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## Compatibility of Departmental Heads' Decision-Making Styles with Conflict Management Practices

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**Abstract:** The objective of the study was to explore compatibility between Decision-Making styles and conflict management practices. All the government universities of territory of Punjab were the population for this study. Descriptive research design was used, and a survey was conducted to probe into the phenomenon. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. A sample of ninety departmental heads of nine universities was selected through multistage sampling technique. Reliability of the questionnaire was measured, which was 0.843. There was a significant positive relationship between the Decision-Making Styles and Conflict Management Styles. It is recommended that decision-making styles of the heads may be refined through training to manage conflicts at workplace.

**Key Words:** Decision-Making Styles, Conflict Management Practices, Departmental Heads

### Introduction

Decision-Making means selecting from various alternatives, one course of action. It is the method of selecting one alternative amongst several alternatives given in a particular situation. Decision-making cannot be distinguished from policy-making because every policy-determination is a decision. Conflict may be manifested by the tension which is referred to as a set of attitudes such as distrust and suspicion. Conflict management stands as a device for dealing with problematic variances within the prevailing social system. It can facilitate productive social changes in the direction of a responsible and unbiased system (Fisher, 2000).

Conflict is interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomenon (Barki & Harwick, 2001). Conflict is a common component of all social groups because of people's interactions. According to Harry, (2009), conflict is the outcome of differences between participants' interests, beliefs and goals. The benefits to attain the desired areas become the basis of conflict in a group.

The scholars and specialists have differing opinions about organizational conflict. As indicated by Judge & Robbin, (2009) a conflict is a procedure where one group accepts that the other group negatively affects its benefits. Harry (2009) expressed that nature generates a requirement for circumstance, control and freedom in individuals, which is getting to be fundamental driver of conflict. Fisher & Shapiro, (2006) said that conflict is a result of social contacts among organisational individuals. A similar view was shown by Walker & Darling, (2007), that conflict is a battle for monetary benefits, authority, likings and needs. In short, conflict is the result of a certain level of hindrance caused by the actions of colleagues and administrators at any organization. Professional associations can't be out of danger of conflict, as in human relations.

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In educational institutions, there may be conflict between teachers and administration, between teachers and students and among teaching staff. The larger amount of conflict is critical for the working efficiency of institution. Balatskii, (2014) said that conflict is a common wonder at institution. There is a dual impact of conflict on any organization which can be negative or positive.

In continuation of discussion about functional and dysfunctional conflict paradigm, Literature suggests two dimensions of conflict mainly which are destructive and constructive. Functional conflict plays a positive role in overall working of employees and facilitates them in achieving their targets (Rivers, 2005), dysfunctional conflict pushes the overall working of company and effectiveness of company's resources.

Harmony causing styles to have been related to the idea of comprehension came to be during courses of action and other referring scenes; however, the impact of conflict styles may be significantly broader than that. Past research has exhibited that people with different habits will, as a rule, make particular social conditions for themselves. Along these lines, an individual situation relies upon external conditions, just as without anyone else approach to manage people and issues. So likewise, experience style that people present as a ground-breaking impact for issues at work.

Different researchers like Blake and Mouton (1964), Thom's (1976) and Rahim (1992) endeavoured to measure the techniques for harmony advancement that an individual grasps at whatever point they face a dispute. This system treated conflict styles as individual, stable after some time and across different situations. Others have argued that approaches to managing conflict are strategies picked to facilitate the conditions or the relationship and thus should not be treated as inherent qualities. An individual can't get a comparative style in all conditions. A person who is exchanging off when going up against conflicts with subordinates isn't most likely going to receive a comparable technique when facing a battle with a boss (Rahim et al., 2000).

Various examinations of dispute dealing with style revolve around unequivocal inquiry objectives scenes. Nevertheless, the impact of conflict styles may be even more solid and unavoidable. Progressing investigation in cerebrum looks into, in like manner maintained this long hold see that people experience unequivocally or oppositely is their own one of a kind result thought. For example Farr & Funder, (1998) examine the effects of individual negativity would all in all keep their joint effort assistants would by and large show stooping behavior act irritated disconnects and rule the collaboration furthermore if singular pessimism is in actuality a dispositional quality this model will be reiterated after some time so the individual high in up close and personal opposition will live in an area that is more stacked up with aggravated pulled back people than occurs for those lower in up close and personal criticism the social condition that these understudies went up against was not some external closeness but rather was shaped by their very own atmospheres and the scholarly passionate system components typical for them. Course of action and discussion objectives are essential assignments of the administrators and question age and challenge objectives are central endeavor of imperative fundamental initiative and the action of constant work bunches every day executives are called upon to decide differentiates in necessities and tendencies and use struggle the degree of conflict experienced isn't just a delayed consequence of torpid conflicts pack models or corporate culture yet furthermore particular assortments in approaches to manage supervising conflicts. Dependent upon how people approach battle they can improve or regularly rising inquiries and make the earth one that is enduring or antagonizing for them.

## Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives of the research:

1. To explore Decision-Making styles demonstrated by the departmental heads of universities.
2. To identify most frequent modes used by the departmental heads of universities in conflict management.
3. To determine the compatibility of Decision-Making styles with the choice of strategy in conflict management.

## Research Questions

1. Which Decision-Making Style is most frequently practiced by departmental heads of universities?
2. Which Conflict Management Practice is most frequently used by head of departments of universities?
3. Are there statistically significant relationships among Conflict Management Styles and Decision-Making Styles?



## Methodology

**Research Design:** Descriptive research method and most specifically survey method were used for this study, and a quantitative approach was employed in this study, keeping in view nature of the objectives. Quantitative facts were collected and analyzed.

**Population of the Study:** All the departmental heads of government sector general universities of Punjab were the population for this study.

**Sample and Sampling Procedure:** Multistage sampling (simple random sampling, then purposive sampling) technique was used to select the sample. Sample size for the present study comprised one category i.e. Departmental Heads of Universities (N=90).

## Instrument of the Study

**Decision-Making Styles Questionnaire (DMSQ):** Decision-Making styles questionnaire (DMSQ) was developed to measure various Decision-Making styles (see Appendix E). It consists of 30 items that are further divided into five styles including Rational Decision-Making style (Item number 1,6,11,16,21,25,28), Intuitive Decision-Making style (Item number 2,7,12,17,30), Dependent Decision-Making style (Item number 3,8,13,18,22), Avoidant Decision-Making style (Item number 4,9,14,19,23,26) and Spontaneous Decision-Making style (Item number 5,10,15,20,24,27,29).

**Conflict Management Styles Questionnaire (CMSQ):** Conflict management style questionnaire was developed, which measures five types of conflict management (see Appendix D). Competing conflict management style (Item No. 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 39, 40), Avoiding Styles (Item No. 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37), Accommodating styles (Item No. 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38), Compromising styles (Item No. 4,9,14,19,24,29,34) and Collaborating styles (Item No. 5,10,15,20,25,30,35).

**Validity of the Instrument:** For the face and content validation of the instrument, instrument was discussed with the experts when it was constructed. Initially, it was shown to the supervisor, and then it was shown to the other senior faculty members and PhD scholars. In light of recommendations proposed by the experts, some changes were made. Some questions were added.

**Pilot Testing and Reliability:** The questionnaire was administered to 10 departmental heads of University of Sargodha for pilot testing. The recommendations and opinions of respondents were collected in the finalization of the questionnaire. The data were collected from available heads. The reliability of the scale was found .843.

## Data Analysis

**Table 1**

*Perception of Heads of the Department regarding Decision Making Styles*

S#	Indicators	SDA (%)	DA (%)	SDA(%) + DA(%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A(%) + SA(%)	Mean	SD
1	Rational Decision-Making Style (RDMS)	0	8.7	8.7	8.32	56.28	26.65	82.93	4.01	0.82
2	Intuitive Decision-Making style (IDMS)	3.32	20.2	23.52	18.02	48.2	10.22	58.42	3.42	1.02
3	Dependent Decision Making Style (DDMS)	0.88	13.54	14.42	8.22	59.56	17.78	77.34	3.79	0.91
4	Avoidant Decision-Making Style (ADMS)	14.08	32.22	46.3	13.9	29.07	10.73	39.8	2.90	1.07
5	Spontaneous Decision-Making Style (SDMS)	10.64	30.14	40.79	19.21	29.51	10.49	40	2.99	1.11
6	Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS)	9.44	35.33	44.77	11.78	32.12	11.32	43.44	3.01	1.02

Table 1 shows that an overall aggregate 82.93 % university departmental heads were in favour of the use of Rational Decision-Making Style while 8.70 % were not in favour of this style and 8.32 % were undecided. The overall values of descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 4.01 and SD = 0.82 indicated that majority of respondents were agreed with Rational Decision-Making Style. An overall aggregate 58.42 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Intuitive Decision-Making Style while 23.52 % were not in the favor of this style and 18.02 % were undecided. The values of descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 3.42 and SD = 1.02 indicated that majority of respondents were agreed with Intuitive Decision-Making Style. Overall aggregate 77.34 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Dependent Decision-Making Style while 14.42 % were not in the favor of this style and 8.22 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 3.79 and SD = 0.91 indicated that majority of respondents were agreed with Dependent Decision-Making Style. Overall aggregate 39.80 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Avoidant Decision-Making Style while 46.30 % were not in the favor of this style and 13.90 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 2.90 and SD = 1.07 indicated that majority of respondents were not in the favor Avoidant Decision-Making Style. Overall aggregate 40 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Spontaneous Decision-Making Style while 40.79 % were not in the favor of this style and 19.21 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 2.99 and SD = 1.11 indicated that approximately equal number of respondents were in the favor and not in the favor of this style.

**Table 2**

*Perception of Heads of the Department regarding Conflict Management Styles*

S. No	Statements	SDA (%)	DA (%)	SDA(%) + DA(%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A(%) + SA(%)	Mean	SD
1	Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS)	9.44	35.33	44.77	11.78	32.12	11.32	43.44	3.01	1.02
2	Avoiding Conflict Management Style (ACMS)	6.39	37.35	43.74	16.82	32.64	6.82	39.45	2.96	1.04
3	Accommodating Conflict Management Style (AcCMS)	1.93	3.19	5.11	17.1	63.6	14.2	77.8	3.85	0.73
4	Compromising Conflict Management Style (CCMS)	0.47	7.63	8.1	16	62.9	13	75.9	3.8	0.71
5	Collaborating Conflict Management Style (CCMS)	0	4.92	4.92	6.99	69.51	18.59	88.1	4.02	0.65

Table 2 shows that an overall aggregate 43.44 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Competing Conflict Management Style while 44.77 % were not in the favor of this style and 11.78 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 3.01 and SD = 1.02 indicated that majority of respondents were not agreed with Competing Conflict Management Style. An overall aggregate 39.45 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Avoiding Conflict Management Style while 43.74 % were not in the favor of this style and 11.78 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 2.96 and SD = 1.04 indicated that majority of respondents were not agreed with Avoiding Conflict Management Style. An overall aggregate 77.80 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Accommodating Conflict Management Style while 5.11 % were not in the favor of this style and 17.1 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 3.85 and SD = 0.73 indicated that majority of respondents were agreed with Accommodating Conflict Management Style. An overall aggregate 75.90 % university departmental heads were in the favor of the use of Compromising Conflict Management Style while 8.1 % were not in the favor of this style and 16 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 3.8 and SD = 0.71 indicated that majority of respondents were agreed with Compromising Conflict Management Style. An overall aggregate 88.10 % university departmental heads were in favour of the use of Collaborating Conflict Management Style while 4.91 % were not in favour of this style and 6.99 % were undecided. The values of overall descriptive statistic i-e Mean = 4.02 and SD = 0.65, indicated that majority of respondents were agreed with Collaborating Conflict Management Style.

**Table 3***Compatibility between Decision Making Styles and Conflict Management*

S. No	Variables	N	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Rational Decision-Making Style	90	.224*	.034
	Competing Conflict Management Style	90		
2	Rational Decision-Making Style	90	.067	.529
	Avoiding Conflict Management Style	90		
3	Rational Decision-Making Style	90	.297**	.004
	Accommodating Conflict Management Style	90		
4	Rational Decision-Making Style	90	-.010	.926
	Compromising Conflict Management Style	90		
5	Rational Decision-Making Style	90	.565**	.000
	Collaborating Conflict Management Style	90		
6	Intuitive Decision-Making Style	90	.309**	.003
	Competing Conflict Management Style	90		
7	Intuitive Decision-Making Style	90	-.017	.877
	Avoiding Conflict Management Style	90		
8	Intuitive Decision-Making Style	90	-.182	.086
	Accommodating Conflict Management Style	90		
9	Intuitive Decision-Making Style	90	0.232*	.028
	Compromising Conflict Management Style	90		
10	Intuitive Decision-Making Style	90	0.022	.835
	Collaborating Conflict Management Style	90		
11	Dependent Decision-Making style	90	0.146	.169
	Competing Conflict Management Style	90		
12	Dependent Decision-Making style	90	-.125	.242
	Avoiding Conflict Management Style	90		
13	Dependent Decision-Making style	90	.218*	.039
	Accommodating Conflict Management Style	90		
14	Dependent Decision-Making style	90	.301**	.004
	Compromising Conflict Management Style	90		
15	Dependent Decision-Making style	90	.134	.209
	Collaborating Conflict Management Style	90		
16	Avoidant Decision-Making Style	90	.313**	.003
	Competing Conflict Management Style	90		
17	Avoidant Decision-Making Style	90	-.136	.203
	Avoiding Conflict Management Style	90		
18	Avoidant decision-making style	90	-.125	.240
	Accommodating Conflict Management Style	90		
19	Avoidant decision-making style	90	.268*	.011
	Compromising Conflict Management Style	90		
20	Avoidant decision-making style	90	-.407**	.000
	Collaborating Conflict Management Style	90		
21	Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	90	.530**	.000
	Competing Conflict Management Style	90		
22	Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	90	-.035	.746
	Avoiding Conflict Management Style	90		
23	Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	90	.051	.631
	Accommodating Conflict Management Style	90		
24	Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	90	.534**	.000
	Compromising Conflict Management Style	90		
25	Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	90	-.169	.111
	Collaborating Conflict Management Style	90		
26	Decision-Making Style	90	.412**	.000
	Conflict Management Style.	90		

Table 3 indicates that there is significant positive relationship among the Rational Decision-Making Style (RDMS) and Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS) as indicated by  $r = .224^*$ ,  $p = 0.034 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant positive relationship among the Rational Decision-Making Style (RDMS) and Avoiding Conflict Management Style (ACMS) as indicated by  $r = .067$ ,  $p = .529 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Rational Decision-Making Style (RDMS) and Accommodating Conflict Management Style (AcCMS) as indicated by  $r = .297^{**}$ ,  $p = .004 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Rational Decision-Making Style (RDMS) and Compromising Conflict Management Style (ComCMS) as indicated by  $r = -.010$ ,  $p = .926 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Rational Decision-Making Style (RDMS) with Collaborating Conflict Management Style (ColCMS) as indicated by  $r = .565^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Intuitive Decision-Making Style (IDMS) and Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS).as indicated by  $r = .309^{**}$ ,  $p = .003 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Intuitive Decision-Making Style (IDMS) and Avoiding Conflict Management Style (ACMS).as indicated by  $r = -.017$ ,  $p = .877 > 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Intuitive Decision-Making Style (IDMS) and Accommodating Conflict Management Style (AcCMS).as indicated by  $r = -.182$ ,  $p = .086 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Intuitive Decision-Making Style (IDMS) and Compromising Conflict Management Style (ComCMS).as indicated by  $r = 0.232^*$ ,  $p = .028 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant positive relationship among the Intuitive Decision-Making Style (IDMS) and Collaborating Conflict Management Style (ColCMS).as indicated by  $r = 0.022$ ,  $p = .835 > 0.05$ . There was insignificant positive relationship among the Dependent Decision-Making style (DDMS) and Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS) as indicated by  $r = 0.146$ ,  $p = .169 > 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Dependent Decision-Making style (DDMS) and Avoiding Conflict Management Style (ACMS).as indicated by  $r = -.125$ ,  $p = .242 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Dependent Decision-Making style (DDMS) and Accommodating Conflict Management Style (AcCMS).as indicated by  $r = .218^*$ ,  $p = .039 < 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Dependent Decision-Making style (DDMS) and Compromising Conflict Management Style (ComCMS).as indicated by  $r = .301^{**}$ ,  $p = .004 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant positive relationship among the Dependent Decision-Making style (DDMS) and Collaborating Conflict Management Style (ColCMS).as Table 20 indicates that there is insignificant positive relationship among the Avoidant decision-making style (ADMS) and Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS).as indicated by  $r = .313^{**}$ ,  $p = .003 < 0.05$ . There is insignificant negative relationship among the Avoidant decision-making style (ADMS) and Avoiding Conflict Management Style (ACMS).as indicated by  $r = -.136$ ,  $p = .203 > 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Avoidant decision-making style (ADMS) and Accommodating Conflict Management Style (AcCMS).as indicated by  $r = -.125$ ,  $p = .240 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Avoidant decision-making style (ADMS) and Compromising Conflict Management Style (ComCMS).as indicated by  $r = .268^*$ ,  $p = .011 < 0.05$ . There was significant negative relationship among the Avoidant decision-making style (ADMS) and Collaborating Conflict Management Style (ColCMS).as indicated by  $r = -.407^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ . There was significant negative relationship among the Spontaneous Decision-Making Style (SDMS) and Competing Conflict Management Style (CCMS).as indicated by  $r = -.530^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Spontaneous Decision-Making Style (SDMS) and Avoiding Conflict Management Style (ACMS).as indicated by  $r = -.035$ ,  $p = .746 > 0.05$ . There was insignificant positive relationship among the Spontaneous Decision-Making Style (SDMS) and Accommodating Conflict Management Style (AcCMS).as indicated by  $r = .051$ ,  $p = .631 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Spontaneous Decision-Making Style (SDMS) and Compromising Conflict Management Style (ComCMS).as indicated by  $r = .534^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ . There was insignificant negative relationship among the Spontaneous Decision-Making Style (SDMS) and Collaborating Conflict Management Style (ColCMS) indicated by  $r = -.169$ ,  $p = .111 > 0.05$ . There was significant positive relationship among the Decision-Making Styles and Conflict Management Styles as indicated by  $r = .412^{**}$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ .

## Conclusion and Discussion

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising within individuals or a group when beliefs or activities of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of

another group. Conflict pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities, thus resulting in an antagonistic state (Schannen-Moran, 2001). Research on this topic revealed that conflict management is difficult to adopt properly. Literature review exposed that violent and vicious situation occurred for heads of department to handle, but proper and timely action could change the situation.

The findings of the current study will provide profitable suggestions to departmental heads and other administrators on which Decision-Making style and conflict management practice to use simultaneously. Results of study revealed that there is a positive correlation between Decision-Making styles and conflict management practices among departmental heads of Universities of Punjab.

### **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that higher authorities should conduct training sessions for decision-making and conflict management strategies quarterly or annually to improve the administrative structure of universities.
2. It is recommended that in pre-service trainings and in induction trainings, decision-making and conflict management strategies should be taught through case studies.
3. Due to some limitations, this study has been limited to government sector of general Universities of Province Punjab. It is hoped that in future it will be conducted with a larger sample size.

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