

## Conflict Management Styles of Faculty

Rainalda Rambuyon<sup>1\*</sup>, Christian Domondon,

<sup>1,2</sup>University of Northern Philippines

Email: <sup>1</sup>\*rptabularam@yahoo.com

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### ABSTRACT

The study determined the most dominant conflict management style of the faculty members of Laboratory Schools, College of Teacher Education, University of Northern Philippines, Vigan City in dealing with conflicts with their supervisor, peers, and students. This study used the descriptive design of research. The researchers adopted the 28-item Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) which consisted of three forms A, B, C which were for supervisors, peers, and students respectively. The results showed that the most dominant conflict management style of faculty in dealing with conflicts with supervisor, peers and students was collaborating. They tried to investigate an issue in order to find an acceptable solution. Moreover, they tried to integrate ideas to come up with a joint decision, working together for proper understanding and to find a solution to a problem that satisfies over expectations exchange accurate information, and bring all concerns out in the open in order for the issues to be resolved in the best possible way. Only few of the respondents preferred accommodating and competing styles in dealing with conflicts towards their supervisor, peers and students; while avoiding was applied in dealing conflicts toward peers. Moreover, respondents never compromised in dealing conflicts with supervisors, peers, and students.

### Keywords

Conflict, Manage, Faculty, Dominant, Descriptive

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### Introduction

The 21st century is an era of stress. Due to globalization, information technology revolution, and speed of life, people face stress in their organization and daily lives. The significant effects of these can be viewed in the world of business and education, and they can express themselves as changes that organizations make in their structures, strategies, and activities. New roles and duties on employees are imposed by constantly changing organizations. Employees who want to accept new roles and responsibilities need to have efficiency in decision-making and problem-solving. Inability to overcome rapid and constant change often leads to conflicts.

Conflicts of various magnitudes occur frequently. A teacher, for example, shares a work space in the faculty room with a colleague who regularly leaves the space disorganized and untidy, which looks unprofessional since students are present in that office. It can also be a senior colleague who insisted being the first author of a research paper when a younger colleague did all the work; or the principal or supervisor expresses disagreements towards a carefully planned instructional activity. A more extreme example would be disruptive supervisors who yell or throw charts or instruments towards teachers.

Conflict has been measured in different settings. Observational studies showed that conflicts were depicted as “high tension events” in which there was a minimum of one to four high tension events. An average of four conflicts per operation happened among operating room team members. Among 5,000 workers in nine countries, 85% of them managed conflict to some degree, and 29% of them managed conflict frequently or always. Another viewpoint focuses on “toxic personalities” defined as “anyone who shows patterns of ineffective work behaviors that weaken individuals, groups, and organizations over the long period.”

Conflict frequently occurs when working with people having toxic personality. A survey found that 64% of individuals experienced and faced a toxic personality in their present work environment, and 94% had worked with people having that kind personality during their career. Another study said that 91% of nurses experienced verbal abuse. The impact of these interactions on mood is significant. In addition, employees interacted with coworkers or superior at four different daily intervals. The employees rated their interactions positively or negatively, and recorded their mood of interaction with them. The employee's mood was affected by the negative interactions five times more strongly than positive ones [1].

Common causes of conflict include unclear guidelines, poor skills in communication, and unclear jurisdiction, differences in personality, conflicts of interest, and gradual changes within the organization. Conflict resulting behaviors could include limited interaction, bullying, or not sharing important information or ideas, and physical or verbal violence. The most frequent causes of conflict observed by employees were personality struggles, stress, heavy workloads, and poor leadership skill, dishonesty, accountability and openness, and unclear role.

Although conflict cannot be avoided, it can be surely managed. It is truly important to develop appropriate skills to effectively manage a difficult conversation. Experts believe that the skills necessary to manage difficult conversations can be acquired and learned; they defined conflict competence as “the capability to develop and employ cognitive, behavioral, and emotional skills that boost productive results of conflict while minimizing the likelihood of harm.” The goal is to be competent enough in having difficult discussions. One model uses the terms “crucial conversations” and “crucial confrontations.” A “crucial conversation” is defined as “a discussion between or among people where there are high stakes, varied

opinions, and strong emotions.” Confrontations are face-to-face discussions in which someone is held accountable.

Conflict management is an important function of our work life. Conflict management skills are necessary to be successful in an organization [2]. The inappropriate use of conflict management technique may create a conflict situation that did not formerly exist, or complicate one that did [3].

The beginning of the process is the cultivation of self-awareness related to one's emotional and physical response to situations relating conflict. The most common responses on dealing with conflict include: avoiding, accommodating, competing, collaborating, and compromising. Avoidance or silence refers to a person who recognize conflict in a situation and consistently decide not to engage with the problem. It may be perceptive when the problem is small, as a brief reaction when emotions are high or when others can resolve a certain problem in a shorter period. This would be the opposite of a competing reaction of someone which is recognized as being uncooperative, forcing, and assertive in the issue. Competition may be proper in urgent circumstances. The needs of people who accommodate others are not basically met. Accommodation can be essential when one is not right, if the situation is more imperative to others or if the value of harmony in the situation outranks the benefit of a conflict. The conflict is resolved when accommodation is used, but if the process repeats itself more often, the relationship may be affected by residual resentment. Compromising and collaborating are a balance of cooperativeness and assertiveness. The distinction between the two is that compromising is, most of the time, a negotiation between equally powered parties, while collaborating is concentrated on finding solutions where the needs of all parties involved are met. Compromising is focused to fix certain issue with enough resources while collaborating aims for a broader perspective to solve a problem. Their combination is identified as an important response in solving problems. Since there is no right and accurate response, open-mindedness to different ideas and views of people can cultivate positive and good results. [1]

Managing conflict requires an individual to discover the root of the conflict. An example of this is a conflict that appears when one or both parties' input over a new advertisement is not valued. Further, each party should be able to recognize the view of other party and to effectively manage discussion in a productive and positive process and should establish win-win situations.

The Laboratory Schools (LS) is part of the College of Teacher Education, University of Northern Philippines. This is divided into four main departments namely child-minding, elementary, junior and senior high schools' departments. Like any other organizations, conflict also arises in the Laboratory Schools between faculty and supervisor, faculty and peers/co-teachers, and faculty and students. Conflicts sometimes arise between faculty and supervisor due to misunderstandings, and heavy and many workloads; between faculty members due to cramming of paper works, hearsay, and misunderstandings; and between faculty and students due to misunderstandings, late

requirements, and naughtiness and disrespectfulness of students inside the classroom.

The researcher would like to determine the conflict management style of the faculty of the Laboratory Schools. The results of this study will lead to a better understanding of the significance of conflict management and resolution, and recognize skills suitable to conflict management leading to a healthy environment. Results can be used by administrators, including the HRMO, to conduct intervention activities like seminar-workshops directed towards managing conflicts in the academe. It may also serve as a basis for future administrative decisions.

## Objectives

This study determined the conflict management style of the faculty of Laboratory Schools, College of Teacher Education, University of Northern Philippines, Vigan City. Specifically, it determined the most dominant conflict management style of the respondents in dealing with conflicts with supervisor, peers, and students in terms of collaborating style, accommodating style, competing style, avoiding style, and compromising style.

## Methods

This portion presented the research design, respondents of the study, research instrument, data gathering procedure, data analysis, and ethical consideration.

## Research Design

This study used the descriptive design of research in determining the most dominating conflict management style of the participants.

## Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the faculty members of the University of Northern Philippines- Laboratory Schools during the School Year 2018-2019.

## Research Instrument

The researchers adopted the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II [4] to determine the conflict management style of the respondents. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) is known by its emphasis on individual predispositions, its belief in the maintenance of balance of conflict in the organization, and its concern for effectiveness in managing conflicts. It was a 28-item questionnaire that is designed to measure five independent management styles namely Collaborating, Accommodating, Competing, Avoiding, and Compromising. The questionnaire contained Forms A, B, and C to measure how one member of an organization manages a conflict with supervisor, peers, and students, respectively. The five conflict management styles were measured by 7, 6, 5, 6, and 4 statements, respectively, chosen based on repeated factor and item analyses. A member responded to each statement

on a 5-point Likert scale. The highest score represented the most dominating conflict style. 1. Collaborating involves deep concern for self and to the other party involved. This concerned with collaboration between parties to have a solution to the conflict (7 items- 1,4,5,12,22,23,28) 2. Accommodating has low concern for self while deep concern for the other party involved in the conflict. It attempts to play down the differences and highlight the similarities to cater the concerns of the other party (6 items- 2,10,11,13,19,24) 3. Competing has high regard for self while low regard for the other party involved. This is a win-lose orientation and forces behavior to win the position of one (5 items- 8,9,18,21,25) 4. Avoiding has low concern for self and to the other party. It is related with withdrawal, passing-the-buck, sidestepping, or “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” (6 items- 3,6,16,17,26,27) 5. Compromising has 4 items (7,14,15,20).

### Data Gathering Procedure

Permission for the conduct of the study was obtained from the principal of the UNP-Laboratory Schools. After this, the letter of consent and the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The questionnaires were recorded, tabulated, and computed to determine the most dominant conflict management style of the respondents. An interview for the enrichment of the discussion of the study was done in which one respondent from each conflict management style were the participants.

### Data Analysis

Frequency and percentages, and rank were used to determine the most dominant conflict management style.

### Ethical Considerations

Research ethics were properly observed in the conduct of the study. Permission to gather data was asked from proper authorities. The researchers provided informed consent for the respondents assuring the anonymity of their names. There was no conflict of interest in the study. The researchers' interest was only to determine the conflict management style of faculty members of UNP-Laboratory Schools. Privacy and confidentiality were considered by the researchers. Any records that were acquired were for the purpose of the study. Records were properly sealed and stored in a safe box. The computer/laptop that was used had a password so that nobody, except the researchers, could access to the data. Records would be destroyed after dissemination and publication by cutting into small pieces or shredding. The terms and conditions of the study were put in the Informed Consent Form. The rights of the respondents were also included in the form. The participation of the respondents was voluntary. The results of this study could be used to help the teachers in dealing with conflicts based on their conflict management style. Teachers would be able to understand each other's style in dealing with conflicts. It could also improve the management system of the school. It will also be a basis for seminars/training. There was no compensation associated with the study. This study would

help the community, especially leaders or managers, to be aware of their management style and effectively manage conflict in their different places.

## Results

This portion presents the results and discussion of the problem of this study.

Below were the tables on the conflict management styles of respondents towards their supervisor, peers, and students.

**Table 1.** Conflict Management Styles of Respondents Towards Supervisor

Management Styles	f	%	Rank
Collaborating	25	86.21	1
Accommodating	3	10.34	2
Competing	1	3.45	3
Total	29	100	

A very great percentage of 86.21% (25 out of 29) of the respondents have a “Collaborating” conflict management style in dealing with their supervisor. It implies that faculty tried to investigate an issue in order to find an acceptable solution. Moreover, they tried to integrate ideas to come up with a joint decision, working together for proper understanding and to find a solution to a certain problem that satisfies over expectations exchange accurate information, bring all issues out in the open so that all issues can be resolved in the best possible way.

On the other hand, three (10.34 %) have an “Accommodating” style. This means that they try to satisfy the needs of their supervisor by accommodating their wishes, allowing concessions, going along with the suggestions of the latter, in order to satisfy her expectations. It is also highlighted that there is only one (3.45%) who manifests a “Competing” style of conflict management. It means that the faculty tried to use his influence for his ideas to be accepted, use his expertise to make decision on his favor, firm in following his side of the issue and use his power to win in a competitive situation.

Teacher A, in an interview, said “Conflicts with the supervisor should collaborate regardless of positions or who's right so that they can hear each other's side and solve the conflict.” This means that understanding each other's side or stories is needed in solving conflict. Teacher B mentioned, “accommodating conflicts with the supervisor is the best thing I can do wherein I will always honor my supervisor and I will willingly ask for forgiveness regardless of being right.” She believed that honoring the supervisor's ideas is still the best way to solve conflict.

On the other hand, teacher C uttered, “I sometimes manage conflict with my supervisor depending on the situation. I compete, especially when I am right and she is wrong. If my integrity or dignity is at stake, I will still do it in the rightest possible way, where I will just state the facts that it is not my fault but hers.” She competes when she is right by stating her rightful side in the best manner.

The result is supported by Williams [5], who said that most people greatly use collaborating in interpersonal conflict

situations. People are more likely to collaborate than to accommodate, avoid, or compromise. Collaborating with other parties cultivates creative problem-solving. It is also a way of promoting mutual respect and good relationship.

**Table 2.** Conflict Management Styles of Respondents Towards Peers

Management Styles	f	%	Rank
Collaborating	27	93.10	1
Accommodating	1	3.45	2.5
Avoiding	1	3.45	2.5
Total	29	100	

All respondents (27 or 93.10%) have a “Collaborating” conflict management style towards their peers. This means that they bring all their issues out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way. Also, they work with their peers to properly understand a problem. In addition, only one (3.45%) respondent has “Accommodating” styles which means that he give in to the wishes of his peers and go along with the suggestions of his peers. Similarly, there is also one who has “Avoiding” style where in the respondent avoid open discussion of his differences with his peers. It also implies that respondents help their peers more in times of conflict than avoid them.

Teacher D stated, “Collaboration is the best way to handle conflicts with my co-teachers. It is better to talk to each other calmly about the situation. I believe that meeting halfway would be best to ask for forgiveness and chance.” She pointed out that helping one another and humbling one’s self is the best positive way of resolving conflict.

Avoiding is the best possible way for Teacher E in managing conflicts with co-teachers. She said, “I will just avoid, without any complain, so that the conflict will not go further. I believe that sooner the conflict would just be gone, and we will be friends again.”

Teacher F said that she would be accommodating a conflict with her co-teachers. “I am ready to humble myself and ask for forgiveness”, she mentioned.

This is not the same as the study of Sportsman and Hamilton [6], who found out that most respondents compromise and avoid when dealing with conflict with their peers.

**Table 3.** Conflict Management Styles of Respondents Towards Students

Management Styles	f	%	Rank
Collaborating	27	93.10	1
Accommodating	1	3.45	2.5
Competing	1	3.45	2.5
Total	29	100	

Twenty-seven out of twenty-nine or 93.10% of the respondents have a “Collaborating” management style in dealing with conflict with their students. This implies that they integrate their ideas with their students to formulate a decision and to work with their students to find solution to a specific problem.

There is only one (3.45%) who has “Accommodating” style who satisfy the expectation of his students. There is also one who has “Competing” conflict management style. This means that he uses his authority and influence over his students to make decisions in his own favor.

Teacher G mentioned, “I am willing to collaborate and listen to my students when conflict arises. I am willing to consider my students’ ideas and reasons and I will also tell mine in which it is a way I and my students think the best possible way to manage the conflict.” Teacher G knows that conflict is resolved when he and his students help one another by considering each other’s ideas.

Managing conflict with students through accommodation is the idea of Teacher H. “I am very willing to go down into my students’ level just to manage the conflict”, she said. On the other hand, Teacher I would compete with the students just to manage conflict. She mentioned, “As the authority of the class, I would stand as long as I am right and I will make my students realize their mistakes.” She believes that using her authority as a teacher will solve the conflict with her students.

Collaborating style is appropriate to use when both parties must continue to work together, and they are more focused on their relationship. Teacher and students relationship should be maintained for a healthy classroom environment [7].

Stanley and Algert [8] differently found out that faculty who became heads mostly used the compromising style for managing conflict with their subordinates in which the least used were avoiding and accommodating styles. They negotiate to resolve the conflict.

## Discussions

The study found out that 1) a very great percentage of 86.21% (25 out of 29) of the respondents have a “Collaborating” conflict management style in dealing with their supervisor; 2) almost all respondents (27 or 93.10%) have a “Collaborating” conflict management style towards their peers; and 3) twenty-seven out of twenty-nine or 93.10% of the respondents have a “Collaborating” management style in dealing with conflict with their students.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that 1) the most dominant conflict management style in dealing with conflicts with supervisor, peers and students was “Collaborating”; 2) only few of the respondents preferred accommodating and competing styles in dealing with conflicts towards their supervisor, peers and students; while avoiding was applied in dealing conflicts toward peers; and 3) respondents never compromised in dealing conflicts with supervisors, peers, and students.

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