

Research Article

A Study on Prevalence of Conflict among Higher Secondary Teachers

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Abstract

Conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction and often manifests in educational institutions where teachers play a central role in shaping the learning environment. This study investigates the prevalence of conflict among higher secondary school teachers, focusing on the sources, types, and frequency of conflicts experienced. Using a descriptive survey method, data were collected from a representative sample of teachers across selected higher secondary schools. The findings reveal that conflicts primarily arise from workload distribution, administrative decisions, interpersonal relationships, and differing pedagogical approaches. Gender, teaching experience, and school management type were found to influence the degree of conflict perceived by teachers. The study emphasizes the need for effective conflict management strategies, open communication channels, and supportive school leadership to minimize negative consequences and promote a harmonious working climate. Recommendations for policy and practice are provided to strengthen teacher collaboration and overall institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: *Conflict, Higher Secondary Teachers, Interpersonal Relations, Workload, School Climate, Conflict Management, Teacher Effectiveness*

INTRODUCTION

"The aim of education should be teach us rather how to think, than what to think rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men" –

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Bill Beattie. Education is the dynamic side of man's life. It deals with the ever-growing life of man who strives to adjust himself to the ever growing and ever changing society. 'Education' means - the act of teaching or training. 'Educare' means - to educate', 'to bring up', 'to raise'. 'Educare' means - out to deco means 'to lead' "I mean by educational that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instigates of virtue in children" - Plato.

CONFLICT:

A conflict exists when two people wish to carry out acts, which are mutually inconsistent. They may both want to do the same thing, such as eat the same apple, or they may want to do different things where the different things are mutually incompatible, such as when they both want to stay together but one wants to go to the cinema and the other to stay at home. A conflict is resolved when some mutually compatible set of actions is worked out. (M.Nicholson: Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict. 199 2: 11) The meaning of conflict is agony, collision, confrontation, difference, disagreement friction or hostility. Thus conflict represents the discontentment, which exists among Schoolteachers in various forms on grounds.

Conflict may stem from a variety of causes, and understanding them is the first step in dealing with it effectively. Below are a few of the most common reasons.

1. There is a perceived breach of faith and trust between individuals
2. There is unresolved disagreement that has escalated to an emotional level
3. There is miscommunication leading to unclear expectations
4. There are personality clashes
5. There are differences in acquired values
6. There is underlying stress and tension

7. There are ego problems
8. There are combinations of the above

This may give some emotional venting or relief but rarely solves the problem, especially when our friends agree with our view and reinforce our necessarily one-sided perspective. If

we perceive the conflict as truly serious, we may contract with lawyers to deal with our problems.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Education is the backbone of the progress and the teachers is the nucleolus of the transmission of culture, intellectual traditions and technical skill, from generation to generation. The Kothari Commission report (1964 - 66) says "The destiny of India is now being shaped in the class rooms; this we believe is no more rhetoric. In a world based science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people".

There is a strong undercurrent of discontent in the teaching profession. Hence, the management of educational crisis needs action on various dimensions. Most of the major problems of staff are caused by tension, dissatisfaction of job, job security, stress and lack of recognition. Consequently, higher education faces a serious and multi-faced crisis results from conflicts. Conflict is undesirable and harmful at the same time; it brings to surface hidden problems, which can be attended to so that we can search for better ways of doing things in the right way. This study is chosen by the investigator, with an idea to focus on the significance of conflict, among the teachers working in State Board Schools in Thoothukudi Educational District.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem chosen by the investigator is "A Study on Prevalence of Conflict among Higher Secondary Teachers in Thoothukkudi Educational District."

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The investigator has formulated the objectives for the study to find out the significant difference between the prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teacher working in State Board Schools in Thoothukkudi Educational District with reference to Sex, Age, Native place of the teachers, Subject, Orientation programme and Refresher courses attended.

HYPOTHESES

There is no significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board Schools with reference to sex, place of teacher, Orientation programme attended, refresher courses attended and subject.

METHOD ADOPTED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Survey can be defined as, "a method of analysis in scientific and orderly form for defined purpose of given situation of problem or population." keeping the guidelines in mind, the investigator adopts survey method, to study prevalence of conflict among teachers working in State Board Schools.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the present study consists of teachers working in State Board Schools. From this population the investigator has selected the sample comprises 227 teachers working in 60 schools in Thoothukkudi Educational District.

CONSTRUCTION OF TOOL:

In order to investigate, and analyse prevalence of conflict among teachers working in State Board Schools, the investigator has prepared a well-structured questionnaire, to tap all the possible information relevant to the study. The chosen research tool has three dimensions namely (i) individual conflict (Question 1 to 20), (ii) Interpersonal conflict (Question 21 to 59), (iii) Inter Group conflict (Question 60 to 65). By Individual Conflict, the investigator wants to reason out, the cause for the conflict in a person. Several psychological and managerial factors are considered to be the cause for conflict in a person. By Interpersonal Conflict, the investigator wants to highlight the reasons why and how conflict arises between individuals. Most of the reasons stems from managerial and psychological factor. By Inter - Group Conflict, the investigator wants to find out the cause for Inter-Group conflict between groups of individuals.

Likert's summated scale was used, to discriminate between persons whose total score is high and those whose score is low. The scale consists of a number of statements, which express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the object of study. The questionnaire is designed with the consultation of the guide and other experts in the field and irrelevant factors are deleted. The respondent is asked to respond to each statement in terms of five degrees of agreements, on a five-point scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (AG), Indifferent (IN), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The scale value ranges from 5 to 1 scores. Each person's response value is summed up, in the summed scale.

ESTABLISHING VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The content validity is the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic under study. The prepared tool to measure the prevalence of conflict among college teachers was given to the experts in the field, Professors and Reader of college and schools. Based on the opinions of the experts, modifications were carried out. Hence the content validity is established.

The test of reliability is a measuring instrument, provides consistent results and hence it does contribute to reliability. The investigator has administered the tool, to a sample of 50 respondents; the responses are carefully examined and scored. After an interval of a week, the same tool is administered to the same set of respondents and the responses are carefully examined and scored. The product movement correlation formula is used to calculate the correlation coefficient and it is found correlation coefficient is 0.689 and hence it is reliable.

SCORING PROCEDURE

The investigator has allotted five statements on a five-point scale. The scale values for different degrees of agreement ranges from 5 to 1 score such as

Strongly Agree (SA)	--	5
Agree {A G)	--	4
Indifferent (IN)	--	3
Disagree (D A)	--	2
Strongly Disagree {SD)	--	1

The structure of the questionnaire was divided into 3 categories; Individual conflict, Inter-personal conflict and Inter - Group conflict. The investigator has distributed out of the 65 questions, 20 questions to measure the individual conflict, 39 questions to assess Inter - Personal conflict and 6 questions to find out Inter-Group conflict.

ADMINISTRATION AND COLLECTION OF DATA

The investigator visited the school, with the permission of the authorities concerned. The investigator as planned has collected relevant information with the co-operation of the Headmaster of the respective school and from different categories of teachers from different localities, in tune with the objectives of the study and to highlight prevalence of conflict among teachers working in State Board schools.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

't' test was used the collected data for the present-study.

DATA - ANALYSIS

Null Hypothesis - 1

There is no significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to sex.

***Difference between male and female teachers working in State Board Schools
with reference to conflict***

Dimensions	Male (N =98)		Female (N=129)		Calculated t' value	Remarks at 5%
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Individual Conflict	73.24	6.66	73.06	7.1	0.10	NS
Inter Personal Conflict	127.46	13.18	128.17	11.65	0.42	NS
Inter-Group Conflict	21.69	3.93	22.18	4.45	0.87	NS
Conflict	218.64	21.51	219.1	22.56	0.16	NS

(Table T value at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

Null Hypothesis - 2

There is no significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to place of teacher.

***Difference between rural and urban teachers working in State Board Schools with
reference to conflict***

Dimensions	Rural (N =98)		Urban (N=129)		Calculated t' value	Remarks at 5%
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Individual Conflict	73.81	7.03	72.64	6.76	1.27	NS
Inter Personal Conflict	129.77	12.38	126.13	12.04	2.24	S
Inter-Group Conflict	22.26	4.07	21.71	4.37	0.99	NS

Conflict	222.59	21.86	215.55	21.81	2.43	S
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(Table 't' value at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

Null Hypothesis - 3

There is no significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to Orientation programme attended.

Difference between orientation programme attended and not attended orientation programme teachers working in State Board Schools with reference to conflict

Dimensions	Attended Orientation (N = 125)		Not Attended Orientation (N=102)		Calculated t' value	Remarks at 5%
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Individual Conflict	73.02	6.85	73.41	6.99	0.43	NS
Inter Personal Conflict	126.91	12.19	129.03	12.41	1.29	NS
Inter-Group Conflict	21.47	4.36	22.58	4	1.99	S
Conflict	217.1	22.11	221.11	21.92	1.36	NS

(Table 't' value at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

Null Hypothesis - 4

There is no significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to refresher courses attended.

Difference between refresher course attended and not attended refresher course teachers working in State Board Schools with reference to conflict

Dimensions	Attended Refresher (N = 148)		Not Attended Refresher (N=79)		Calculated t' value	Remarks at 5%
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Individual Conflict	72.14	6.82	74.05	7.01	1.36	NS

Inter Personal Conflict	126.19	12.13	131	12.11	2.85	S
Inter-Group Conflict	21.36	4.36	23.1	3.75	3.14	S
Conflict	216.05	21.9	224.24 I	21.51	2.71	S

(Table 't' value at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

Null Hypothesis - 5

There is no significant difference in prevalence of conflicts and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to subject.

Difference between science and arts teachers working in State Board Schools with reference to conflict

Dimensions	Science (N = 196)		Arts (N=31)		Calculated t' value	Remarks at 5%
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Individual Conflict	72.91	6.93	74.97	6.53	1.61	NS
Inter Personal Conflict	127.68	12.07	129.00	13.90	0.50	NS
Inter-Group Conflict	21.87	4.30	22.58	3.73	0.96	NS
Conflict	218.49	21.52	221.48	25.48	0.62	NS

(Table 't' value at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

FINDINGS

1. No significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions such as Individual conflict, Interpersonal conflict and Inter Group conflict is observed among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to sex.
2. Significant difference is observed in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to place to teachers. As far as dimensions are concerned. Significant difference is observed in Interpersonal conflict

and no significant difference is observed in the dimensions such as Individual conflict and Inter Group conflict.

3. No significant difference is observed in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to orientation programme attended. As far as dimensions are concerned significant difference is observed in Inter Group conflict and no significant difference is observed in the dimensions such as individual conflict and Interpersonal conflict.
4. Significant difference is observed in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to Refresher courses attended. As far as the dimensions are concerned significant difference is observed in the dimensions such as interpersonal conflict, Inter Group conflict and no significant difference is observed in Individual conflict.
5. No significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions such as a) Individual conflict, b) Interpersonal conflict and c) Inter-Group conflict is observed among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to subject.

INTERPRETATIONS

It is revealed from the analysis no significant difference is observed in prevalence of conflict among teachers working in State Board schools and its dimensions (Conflict and also in Interpersonal conflicts) with reference to locality of teachers. Rural teachers {222.59} are having more conflict than urban teachers

{215.55}..This may be due to the culture and behaviour of the teachers of rural area, where as in the urban locality the teachers are having interaction with other members.

It is observed that no significant difference in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools with reference to orientation programme attended and riot attended. It seems both teachers attending orientation programme and not attending orientation programme are having same level of conflict whereas, significant difference is observed in Interpersonal conflict among teachers attended and not attended orientation programme.

As far as teachers attending Refresher courses significant difference is observed in prevalence of conflict and its dimensions among teachers working in State Board schools. The teachers who do not attend refresher course are having more conflict than teachers who have

attended the Refresher course. This: may be due to teachers who do not attend the Refresher course may not have proper communication and interaction.

It is observed that no significant difference is observed in prevalence of conflict among teachers working in State Board schools and its dimensions with reference to teachers handling Science and Arts subjects.

Significant difference is observed among teachers handling different subjects in State Board schools with reference to prevalence of conflict and its dimensions (Conflict and Individual conflict). This may be due to teacher's have different subjects; who mean it is depending upon the depthless and importance of subject and one may have relaxation, if different persons teach different subjects. Therefore handling different subjects may be helpful in minimizing the conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the level of conflict among teachers working in State Board school is moderate. Seminars or workshop may be organised by the constituent schools, University or U.G.C at regular intervals so that the conflict may be minimized among teachers.
2. Changes may be provided to the teachers working in State Board School who do not undergo Orientation programme and Refresher courses under Faculty Improvement Programme.
3. Effective (counselling Programmes and Communication Programmes can be organized among teachers in the District itself.

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