

UNPACKING EXECUTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION: INSIGHTS FROM AN INDIAN DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIAL CLUSTER

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Abstract

Today's integrated work environment is highly dynamic in nature and "Conflict" is an inevitable part of organizational life. The ways in which conflicts are resolved in the organisations determine the degree of the organisational success. Research studies indicate that for conflicts to be managed most effectively, one style is more appropriate than the other, based on the situation (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979; Thomas, 1992). The present study is undertaken among the Executives of an Indian Diversified Industrial Cluster Automobile distribution company located in Madurai. Descriptive research design is incorporated. A sample of 100 executives were identified based on proportionate stratified sampling method out of 241 executives. Study reveals that 21% of the Executives are adopting Negotiation style of Conflict Resolution, 18% of the Executives are not using Compromise style of Conflict Resolution. Study also reveals that there is a significant difference in the Compromise Conflict Resolution Style between the Executives who are Married and Executives who are Single. There is a significant difference in the Confrontation Conflict Resolution Style between the Executives who are Leaders, Managers and Officers. There is a positive relationship between Age and Compromise Resolution Style with probability of Age having a positive influence of 8.3% on Compromise Conflict Resolution Style. There is a positive weak correlation that exists between Confrontation and Compromise Conflict Resolution styles with Age ($r=.227$, $r=.227$) and Years of Experience ($r=.207$, $r=.207$)

Keywords: Conflict Resolution Styles.

Introduction

Conflict is the perception and feeling by one party, individual, or group that the 'other' party is hindering the first party from achieving a goal. Conflict resolution or Conflictology is the process of attempting to resolve a dispute or a Conflict. Resolving Conflicts involves two distinct elements to achieve positive outcomes. The first element is 'Conflict Management'. This element is often referred to Conflict Settlement. The second element is 'Negotiation'. This element is used to arrive at an outcome which satisfies

both the parties. Conflict management is then directed towards settlement and Negotiation is directed towards achieving the more difficult outcome, Conflict Resolution.

Conflict Resolution Styles

1. **Resignation:** Resignation style of conflict resolution means ignoring or postponing the conflict. In other words, it is a belief that denying the unpleasant situation may result in the resolution of the conflict in due course of time.
2. **Withdrawal:** Withdrawal is another form of avoidance in getting away from a conflict situation. This may take several forms like not leaving opportunities for parties involved in conflict to work together, withdrawal of one of the conflicting parties from the conflict when it takes place, separating either of the parties physically, limiting the boundaries of interaction of the conflicting parties.
3. **Confrontation:** Confrontation is a style of conflict resolution often adopted by the management or the trade union in order to derive a solution in one's favour by fighting out the issue. It may result in 'win - lose' situation.
4. **Compromise:** This style of conflict resolution is often used in conflicts between management and unions. Compromising is the process of sharing the gain without resolving the conflict by bargaining.
5. **Negotiation:** It is the most mature approach in all conflict resolution styles. The satisfactory solution can be achieved through this style of conflict resolution. This method is also called as problem-solving method and it evokes the intellectual intensity of an individual to arrive at a fruitful solution for the conflict.

This study is undertaken among the executives of an Indian diversified Industrial Cluster Automobile distribution company located in Madurai to understand the conflict resolution styles among executives.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the conflict resolution styles preferred by the Executives
- To study the relationship between
- Conflict resolution styles and socio demographic profile among the executives.
- Confrontation, Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation conflict resolution styles among the executives.

Hypotheses

SL. No.	HYPOTHESIS	TESTING TOOLS
H ₀₁	There is no significant difference between Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic profile (Gender, Marital Status and Type of Family)	t-Test
H ₀₂	There is no significant difference between Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic profile (Designation)	ANOVA
H ₀₃	There is no significant relationship between Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic profile (Age, Income and Years of Experience).	Correlation
H ₀₄	There is no significant relationship between Confrontation, Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation of Conflict Resolution Styles.	Correlation
H ₀₅	There is no significant relationship between Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic profile (Age and Years of Experience).	Regression

Methodology:

Research Design: Descriptive research design

Determination of sample size:

- *Nature of Sample:* Executives
- *Population Size :* 241
- *Sample Size :* 100
- *Sampling Technique:* Proportionate Stratified Sampling (Identified three Strata are Leaders, Managers and Officers)

Table No: 1 Strata Table

Strata Name	Strata Size	Proportionate Size	Sample Size
Leaders	10	4.14	4
Managers	45	18.67	19
Officers	186	77.17	77

Simple Random technique was identified to select the sample in each stratum.

Sources of Data

Primary Source: Questionnaire was developed for the purpose of data collection.

Construct of the Inventory: Inventory for Conflict Resolution Styles is adopted from the scale developed by Udai Pareek and Surabhi Purohit Saloni. Split half reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.516. This scale consists of 20 statements measuring five

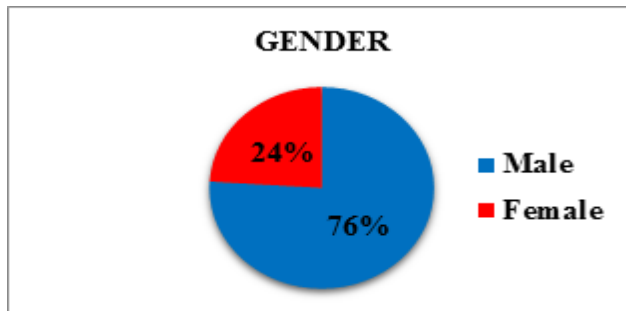
different dimensions of Conflict Resolution Styles which include Confrontation, Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation. The questionnaire also comprises of Socio Demographic questions which consists of both open ended and close ended questions.

Method of Data Collection: Interview Schedule.

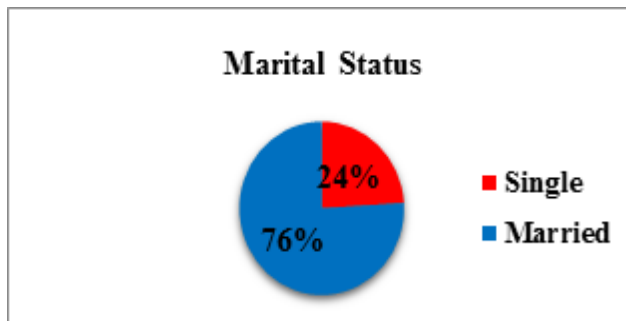
Framework of Analysis

- Descriptive Analysis : Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage , Bar and Pie Diagram
- Inferential Statistics : t-Test, ANOVA, Correlation and Regression

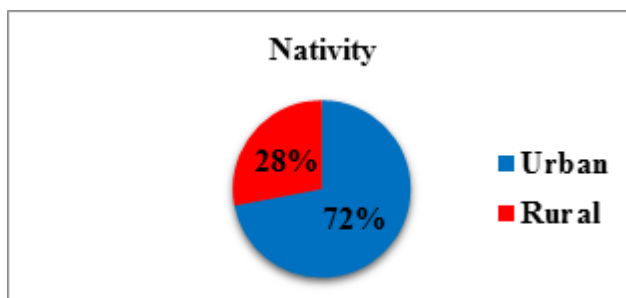
Results and Discussion



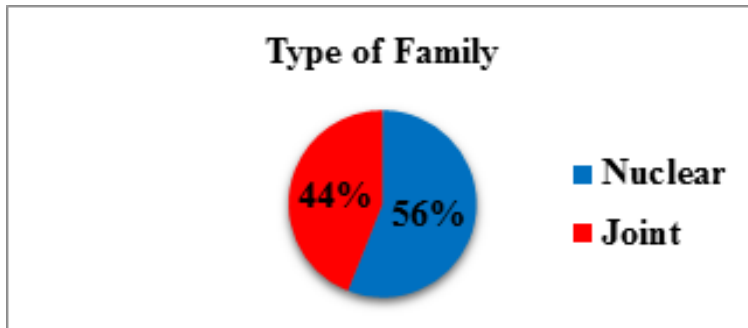
The diagram shows that 76% of executives are Male and 24% of executives are Female



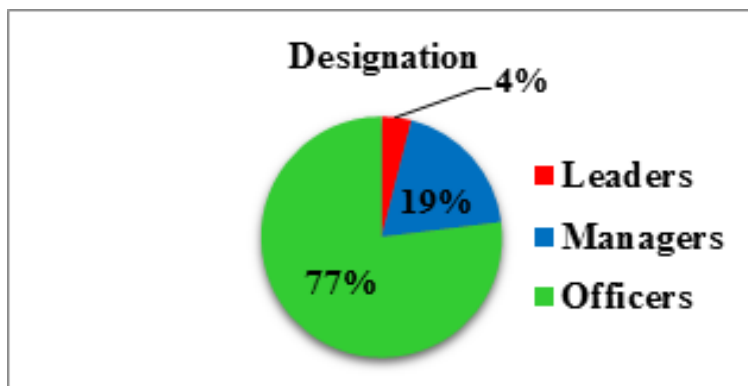
The diagram shows that 24% of Executives are Single and 76% of Executives are Married



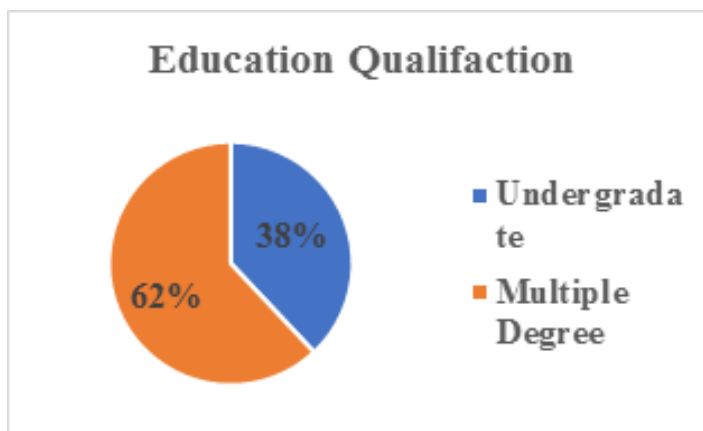
The diagram shows that 28% of Executives native place is Rural area and 72% are from Urban area.



The diagram shows that 56% of executives belong to Nuclear Family and 44% of executives belong to Joint Family.



The diagram shows that out of 100 Executives 4% are Leaders, 19% are Managers and 77% are Officers.



The diagram shows that 38% of executives are qualified with Single Degree and 62% of executives hold multiple degrees.

Table No: 2 Levels of Conflict Resolution Styles

	HIGH		MODERATE		LOW	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Confrontation	18	18%	66	66%	16	16%
Compromise	11	11%	71	71%	18	18%
Negotiation	21	21%	66	66%	13	13%
Withdrawal	16	16%	63	63%	21	21%
Resignation	22	22%	61	61%	17	17%

From the above table it is inferred that, 18% of the Executives are adopting Confrontation style of Conflict Resolution as they explore the reasons for conflict and 16% of the Executives are found low with Confrontation style as they don't express their feelings and they don't believe in fighting out the solutions for the Conflict. 11% of the Executives are adopting Compromise style of Conflict Resolution as they highly believe in Compromising with the situation and are ready to agree with the proposed solutions, while 18% of the Executives are not using Compromise style of Conflict Resolution as they are not much worrying about breaking their relationship with others. 21% of the Executives are adopting Negotiation style of Conflict Resolution as they try finding out alternative solutions for any problem. 13% of the Executives are not using Negotiation style of Conflict Resolution because they don't prefer seeking solutions from others. 16% of the Executives are adopting Withdrawal style of Conflict Resolution as they believe that avoiding Conflict is the best strategy and they always prefer being in comfort zone while dealing with relations and on the other hand 21% of the Executives are not adopting Withdrawal style because don't prefer entering into any conflict. 22% of the Executives adopt Resignation Style of Conflict Resolution because they have a practice of giving time to think for their companions before they talk, while 17% of the Executives are not using Resignation style because they postpone the problem situations.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀1: There is no significant difference between Conflict Resolution Styles and Gender (Male and Female)

Table No: 3 t-test for Testing Significance between the Conflict Resolution Styles and Gender

Conflict Resolution Styles	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t Value	P Value
CONFRONTATION	MALE	76	14.91	2.629	1.095	.282
	FEMALE	24	14.04	3.581		

COMPROMISE	MALE	76	14.41	2.515	.848	.403
	FEMALE	24	13.75	3.529		
NEGOTIATION	MALE	76	15.01	2.397	-.469	.640
	FEMALE	24	15.29	2.941		
WITHDRAWAL	MALE	76	14.62	2.471	-1.000	.320
	FEMALE	24	15.21	2.670		
RESIGNATION	MALE	76	14.05	2.795	.205	.838
	FEMALE	24	13.92	2.933		

The above table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation, t value and P value for Conflict Resolution Styles and Gender among the executives. It is observed that with respect to Confrontation Style, Males have a mean score of 14.91, Compromising Style, Males have a mean score of 14.41 and Resignation Style, Males have a mean score of 14.05, whereas Negotiation Style, Females have a mean score 15.29 and for Withdrawal Style, Females have a higher mean score of 15.21.

It is found that the P value is more than 0.05 in all the five conflict resolution styles. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the Conflict Resolution styles (Confrontation, Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation) and Gender of Executives.

H₀1: There is no significant difference between Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Status (Married and Single)

Table No: 4 t-test for Testing Significance Between the Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Status

Conflict Resolution Styles	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t Value	P Value
CONFRONTATION	SINGLE	24	13.96	3.407	-1.450	.150
	MARRIED	76	14.93	2.690		
COMPROMISE	SINGLE	24	13.04	3.263	-2.501	.014
	MARRIED	76	14.63	2.524		
NEGOTIATION	SINGLE	24	14.33	2.514	-1.677	.097
	MARRIED	76	15.32	2.499		
WITHDRAWAL	SINGLE	24	14.25	2.575	-1.139	.257
	MARRIED	76	14.92	2.497		
RESIGNATION	SINGLE	24	13.50	3.065	-1.039	.301
	MARRIED	76	14.18	2.731		

The above table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation, t value and P value for Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Status among the executives. It is observed that irrespective

of Conflict Styles Married Executives have a higher mean score, with respect to Confrontation Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.93, Compromising Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.63, Negotiation Style, Executives have a mean score of 15.32, Withdrawal Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.92 and Resignation Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.18

There is a significant difference in the Compromise Conflict Resolution Style between the Executives who are Married and Executives who are Single, as the P value is less than 0.05.

However, it is found that the P value is more than 0.05 in all the other Conflict Resolution Styles. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the Conflict Resolution Style (Confrontation, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation) and Marital Status of Executives.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between Conflict Resolution Styles and Type of Family (Nuclear and Joint)

Table No: 5 t-test for Testing Significance Between the Conflict Resolution Styles and Type of Family

Conflict Resolution Styles	Type of Family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t Value	P Value
CONFRONTATION	NUCLEAR	56	14.55	2.966	-.570	.570
	JOINT	44	14.89	2.814		
COMPROMISE	NUCLEAR	56	14.13	2.809	-.504	.615
	JOINT	44	14.41	2.781		
NEGOTIATION	NUCLEAR	56	14.93	2.729	-.675	.502
	JOINT	44	15.27	2.255		
WITHDRAWAL	NUCLEAR	56	14.70	2.280	-.283	.777
	JOINT	44	14.84	2.820		
RESIGNATION	NUCLEAR	56	13.70	2.954	-1.302	.196
	JOINT	44	14.43	2.601		

The above table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation, t value and P value for Conflict Resolution Styles and Education Qualification among the executives. It is observed that irrespective of Conflict Styles, Executives who come from Joint Family have a higher mean score, with respect to Confrontation Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.89, Compromising Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.41, Negotiation Style, Executives have a mean score of 15.27, Withdrawal Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.84 and Resignation Style, Executives have a mean score of 14.43

However, it is found that the P value is more than 0.05 in all the five conflict resolution styles. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the Conflict Resolution styles (Confrontation, Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation) and Type of Family of Executives.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between the Conflict Resolution Styles and Designation (Leader, Manager and Officer)

Table 6: One Way ANNOVA for Testing Significance Between the Conflict Resolution Styles and Designation

Conflict Resolution Styles	Designation	N	MEAN	S.D	F value	p-value
CONFRONTATION	LEADER	4	13.50	1.732	3.318	.040
	MANAGER	19	16.16	2.167		
	OFFICER	77	14.40	2.992		
COMPROMISE	LEADER	4	15.00	2.582	2.424	.094
	MANAGER	19	15.42	2.317		
	OFFICER	77	13.92	2.846		
NEGOTIATION	LEADER	4	16.75	2.630	2.831	.064
	MANAGER	19	16.00	2.357		
	OFFICER	77	14.77	2.502		
WITHDRAWAL	LEADER	4	15.00	2.582	.159	.853
	MANAGER	19	14.47	1.954		
	OFFICER	77	14.82	2.659		
RESIGNATION	LEADER	4	14.25	2.986	.107	.898
	MANAGER	19	14.26	2.513		
	OFFICER	77	13.95	2.906		

The above table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation, F value and P value for Conflict Resolution Styles and Designation among the executives. It is observed that with respect to Confrontation Style, Managers have a mean score of 16.16, Compromising Style, Managers have a mean score of 15.42 and Resignation Style, Manager have a mean score of 14.25, whereas Negotiation Style, Leader have a mean score of 16.75, Withdrawal Style, Leader a Mean Score of 15.00

There is a significant difference in the Confrontation Conflict Resolution Style between the Executives who are Leader, Manager and Officer, as the P value is less than 0.05.

However, it is found that the P value is more than 0.05 in all the other Conflict Resolution Styles. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the Conflict Resolution Style (Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation) and Marital Status of Executives.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Conflict Resolution Styles with Age and Experience

Table No: 7 Correlation between the variables of Conflict Resolution Styles

Conflict Resolution Styles	AGE	EXPERIENCE
CONFRONTATION	.227*	.207*
COMPROMISE	.227*	.207*
NEGOTIATION	.159	.122
WITHDRAWAL	.016	.027
RESIGNATION	.157	.188

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that a positive weak correlation exists between Confrontation and Compromise Conflict Resolution styles with Age and Years of Experience. It is also observed that Confrontation Style and Age are weakly correlated ($r=.227$); Confrontation Style and Experience are weakly correlated ($r=.207$); Compromise and Age are weakly correlated ($r=.227$); Compromise and Experience are weakly correlated ($r=.207$)

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between Confrontation, Compromise, Negotiation, Withdrawal and Resignation of Conflict Resolution Styles.

Table No: 8 Correlation between the variables of Conflict Resolution Styles

	Confrontation	Compromise	Negotiation	Withdrawal	Resignation
Confrontation	1				
Compromise	.571**	1			
Negotiation	.362**	.600**	1		
Withdrawal	.255*	.338**	.316**	1	
Resignation	.440**	.491**	.318**	.365**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that a positive correlation exist between all the five dimensions of Conflict Resolution Styles. It is also observed that Negotiation and Compromise Styles of Conflict Resolution are highly correlated ($r=.600$); Compromise and Confrontation ($r=.571$), Resignation and Confrontation ($r=.440$), Resignation and Compromise ($r=.491$) are moderately correlated; positive low correlation exists between Negotiation and Confrontation ($r=.362$), Withdrawal and Confrontation ($r=.255$), Withdrawal and Compromise ($r=.338$), Withdrawal and Negotiation ($r=.316$), Resignation and Negotiation ($r=.318$), Resignation and Withdrawal ($r=.365$).

Suggestions

- Counselling sessions can be scheduled with professional counsellors to help Executives identify why do they get short tempered during the time of Conflict and how can they handle Conflicts among the subordinates by empathising them.
- Workshops can be conducted on Awareness on Conflict Resolution Styles for Executives because it will help them to identify what type of styles they are following and also will help them to choose appropriate styles for resolving Conflict situations accordingly.

Conclusion

Human Resources are the people who make up the workforce of an organisation. They are being considered as the assets of the organisation. Peaceful and comfortable work environment will enable the employees to contribute more effectively. But, conflicts are part of every organisational setup. So, conflict management is very important in order to resolve such conflicts.

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