

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE OF DEANS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN REGION VI: ITS RELATIONSHIP TO JOB SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE OF FACULTY MEMBERS*

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Abstract: *The study aimed to find out the conflict management style of the deans as perceived by themselves and by the faculty members, and job satisfaction of and performance of the faculty. The deans and the faculty agreed that deans resolve conflicts using the collaborating style. The deans and the faculty members' perceptions did not vary significantly by age, sex, civil status, educational qualification, length of service and academic rank. Most of the faculty members were satisfied with their jobs and have good performance.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important functions of management is to resolve conflicts. Conflicts are inherent in all organizations (Katz and Kahn, 1978) and the success of an organization can be affected by the way the manager handles conflict or how he leads (Davis, 1977). A manager's style of resolving conflict is expected to influence a personnel's work performance. The connection between performance and management style, however, may still be affected by other intervening factors, one of which is job satisfaction (Caipang, 1989). According to Herzberg (1966) dissatisfaction can be prevented by good supervision, in other words,

good management. One aspect of good management is conflict management.

Many studies in leadership style and management style have already been conducted, but most studies focus on management style in general. Despite the adverse effects of conflicts in an organization, very few studies, if any has been conducted in this area.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to find out whether the conflict management style of the deans as perceived by the faculty members of state universities and colleges in Region VI is related to their job satisfaction and performance. The study further

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aimed to determine whether conflict management styles of deans as perceived by themselves and by the faculty members under them significantly differ when the respondents are grouped according to age, sex, civil status, educational qualification, length of service and academic rank. The study also sought to determine whether level of job satisfaction of the faculty members is related to their performance ratings.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The basic framework of this study is the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Handling Mode Model. Thomas (1976) classifies conflict management into two dimensions: that of assertiveness and that of cooperativeness. The degree of assertiveness refers to a person’s concern for oneself and his own

goals. On the other hand, cooperativeness refers to a person’s concern for relationships and the goals of others. Based on these dimensions, there are five strategies or styles in dealing with conflicts: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating styles.

In this study, conflict management style of the deans, which serves as the independent variable, is expected to influence the faculty members’ job satisfaction (dependent variable1) and performance (dependent variable2). It is assumed that the deans’ degree of assertiveness can influence their relationships with faculty members which will affect their responses and reactions and consequently, their performance (dependent variable). As shown in Figure 1, these major variables are also expected to vary according to certain characteristics of the faculty and of the deans (antecedent variables).

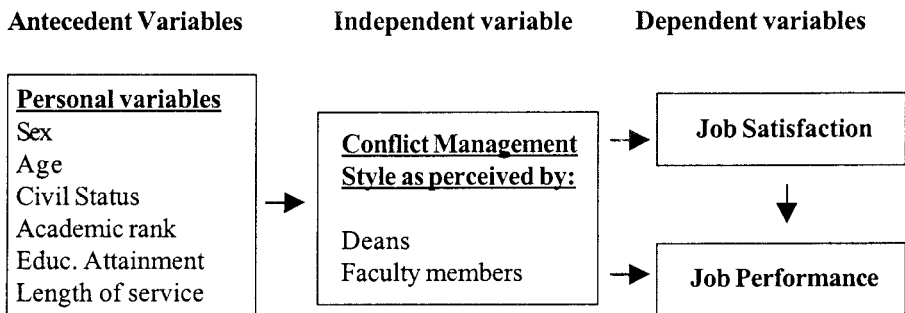


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram Showing the Assumed Flow of Relationships Among the Study Variables

METHODOLOGY

The study sample consisted of 15 deans and 235 faculty members who were selected using proportionate random sampling in the seven state universities and colleges (SUC's) in Western Visayas, namely; ASCA in Aklan, PSPC in Capi, PSCA in Antique, CAHMSC in Negros Occidental, NIPSC in Estancia, ISCOF in Barotac Nuevo, and WVSU in Iloilo City.

Data were collected using three sets of self-administered structured questionnaires; one on conflict management style of the deans as perceived by themselves; another on conflict management style of deans as perceived by the faculty members, and the third on the job satisfaction of faculty members. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability. The questionnaires were distributed to the sample respondents and later retrieved. The data were processed and analyzed using the SPSS PC+ statistical software.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Personal Characteristics of the Deans and Faculty

Most of the deans in the seven SUC's were 46 years old or older (87%), female (67%), married (87%), and doctoral degree holders (67%). Most of them (54%) had served for one to four years as deans, and had

an academic rank of full professor (80%).

On the other hand, most of the faculty members were 45 years old or younger (54%). They were also mostly women (69%) and married (79%). The deans were obviously better educated than the faculty members. While the deans were mostly doctorate degree holders, the faculty members were mostly holders of masters degree and have earned 21 or more units towards Ed. D./Ph. D. On average, the faculty members had been in service for nine or more years. Their academic ranks varied: 34% were instructors, 37% were assistant professors, while one in four were associate professors. Only 4% hold the rank of full professor.

Conflict Management Style of the Deans as Perceived by Themselves and by the Faculty Members

When asked to assess the deans' management responses to certain conflict situations, the deans and the faculty members agreed that deans tend to adopt the "collaborating style" of conflict management. Among the five styles of conflict management, this style obtained the highest mean score both for the deans (4.61) and for the faculty members (4.31).

The faculty members also affirmed the deans perception that

that deans tend to avoid the “avoiding style” of conflict management. This style obtained the lowest mean score for both groups (1.55 and 1.67, respectively). This means that the action representing this style is the least that the deans prefer to adopt.

Apparently, the deans involve the faculty in resolving conflicts. They obviously consider the views and positions of others rather than ignore them, a characteristics of the “avoiding style.”

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Personal Variables

Indicators	Deans		Faculty	
	Number	%	Number	%
Age: Older (46 – above)	13	87	107	46
Younger (45-below)	2	13	128	54
Total	15	100	235	100
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	5	33	74	31
Female	10	67	131	69
Total	15	100	235	100
<u>Civil Status</u>				
Single/Widow	2	13	50	21
Married	13	87	185	79
Total	15	100	235	100
<u>Educational Qualification</u>				
Ed.D./Ph/D.	10	67	27	12
MA with units in Ed.D./Ph/D.	5	33	102	43
MA	0	0	19	8
Bachelor’s Degree with MA Units	0	0	87	37
Total	15	100	235	100
<u>Length of of Service</u>				
1-4 years	8	54	25	11
5-8 years	1	7	31	13
9 years and above	6	40	179	76
Total	15	100	235	100
<u>Academic Rank</u>				
Instructor	0	0	79	34
Assistant Professor (I-IV)	1	7	87	37
Associate Professor (I-IV)	2	13	58	25
Full Professors (I-VI)	12	80	11	4
Total	15	100	235	100

Table 2. Differences in Means of Dean’s Conflict Management Styles as Perceived by themselves and by the Faculty Members

Conflict Management Style	Dean’s Perception	Faculty’s Perception
Competing	3.44	3.33
Collaborating	4.61*	4.31*
Compromising	3.19	3.27
Avoiding	1.55	1.67
Accommodating	2.07	2.37
	Mean = 2.99	Mean = 2.98

t= 0.18 not significant at 5 percent level

Over-all Mean = 2.9889

Legend:

5- most preferred

2- Least Preferred

4- often preferred

1- would not make at all

3 – occasionally preferred

The faculty members’ assessment of their deans’ conflict management style did not differ significantly according to their age, educational qualification, length of service, and academic rank. This is indicated by insignificant the Cramer’s V values for all crosstabulations of the faculty’s perceptions by their specified characteristics. This means that irrespective of age, educational

qualification, length of service and academic rank, the faculty members consistently perceived that their deans’ preferred conflict management style was “collaborating” in nature, and their least preferred style was the “avoiding style.” Not one of the personal variables studied was significantly related to the conflict management style of the deans as reported by themselves.

Table 3. Association Between Conflict Management Styles and Personal Variables

Personal Variables	Cramers V
Age	0.15 ns
Sex	0.19 ns
Civil Status	0.27 ns
Educational attainment	0.17 ns
Length of Service	0.31 ns
Academic Rank	0.22 ns

ns = not significant at 5 percent

Association between Conflict Management Style and Level of Job Satisfaction

Most the faculty members in every state university/college were either satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction of the faculty did not vary significantly according to the faculty member’s personal characteristics, namely; eye, sex, civil status, education, length of service and academic rank. This is substantiated by Cramers V values which all are not statistically significant at 5 percent level. (Table 4). The findings corroborate Janay’s (1995) observation that conflict management style and educational qualification are

not related and Caipang’s (1989) finding that there is no significant difference in the job satisfaction level of the college graduates and of the non-college graduates.

Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Performance

Majority of the faculty members in each sample state university/college obtained a performance rating of “very satisfactory”. The level of job performance of the faculty members is slightly related to their level of job satisfaction. The conflict management style of the deans was not significantly related with job satisfaction.

Table 4. Association Between Faculty Members’ Job Satisfaction and their Personal Variables.

Personal Variables	Cramers V Values
Age	0.08 ns
Sex	0.31 ns
Civil Status	0.43 ns
Educational Qualification	0.19 ns
Length of Service	0.47 ns
Academic Rank	0.32 ns

ns = Not Significant at 5 percent

CONCLUSIONS

Both the deans and faculty members in State Colleges and Universities in Region VI perceived that deans tend to resolve conflicts using the “collaborating style” and seek solutions to problems through open discussion.

Faculty members with high level of job satisfaction tended to perform better than those less satisfied with their job. There is no significant relationship between the level of job satisfaction of faculty members and their performance ratings. The findings corroborate Janay’s (1995) findings.

The results support the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the job satisfaction of the faculty members when they are grouped as to age, sex, civil status, educational qualification, length of service and academic rank. Caipang (1989) also observed that job satisfaction is constant for those who have been in the service for a long time. The study, however, failed to confirm Buensuceso's (1984) findings that length of service had no significant influence on job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction did not also have a significant bearing on the job performance of faculty members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

School administrators must be trained on conflict management so that they could gain skills and competence in making sound decisions and in resolving conflicts. SUC presidents/administrators should adopt strategies that will help increase teachers' level of satisfaction.

Further research on conflict management should make use of more refined instruments or more discriminating procedures for measuring/determining conflict management styles of administrators, job satisfaction and performance. Future studies on the perception of non-teaching personnel, students, and alumni regarding conflict management style of deans/administrators should also be undertaken. Private higher education

institutions should be covered in these future studies.

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