I. INTRODUCTION

The educational institutes have been established by society for its individuals' education. These are said to be the small societies where students are taught and trained regarding their adjustment to society. Here in the schools, they are provided with the experiences that have been designed by the schools and the teachers as well (Tatlah, 2015). The students are exposed to these experiences and learn to apply the learnt knowledge for the solutions to real-life problems (Jones, 2000).

The aim of the institution is the students' well-adjustment to society. For this purpose, the students' behavior is modified in order to get the desired behavior out of them. The desired behavior is brought out with the help of teaching (Durkheim, 2012). For this purpose, the teachers are hired by the educational institutes. The teachers also have a significant position in the educational process (Peters, 2015). They are more mature in terms of life experiences and more qualified as well. They are supposed to teach the students in a way so that may become useful and able (Chilton, 2019). The teachers try to make the students familiarize themselves with the social norms and traditions (Adomi, 2005). They also induce skills and the latest knowledge in students. They also teach them critical thinking and problem-solving (Alsubaie, 2016).

As the schools are the miniature societies where the students are taught with their other fellows who belong to different family backgrounds and have different abilities. In such a situation of individual differences, the conflicts rising is quite common (Mullius, 2010). This is the reason that different conflicts appear within the schools. These conflicts are either interpersonal or organizational. Regardless of their nature, they must be treated in a well-mannered way so the organizational culture and efficiency may not be disturbed (Thapa T. B., 2015).

The conflicts must be taken on priority regarding their resolution as they have the potential to affect the teaching/ learning process. Classroom conflicts arise because of the individual differences among students (Griffin, 2005). If they are treated on priority and appropriately, the teaching/ learning process may be aided by them. However, in an inverse situation, these conflicts may disturb the educational environment (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). The existence of classroom conflict is natural (Ghaffar, 2010). No classroom can be away from the conflicts because of the individual difference. However, the teachers must play their role regarding the resolution of the conflicts rather than avoiding or ignoring them (Obraztsova, 2018).

Valente & Lourenço (2020) conducted research and concluded a positive relationship between the teachers' Emotional Intelligence and the conflicts that appeared in the classroom. However, they also highlighted the gap in the literature that was still unknown till then that how the classroom conflicts are treated by the teachers.

Göksoy & Argon (2016) concluded based on their research that the teachers' performance is affected by the conflicts within the organization. Their performance is decreased when they are unable to resolve their conflicts. However, at the same time, it has been concluded by them that the conflicts carry both types of effects on teachers' performance. Some of them have a positive whereas some of them have a negative effect of the conflicts on their emotional and psychological state.

Jennings & Greenberg (2009) concluded on the basis of their research that it is natural to have conflicts within the classroom. However, it is the requisite of effective teaching that the teachers must resolve the classroom conflicts while involving in them actively instead of avoiding them. The students need a conducive environment for learning which cannot be marinated unless the conflicts are resolved.

Morris-Rothschild & Brassard (2006) concluded that teachers must respond actively and efficiently against classroom conflict. Those teachers remain successful in the provision of a conducive learning environment for the students who treat and resolve the conflicts appropriately while using effective strategies.

Although there is limited literature available on the concerned topic. However, regardless of its insufficiency, it has been revealed that classroom conflicts are unavoidable. So, the teacher should recognize well in time and also resolve on priority. But as there is a gap in the literature regarding the nature of classroom conflicts and the reasons behind them. So, it was the need of the time to conduct such research which could highlight the classroom conflicts as well as the reasons behind them in the Pakistani context. On the other hand, the teachers' practices were needed to be brought into the light so it could be known that how do the teachers deal and tackle the classroom conflicts regarding their solution. So, the objectives of this study were;

- To investigate the teachers' practices regarding classroom conflict management.
- To find out the difference among the teachers' practices regarding classroom conflict management on the basis of their gender.

II. METHODOLOGY

This was quantitative research which has been conducted under the Positivist paradigm. All the Elementary School Teachers at FGEI's (C/G) Lahore region were the population for this study. However, 150 male whereas 150 female Elementary School Teachers (ESTs) have been selected by Conveniently sampling. The data was collected by using the Survey method. The instrument was developed by the researcher(s) for this study. This was a 5 point Likert rating scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. There were 30 items on this scale. The validation of the instrument was ensured by taking experts' opinions. Furthermore, its reliability was ensured after its pilot testing. There were 36 teachers, who took part in the pilot testing. The Cronbach's Alpha for this instrument was .68 which is acceptable for the instrument to be reliable.

III. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) have been used to analyze the data regarding the demographic detail whereas the Mann Whitney U test has been applied to the data so to find out the difference among the teachers' practices regarding classroom conflicts on the basis of their gender.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	150	50%
	Female	150	50%

The results show that there were 100 male whereas 100 female teachers who participated in this study. Their ratio was 50/50% within the selected sample.

Table 2. Teachers' practices regarding interpersonal conflicts

Sr. No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I deal with the students' conflicts constructively.	4%	5%	10%	51%	30%
2	I try to satisfy the students with a logical stance if they have any conflict with me.	2%	12%	12%	52%	22%
3	I teach students to welcome their fellows' conflicting stance to them.	2%	9%	27%	39%	23%
4	I teach students to resolve their conflicts while thinking logically.	3%	8%	19%	42%	28%
5	I train the students to be democratic while discussing with their fellows.	6%	4%	10%	43%	37%
6	I help my students to resolve the conflicts if they are unable to do this themselves.	3%	6%	18%	42%	31%
7	I neither get panic nor get angry while facing the challenge.	1%	15%	17%	44%	23%
8	I behave normally if any of my colleagues have any conflicting stance with me.	4%	8%	13%	40%	35%
9	I resolve the conflicts democratically with my colleagues.	1%	15%	17%	44%	23%
10	I help my colleagues to resolve their conflicts.	3%	8%	19%	42%	28%
11	I listen to both of the parties with equal attention when my colleagues have a conflict with each other.	6%	4%	10%	43%	37%
12	My strategies to deal with the conflicts vary situation-wise.	3%	6%	18%	42%	31%
13	I listen to others humbly before speaking my stance.	1%	15%	17%	44%	23%
14	I neither get panic nor get angry while facing the challenge.	4%	8%	13%	40%	35%
15	I suggest the remedy for my colleagues rather than imposing it to them whenever they have any conflict.	1%	15%	17%	44%	23%

It has been revealed by the above-stated results that the majority of the participants responded in agreement with 81%, 74%, 61%, 70%, 80%, 73%, 67%, 75%, 67%, 70%, 80%, 73%, 67%, 75%, 67% regarding "Interpersonal Conflicts" that they deal with the students' conflicts constructively; they try to satisfy the students with logical stance if they have any conflict with me; they teach students to welcome their fellows' conflicting stance to them; they teach students to resolve their conflicts while thinking logically; they train the students to be democratic while discussing with fellows; they help the students to resolve the

conflicts if they are unable to do this themselves; they neither get panic nor get angry while facing the challenge; they behave normally if any of their colleagues have any conflicting stance with me; resolve the conflicts democratically with their colleagues. They also showed their agreement that they help the colleagues to resolve their conflicts; they listen to both of the parties with equal attention when colleagues have a conflict with each other; their strategies to deal with the conflicts vary situation-wise; they listen to others humbly before speaking own stance; neither get panic nor get angry while facing the challenge. It was also stated by the majority that they suggest the remedy for colleagues rather than imposing it on them whenever they have any conflict.

Table 3. Teachers' practices regarding organizational conflict

Sr. No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
16	I treat all of my students' conflicts equally regardless of their gender.	4%	10%	27%	45%	14%
17	There is no restriction on students regarding presenting their conflicts in class.	4%	5%	10%	51%	30%
18	I provide a conducive environment in the class to students for discussion.	2%	12%	12%	52%	22%
19	I help students to resolve their conflicts with the school administration.	4%	5%	10%	51%	30%
20	I counsel the students if they have any conflict with the organizational policy.	2%	12%	12%	52%	22%

The results show that majority of the participants agreed with 59%, 81%, 74%, 81%, 74% responses regarding "Organizational Conflict" that they treat all of the students' conflicts equally regardless of their gender; they don't restrict the students regarding presenting their conflicts in class; they provide a conducive environment in the class to students for discussion; they also help students to resolve their conflicts with the school administration. They also counsel the students if they have any conflict with the organizational policy.

Table 4. Teachers' practices regarding conflict management

Sr. No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
21	I always look for the reason behind a conflict.	14%	19%	10%	38%	19%
22	I remain quiet until I understand the conflicting situation well and then react.	13%	17%	16%	41%	13%
23	I try to find the solution rather than crying over the conflict.	14%	19%	15%	33%	19%
24	I try to keep myself calm and away from anger in a conflicting situation.	12%	19%	05%	41%	23%
25	I try to keep myself calm and away from anger in a conflicting situation.	12%	22%	14%	24%	28%
26	I avoid unnecessary arguments while dealing with the conflict.	14%	4%	11%	67%	4%
27	I observe others' self-respect while posing my stance.	17%	60%	6%	63%	4%
28	I prefer conflict resolution	55%	11%	15%	10%	9%

	instead of winning the debate.					
29	I deal with the conflicts logically rather than emotionally.	31%	33%	14%	12%	10%
30	I don't let Democracy be ignored while stating my stance regarding the conflict.	11%	61%	12%	8%	8%

It has been revealed by the above-stated results that the majority of the participants responded in agreement with 57%, 54%, 52%, 64%, 52%, 71%, 67% regarding the “*Conflict Management*” that they always look for the reason behind a conflict: they remain quiet until they understand the conflicting situation well and then react; they try to find the solution rather than crying over the conflict; they also try to keep themselves calm and away from anger in a conflicting situation; they try to keep themselves calm and away from anger in a conflicting situation; they also avoid unnecessary arguments while dealing with the conflict. However, the majority of the teachers disagreed with 66%, 64%, 72% responses that they observe others’ self-respect while posing their stance; they prefer the conflict resolution instead of winning the debate; they deal with the conflicts logically rather than emotionally; they also don’t let the democracy be ignored while stating their stance regarding the conflict.

Table 5. Comparison of teachers’ practices on the basis of their gender

Gender	N	M	U	P
Male Teachers	150	133.43		
Female Teachers	150	167.57	8690.00	.001

*p < .05; df = 298

It is revealed in the light of the results that the mean score for the female teachers (M=167.57) is higher than the mean score for the male teachers (M=133.43). It is concluded that” Ho: There is no significant difference between the male and female teachers’ practices regarding classroom conflict management” is rejected as the $p < 0.05$ ($p = .001$, $U = 9690$).

IV. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

On the basis of the results, it has been concluded that the teachers deal with interpersonal conflicts appropriately. They deal with the conflicts constructively, democratically without getting panic. They also listen to others humbly and resolve the conflicts logically instead of getting angry. It is also concluded that teachers also deal with the “*Organizational Conflict*” in the desired way that they provide a conducive environment for students to resolve their conflicts. They also help them resolve their conflicts with the school administration and organizational policy. As far as it is concerned with the teachers’ practices regarding “*Conflict Management*”, they deal with the conflicts properly for resolving and managing them. They behave patiently and look for the reason behind the conflict so it could be resolved properly. They also avoid unnecessary arguments while conflict management. However, it is also concluded that the teachers remain failed to observe the others’ self-respect while posing their stance. They also drag the debates instead of resolving the conflicts and also become autocratic while stating their stance regarding the conflict. On the other hand, there is a significant difference found between male and female teachers’ practices regarding classroom conflict management.

It has been understood in light of the conclusion of this study that conflicts cannot be avoided within the classroom. On the other hand, it also revealed that conflict management and resolution are necessary because a conducive environment for learning cannot be provided unless classroom conflicts are resolved. The findings of the current study supported the previous studies on a similar phenomenon including (Göksoy & Argon, 2016; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Valente & Lourenço, 2020). However, the new thing revealed is that the teachers here remained failed to observe the others’ self-

respect while posing their stance. They also drag the debates instead of resolving the conflicts and also become autocratic while stating their stance regarding the conflict.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been recommended on the basis of the conclusion that the teachers should be given proper training regarding classroom conflict management. On the other hand, the teachers should observe others' self-respect while posing their stance. They should also be democratic while stating their stance and listening to others'.

VI. REFERENCES

1. Abdu-Raheem. (2004). *Conflict management by principals in Ekiti State public secondary schools*. Unpublished M. Ed Thesis, University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.
2. Adeyemi, T. O. (2009). Principals' management of conflicts in public secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria: A critical Survey. *Educational Research and Review*, 418-426.
3. Adomi, E. &. (2005). Conflicts management in Nigerian University. *Journal of Library Management*, 520-530.
4. Afful-Broni. (2012). *Conflict Management in Ghanaian Schools: A Case Study of the Role of Leadership of Winneba Senior High School*. University of Education, Winneba.
5. Dunham. (2005). *Developing Effective School Management*. London: Routledge.
6. Ghaffar, A. (2010). Conflict in school: It's causes & management strategies. *Journal of Managerial Sciences*, 213-227.
7. Göksoy, S., & Argon, T. (2016). Conflicts at Schools and Their Impact on Teachers. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 197-205.
8. Griffin, D. a. (2005). *Human Resource Management*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
9. Iwuagwu. (2011). *Managing School Related Conflict. An Unpublished Ph.D. Seminar work submitted to the department of Educational Foundations and Management*. Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria.
10. Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The Prosocial Classroom: Teacher Social and Emotional Competence in Relation to Student and Classroom Outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 491-525.
11. Jones. (2000). *Conflict Resolution Education: Goals, Models, Benefits and Implementation*. Temple University.
12. Makaye, J. &. (2012). Conflict resolution between heads and teachers case of four schools in Zimbabwe. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 105-110.
13. Morris-Rothschild, B. K., & Brassard, M. R. (2006). Teachers' conflict management styles: The role of attachment styles and classroom management efficacy. *Journal of School Psychology*, 105 – 121.
14. Mullius. (2010). *Management Organisational Behaviour. 9 th ed.*. Pearson Education Limited, England.
15. Obraztsova, O. (2018). Teachers' beliefs on conflict and conflict resolution . *Education in the North*, 259-274.
16. Oyebade. (2000). *Staff authority conflict and management strategies in institutions of higher learning in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ado-Ekiti.
17. Thapa. (2013). Students' conflicts in school. *Academic Voices: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 76-80.
18. Thapa, T. B. (2015). Impact of conflict on teaching learning process in schools. *Academic Voices*, 73-78.
19. Tshuma, R., Ndlovu, S., & Bhebhe, S. (2016). Causes of conflict among school personnel in Gwanda District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 32-41.
20. Valente, S., & Lourenço, A. A. (2020). Conflict in the classroom: How teachers' emotional intelligence influences conflict management. *Frontiers in Education*, 1-10.