

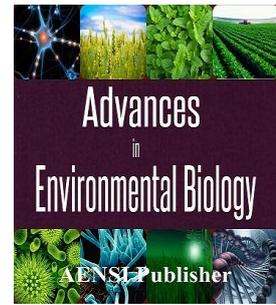


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A Study of the Relationships between Conflict Management Styles and the Effectiveness of the Personnel of Sports and Youth Organizations of Hamadan Province

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at considering the relationships that may come about between the conflict management styles and the effectiveness of the personnel of the Sports and Youth Organizations in Hamadan province, Iran. This study is of correlative-descriptive type done as a case study. Considering its aims, this project is regarded as a practical research. For collecting the data necessary for the study, we employed the Conflict Management Questionnaire of Robbins (1991) which basically comprises 30 questions, and the Personnel Efficiency Questionnaire of Nedai (2012) which consists of 20 questions. The stability of the questionnaires was checked out through the use of Cronbach alpha whose values were found to be 0.88 for the Conflict management questionnaire and 0.67 for the Personnel Efficiency one. The statistical community of the study comprised all the staff of the Sports and Youth offices of Hamadan province, Iran, in the year 2014. They comprised a total of 140 persons (N=140) from among whom 103 (n=103) ones were selected as the subjects of the study using the Morgan sampling table as the available samples. Regarding the naturalness of the data, in **inferential statistics**, we use the Pearson Correlation Coefficient for analyzing the relationships, and Multi-variable Regression Coefficient for predicting the variables. Results from our study show that there is a significant relationship between the conflict management style of cooperation and personnel's efficiency ($P < 0.05$). Such relationship between the style of avoidance and the efficiency of the personnel of the Sports and Youth Offices of Hamadan province, however, is not significant ($P > 0.05$). results also indicate that the styles of Conflict Management are suitable for predicting the efficiency of the staff. And finally, it is proved that the style of competition has the greatest effect on the performance of the staff.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a phenomenon which may leave positive or negative effects on the performance of people and organizations. Proper exploitation of *conflict* can, at the same time, improve the performance of an organization and enhance its general health status. An improper application of it, however, can cause a decline in the performance and bring about tension and disturbance in the organization. A fruitful use of conflict demands a full understanding of its nature, causes of its creation and gaining the necessary skills and expertise in managing and controlling it as this is now considered an important skill in the field of management [6] Managers' ability in confronting and controlling the conflict is important in their success and prosperity. If conflicts are, thus, constructive, they will provide for the emergence of innovative ideas, which, in turn, help the productive development of the organization, and finally aid the managers in reaching their intended goals. Healthy and fruitful human relations, organizational cooperation and sympathy are among the latent factors that are necessary for the successful provision of products and services in any educational, industrial, administrative and service organization. And humans are the main source of both such healthy relations and, at the same time, lack of corporation and organizational conflict.

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Conflict is among the issues which has nowadays received the attention of the managers and the administrators of the organizations. This is because of the existence of abnormal conflict within the organization which wastes the energies and the capabilities of staff. It may even affect the production process and human resources. And this is never in favor of the organizations and their administrators as the present world is a highly competitive one in which products must be qualified and industrially justifiable. Thus, in order to exploit the full physical, mental and innovative capabilities of their staff, organizations have no way other than eliminating the intruding factors and problems. Instead of eliminating the conflict, if managers can devise a working way for dealing for it, they can make up for the efficiency of their organization, enhance its performance and success, and finally increase the confidence and commitment of the staff. The point to keep in mind is that it is not the conflict which brings about disturbance in the workings of a firm, it is rather the ineffective and improper management which lead to improper results. On important issue in such organizations, therefore, is how to manage and cope with conflict [1].

Conflict management is among the skills that managers must be endowed with in sports organizations. According to Robbins (1999), *conflict management* means that the managers be able to manage their organizations in the best possible way and provide for a balance between the organization and the members when there are oppositions. Therefore, conflict management implies management while there is a conflict, and it is believed that conflict is a source of released human energies which managers can use for reforming the general atmosphere of the organization in favor of its growth.

As conflict management involves three major strategies of solution-orientation (in which both parties seek cooperation with each other), non-opposition (in which parties tend to avoid opposition), and control (in which people just think of their own personal interests which lead to opposition), understanding different viewpoints helps people undertake proper procedures for solving the conflict. Besides these, the case of effectiveness is also highly significant in the lives of the organizations, so that the administrators should try to enhance this factor. According to the scholars of management science, effectiveness is the rate of achieving the intended goals, which demands various criteria [5].

Hensel et al. [10] in their study, conclude that there is a direct relation between organizational effectiveness and conflict. Also studies by Dats (1973) and Tjosvold [23] have stated that cooperation style of conflict management is more effective than the style which is oriented toward competition in team effectiveness. Hodge (1988) believes that an organization is effective when, regardless of other results achieved, it cooperates with its surrounding milieu. Some scholars consider effectiveness as profitability, others regard it as job satisfaction, and still others say that it is social advantage [15]. Studies by Abbas Naghzadeh et al [17] have shown that the *cooperation* style of conflict management has significant effects on team effectiveness from the viewpoints of coaches and players, while the *competition* style has negative effects on team effectiveness.

A short glance at the different branches and the standards of effectiveness presented by the scholars and experts in the field of organizational management can well indicate that the styles of conflict management can directly and indirectly affect the effectiveness of the staff

The Sports and Youth Office is an organization which plays a key role in training able human workforce for the sports section of the country. Therefore, Taking care of the styles of conflict management can be helpful in enhancing their effectiveness.

The present study, accordingly, has intended to investigate the conflict management styles in the personnel of offices of Sports and Youth in Hamadan Province. It also aims at analyzing the effects of such styles on the effectiveness of them, and at coming up with working methods for resolving the conflicts and problems that may come about among the staff. What makes this study specially important is dealing with the parameters and variables that have significant roles in the management of the sports. Regarding the importance of each one of the mentioned variables, studying the relationships among them can offer remarkable outcomes for the managers and the personnel of such offices. They can let them come up with better management procedures. Basically, the major question that we follow in this study is: is there a significantly positive relationship between the Conflict Management styles and the effectiveness of the staff of the Sports and Youth Offices of Hamadan Province?

Research Methodology:

The present research is of correlative- descriptive sort which was conducted as case study through the use of questionnaires. Regarding its aims, this study is a practical one. The statistical community of the study comprised all the staff of the Sports and Youth offices of Hamadan province, Iran, in the year 2014. They comprised a total of 140 persons (N=140) from among whom 103 (n=103) ones were selected as the subjects of the study using the Morgan sampling table as the available samples. For collecting the data necessary for the study, we employed the Conflict Management Questionnaire of Robbins [19] which basically comprises 30 questions, and the Personnel Efficiency Questionnaire of Nedai which consists of 20 questions. The stability of the questionnaires was checked out through the use of Cronbach alpha whose values were found to be 0.88 for the Conflict management questionnaire and 0.67 for the Personnel Effectiveness one. For proving the

justifiability of the questionnaires and precisely checking the intended concepts and facts, they were critically considered by 12 professors of Physical Education. For testing the naturalness of the data also, we employed the Kolmogorov-Simronov test. For testing the hypotheses, we consulted the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and multi-variable Regression in SPSS 19 software with a $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

Findings:

Descriptive findings:

Table 1 presents the values of descriptive statistics for the variables of the study. As can be seen from this table, the mean value of the variable of age for 17 persons of the study (16.5 percent) is between 26 to 0 years, it is 31 to 35 years for 28 other ones (27.2 percent), and this value is above 6 years of age for the rest of the subjects, that is 58 people (56.3 percent). The mean values for the variable of sex were found to be male for the 71 persons of all the subjects (68.9), and female for the remaining 32 persons (31.1 percent). Results also show that of all the 103 subjects, 12 persons (11.7 percent) had less than 5 years of work experience in the studied offices, 29 others (28.2 percent) had between 6 to 10 years of job experience, 18 persons of them (17.5 percent) between 11 to 15 years, and finally 44 ones (42.7 percent) had more than 16 years of job experience. In terms of marital status, 16 persons (15.5 percent) of the subjects under study were single and the other 87 ones (84.5 percent) were married.

Table 1: descriptive statistics results

Percentage	Number	age
0	0	Under 25 years
16.5	17	26 to 30 years
27.2	25	31 to 35
56.3	58	Above 36
Percentage	number	sex
9.68	71	male
1.31	32	female
Percentage	Number	Job experience
11.7	12	Less than 5 years
28.2	29	From 6 to 10 years
17.5	18	From 11 to 15
42.7	44	More than 16 years
Percentage	number	Marital status
5.15	16	Single
5.84	87	Married

Inferential findings of the data:

Based on table 2, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient between competition style and effectiveness is $r=0.281$ with a 0.004 of significance level. Thus there is no significant relationship between these two variables and the hypothesis is refuted.

As well as presented in table2, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient for the relation between the cooperation style and effectiveness was found to be $r=0.135$ with a 0.009 level of significance, and this proves the significant relationship between these two variables.

As well as we can see from table 2, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient for the relation between the avoidance style and effectiveness was found to be $r=0.173$ with a 0.082 level of significance, and this refutes the zero hypothesis and proves the significant relationship between these two variables.

Table 2: results from Pearson correlation coefficient for the relation between competition style and the effectiveness of the staff,

STATISTIC VARIABLE	number of samples	Pearson correlation coefficient	sig..
competition style and the effectiveness of the staff	103	0.281	0.004
effectiveness of the staff, cooperation style	103	0.135	0.009
effectiveness of the staff, avoidance style	103	0.173	0.082

Emphasizing the existence of linear relations among the variables, assuming the independence of errors, observing Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) close to 1, and approving of the assumption of no parallel linear relations among the independent variables of the study, we placed them into the Regression model. Based on results presented in table 3, all the styles of Conflict Management with significance levels smaller than 3 percent, bear direct relations with effectiveness. In other words, all such styles have the capacity of affecting the

effectiveness of the staff, while the *competition* style with 0.251 of standard coefficient has the greatest effects on the effectiveness variable. Next to it, the variables of avoidance and cooperation styles are the most effective ones with 0.163 and 0.079 coefficients, respectively.

Table 3: Regression model coefficients for each of the variables.

Sig.	standard	Non-standard		Model independent variables
	Beta coefficient	Standard deviation	Beta coefficient	
0.000	--	0.235	2.066	Fix value
0.220	0.251	0.042	0.096	Competition style
0.481	0.079	0.065	0.046	Cooperation style
0.106	0.163	.039	0.064	Avoidance style

Discussion and conclusion:

Our results, as we saw, show that there is a direct significant relationship between the competition style of Conflict Management and the effectiveness of the staff. This result of ours agrees with those of Jalilvand et al. [12], Mozafari et al. [16], Naghizadeh et al. [17], Kanani et al. [13], Hensel et al. [10], and Shamiala et al. [21]. We can, thus, conclude that the more the managers employ the competition style in dealing with conflict situations, the more effective their personnel will be. After competition, the staff also tend toward cooperation, while Among all the subjects, competition takes the second place of importance. In the other studies mentioned, competition style occupies a rank from first to fifth, variously. This shows that managers more often use the power of their authority and organization in solving the conflict situations than the cooperative and unitary ones.

Our results also prove that there is a direct and significant relationship between the cooperation style and the effectiveness. This accords with the results of Alpero et al. Jalilvand et al. [12], Rahimnia et al. [18], Bagherzadeh et al. [4], Mozafari et al. [16], Naghizadeh et al. [17], Kanani et al. [13], Shamiala [21], Somech et al. [22], Rotschild et al. [20], Hensel et al [10], Farzadnia et al. [8], Mozafari and Ahmadi [14] Shamiala et al. [21], and Anti Somech [3]. All such results along with ours, show that the cooperation style of conflict management has positive effects on the effectiveness of the personnel. Compared to the style oriented toward competition helps the staff be more effective in the time of conflict. Under this style, the parties involved are firmly after their interests while, at the same time, they seek cooperation and care for the profits of the other party.

Our results also indicate that there is no significant relation between the avoidance style and effectiveness. This finding of ours agrees with those of Mazaheri & Ahmadi [14], Fiazi [7], and Ghaviandam [9], however, does not accord with the results from the studies of Hensel et al [10], Jalilvand et al. [12], Kanani et al. [13], and Shamiala et al. [21]. Reasons for this disagreement might well lie in intending different subjects and place of conduction of the study. In this style, the manager has little emotional preparation for facing and dealing with the tensions caused by the conflict. He or she, in other words, has not the capability of withstanding the results of a conflict, and therefore, tries to ignore it, or stay indifferent to it. In such situation, accumulation of conflicts and differences disturbs the cooperation and agreements, and finally leads to a decrease in the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Applying the avoidance style to all instances of conflict is not good. When, however, there is little conflict, or the emotions and feelings of the parties involved are hurt, it can be proper procedure for coming out of the difficulties.

Based on what we learnt from this study, the cooperation style is the best strategy to be held in conflict-ridden situations as it has also enhanced the effectiveness of the staff. Cooperation is the only style in which the parties involved in conflict listen to each other, try to identify the source of the conflict and finally mean to solve it through cooperative measures and mutual participation. They try to reach solutions that covers the interests of both sides, or may even exchanges some advantages in order to gain a remedy. Regarding the cultural differences and the kind of performance that people have in various organizations, organizational conflict and conflict management have been increasingly cared for by the managers and officials of the organizations. Thus considered, Conflict is something undesirable within an organization. And for exploiting the greatest degree of the physical, mental, and intellectual capacities of their workforce, organizations must get rid of such intruders as organizational conflict. By employing able managers who can come up with working solutions for coping with conflict, organizations can lead it toward achieving their aims. As conflict seems unavoidable in sport settings, the outcomes of conflict depend on how to face it and what strategies to hold in the face of it. In order to properly use conflict so as to increase the effectiveness of the staff via it, one shall have a knowing strategy and seek solutions for getting of conflict that are accepted by all parties involved.

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