

Nature, Causes and Strategies for Resolving Students' Conflicts: The Perceptions of Faculties of Pure and Social Sciences

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Abstract

This paper focused on the investigation on the causes, nature and role of the public and private sectors universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For this purpose 10 universities were taken as sample of the study. The major objectives of the study were to; i). To identify the views held by the faculty of pure and social sciences of public and private universities respondents regarding the nature and causes of students' conflicts in universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ii). to identify the views held by the faculty of pure and social sciences of public and private universities respondents regarding academic personnel' strategies in universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to identify the views held by the faculty of pure and social sciences of public and private universities respondents regarding the role of academic personnel in resolving students' conflicts in universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Self-developed questionnaires were used to ascertain data from the respondents. Data were put into SPSS 21 version and standard deviation and t-test were utilized for analysis of data. Findings show that private sector universities have got more accurate disciplinary committees for the identification of students' conflicts. Similarly they very aptly resolve their internal conflicts.

Keywords: Students' conflicts, Strategy, Higher Education, Teaching faculty, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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Introduction

Conflict is a fact in organizational life. It is not solid but appears suddenly from individuals' emotions and sentimentalism and adopts a solid shape through reasoning, intimidating, bullying, harassing, maltreating, menacing, and opposing and even take the shape of fighting. Timely, properly and efficiently handling of conflict bring constructiveness. Untimely and ineffectively tackling of a conflict brings destructiveness.¹

Social conflict arises in social setting between/among individuals when they are struggling for the attainment of their own desires and they do not show their positive sharing to the concerned matter. The occurrence of conflicts is sometimes due to changes occurring in the procedure and adopts vicious and aggressive shape. Some of the members desire for change while others show opposition to it. Human life has been adversely or positively affected by conflicts. So conflict needs proper management and proper dealing. It becomes terrifying and even fatal if not managed properly. The proper and positive handling of conflict results constructiveness. Sound relationship is encouraged, unity is constructed, smooth interaction is cultivated, organizations are built up, new philosophies, doctrines and rules are advanced by proper handling of conflicts.²

Similarly, conflicts are different in nature and other characteristics. Conflict is a multi-dimensional occurrence. All conflicts have distinctiveness, but there is peculiar backdrops, dimensions, and home-grown construction behind each conflict. They have diverse features and pass through diverse stages. To reach to the solid solution of conflicts, there is a need to visit the root causes of those conflicts.³ Social group in a social setting always start conflict. It can further be divided in two groups. The first is triggered by inexperienced exchange agenda while the other is stimulated by societal issues based on shared interests.⁴

Statements of the Problem

This paper concentrates on the investigation of the study of Public & Private Sector Universities Academic personnel' views regarding nature, causes, strategies and role in resolving Students conflicts between the faculties of pure and social sciences.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

- i). To know about the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding

the nature of conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

- ii). To find the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the causes of conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- iii). To investigate about the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the strategies of resolving conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- iv). To assess the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the role of academic personnel in resolving conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

- i). Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the nature of conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
- ii). Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the causes of conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
- iii). Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the strategies of resolving conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
- iv). Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the role of academic personnel in resolving conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Review of Related Literature

Reasons and Sources of Conflicts

Social conflicts are created by individual or group dissimilarities, disharmony, discrepancy, incongruity, skirmishes, smashes, spat, quarrel, or even by battles and hostile confrontations. Issues like responsibility, authority and personal misconception are protected

by conflicts. Conflicts arise due to multiplicity in ideas, variances in benefits, varieties in philosophies and aspirations of persons.⁵

Conflict is an integral part of life. One can face conflict in one's life in divergent situations. There is no proper place or proper time for its occurrence but may occur anywhere, in any setting, anytime during human dealings. The major causes of conflicts are resources, psychological needs, values and disinformation. Conflicts occur due to scanty resources and one individual or group wants to snatch all resources. Sometimes conflicts arise due to over values and one individual or group is fighting for the sake of his /her own values or principles. Some imperfect information becomes the main cause of conflicts and this is considered the major reason among others. The psychological requirements also play its role in the occurrence of conflicts because everyone wants to fulfil his/her own needs.⁶

Research studies show that the main causes of conflicts are aspirations, yearnings, craving, necessities, anxieties, and drives. Conflicts speak of hostility, discord, opposition which occur among individuals or groups when they disprove or oppose each other notions, outlooks or communications. So confrontational and combative situations prevail due to these factors.⁷

Furthermore, in case of clashes among the fellows of a team, stern rules should be charted. He should be rusticated from the team or give permission to join the other team if violate the rules and adopt unfair mean.⁸ Sometimes elimination of the person from group is valuable for the team performance. Halperin, studied that during disputes active listening to the problem is needed. Interruption should be disregarded. Satisfaction should be provided to every party. Opportunity should be given to everyone to defend himself/herself in a proper way and the solution should be accepted.⁹ Self-awareness is very essential for the solution of organizational problems. We can make strong our professional connections and can easily manage our problems through this technique.

Conflict is the situation which guarantees the existence of differences between or among the interdependent persons when they try for the attainment of their aims and goals; and for fulfilling of their requirements. The disparity in the opinions of the persons and discrepancy in their views cause conflicts in social setting. Conflict arises due to struggle between parties when they want to get their objectives, or to do according to their own beliefs or to fulfil their own needs.¹⁰

Collective resources, goals inconsistencies, breaches in perceptions, opposing views about standards, opposition in the role requirements, improper exchange of ideas, struggling sense for the attainment of goals, obstruction in glory, aspiration, needs achievement, security and in the equality of decision making; and nature of work, hostile attitudes of persons and diverse stages in the progress of structure development and organizational shape are major sources of social conflicts. Aggression and hostility based on non-attainment of goals cause conflicts and sometimes power struggle becomes the strong cause of conflict. Sometime the concerned persons try to control the other party and show aggression which cause conflict when reaction arise from other side. Variance in opinions, requirements, goals, and standards create a sense of rivalry between or among the individuals or groups and then these opposing views, dissimilar interests and divergent perceptions cause severe actions which is called conflict.¹¹

Fundamental Forces behind Conflicts

There are various factors which affect the origination of conflicts in social setting. Human nature is always confronting with clashes and conflicts which are the consequences of those contrasting struggles, made for usurping the available resources or seizing power by force. Conflicts always arise due to class struggle in organization and in educational institutions.¹² Mughal and Khan¹³ argue that there are five fundamental forces which start conflicts are discussed as under;

Communiqué/Communication

Communication is one of the basic forces behind conflict. Individuals show defection and imperfection in communication which badly damage the whole society. Wrong communication brings destruction, catastrophe and even collapse of the human empire.¹⁴ Class differences, gender prejudice standards of living, materialism and severe greed are main factor for the origination of conflicts. On other side, social peace-building needs positive, constructive, decent and respectable communication.

Emotions and Sentiments

Emotions are catalyst for the start of conflicts. It is just like fuel to fire. Emotions are promoted by earlier experiences and peculiar social relationship. The direct expression of emotion speed up conflicts. Overcoming emotions and controlling sentimentalism is

vital for the secure atmosphere and peaceful existence. To avoid conflict arbitration may be given opportunity to eradicate the evil of conflict even in the beginning. To nip the evil in the bud rule may be applied timely.¹⁵

Values and Principles

Values are the very basic beliefs, dogmas, doctrines, philosophies, criteria, standards, morals, principles, ideologies, theories, and creeds of human life. They are very effective and have a paramount importance in the lives of persons. These are the fundamentals and course of action in all walks of life. Society is the mixture of diverse angles and there are also the concepts of good and bad. Sometimes these values become the causes of conflict and no one compromise on values but considers himself/herself the most fair, honest and upright and the other is regarded as Satan, wicked, spiteful, malicious, despicable and treacherous.¹⁶

Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature and survey was conducted to collect the data from the respondents of the study.

Population

There are Twenty-eight (28) universities, including Nineteen (19) Public and Nine (09) Private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan constituted the population of this study. All the academic personnel (Director Academics, Deans of Science and Arts, Chairperson, Assistant professors, lecturers and students) of these universities constituted the population of this study.

Sampling

A Sample of Ten (10) universities, five (05) each from Public and Private Sector Universities was selected randomly. Multistage-Purposive sampling methods were used for the selection of Directors academics, Deans of science and art, chairpersons/HODs and random sampling techniques were employed for the selection of assistant professors, lecturers and students of bachelor and master. A sample of 580 respondents was selected through multistage- purposive and random sampling techniques from the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan for the study. From ten selected Universities, Director Academic, Dean of Science and Dean of Arts were selected using identical sampling method while, five Directors/ Chairmen from respective Departments, ten

Assistant Professors, ten Lecturers, fifteen Bachelors and fifteen Masters Students were selected randomly. In this way, from each University the size of the sample was fifty-eight and total sample size was five hundred & eighty (580).

Analysis of the Data

Statistical analysis was carried out with SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistics i.e. mean, and standard deviation was used to describe the trends in the data. For inferential statistics t-test and Cohen's d were used to describe mean difference and effect size. Independent samples t-test was used to find mean difference across groups along with effect size to find the strength of the mean difference through Cohen's d. The obtained results were tabulated and interpreted separately.

Results

Table 1: Comparison of views between the respondents of pure and social sciences faculties regarding the nature of conflicts among students (N= 580)

Faculty category	N	Mean	SD	T	P	Cohen's d
Pure sciences	290	3.82	0.59			
Social sciences	290	3.92	0.55	-1.89	0.00	0.17
Overall	580					

Table 1 depicts that there is a significant difference between the views of the pure science and social sciences respondents at point 0.05 level of significance with t value=-1.89 and p-value=0.00. It can be further depicted that the respondents of private universities are significantly more agreed on statements regarding the nature of conflicts among university students as compared to the respondents of public sector universities with effect size=0.17

Research Question

Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the causes of conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Table 2: Comparison of views between the respondents of pure and social Science faculties regarding the causes of conflicts among students (N= 580)

Faculty category	N	Mean	SD	T	P	Cohen's d
Pure sciences	290	3.87	0.57	-4.64	0.00	0.38
Social sciences	290	4.07	0.45			
Overall	580					

Table depicts that there is a significant difference between the views of the public and private universities respondents at point 0.05 level of significance with t value=-4.64 and p-value=0.00. It can be further depicted that the respondents of private universities are significantly more agreed on statements regarding the nature of conflicts among university students as compared to the respondents of public sector universities with effect size=0.38

Research question

Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the strategies of resolving conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Table 3: Comparison of views between the respondents of pure and social sciences faculties regarding the conflict resolution strategies/ approaches of conflicts among students (N= 580)

Faculty category	N	Mean	SD	T	P	Cohen's d
Pure sciences	290	3.65	0.58	-3.46	0.00	0.28
Social sciences	290	3.81	0.54			
Overall	580					

Table depicts that there is a significant difference between the views of the public and private universities respondents at point 0.05 level of significance with t value=-3.46 and p-value=0.00. It can be further depicted that the respondents of private universities are significantly more agreed on statements regarding the nature of

conflicts among university students as compared to the respondents of public sector universities with effect size=0.28

Research question

Is there a significant difference among the opinions of different categories of respondents of pure and social science faculties regarding the role of academic personnel in resolving conflicts among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Table 4: Comparison of views between the respondents of pure and social sciences faculties regarding the role of academic personnel in conflicts among students (N= 580)

Faculty category	N	Mean	SD	T	P	Cohen's d
Pure sciences	290	3.71	0.59	-0.89	0.37	0.08
Social sciences	290	3.76	0.55			
Overall	580					

Table depicts that there is a significant difference between the views of the public and private universities respondents at point 0.05 level of significance with t value=-0.89 and p-value=0.37. It can be further depicted that the respondents of private universities are significantly more agreed on statements regarding the nature of conflicts among university students as compared to the respondents of public sector universities with effect size=0.08

Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

- There was significant difference (t -1.89, p 0.00) between the views of the pure science and social sciences respondents on the nature of conflict at university level. The t value -1.89 illustrates that the respondents of social sciences were more aware of the nature of conflict among university students than the respondents of pure sciences (Table 1).
- There was significant difference (t- 4.64, p 0.00) between the views of the pure science and social sciences respondents on the causes of conflict at university level. The t value -4.64 illustrates that the respondents of social

sciences were clearer on the causes of conflict among university students than the respondents of pure sciences.

- There was significant difference ($t=3.46$, $p=0.00$) between the views of the pure science and social sciences respondents on the approaches/strategies applied for the resolution of conflict of students at university level. The t value -3.46 illustrates that the respondents of social sciences were more aware about the approaches/strategies implementable for the solution of conflict among university students than the respondents of pure sciences.
- There was significant difference ($t=0.89$, $p=0.37$) between the views of the pure science and social sciences respondents on the role of academic personnel in conflict resolution at university level. The t value -0.89 illustrates that the respondents of social sciences were more aware of the role of academic personnel in conflict resolution among university students than the respondents of pure sciences (Table 4).

Recommendations

Keeping in view the conclusion of the study the following recommendations are made.

- i). The institutions may take initiative to make all teaching faculty aware about the nature and the contrary effects of students' conflicts.
- ii). Similarly all the faculties should be made aware of the strategies used for resolution of conflicts so that when and if any need arises they may utilize the relevant approach for conflict resolution.
- iii). Role of the administration is very crucial for resolution of conflicts, for this purpose the university administration should take proper measures to instigate and motivate teachers from pure and social sciences to resolve all sorts of conflicts.

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