

An executive summary of the final report of work done on the Minor research project of **Ms. Sumitha P.V.**, entitled “**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES OF ACADEMICIANS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MANGALORE BUSINESS SCHOOLS**” sanctioned by UGC, vide sanction letter No.**MRP(H)-0806/13-14/KAMA002/UGC-SWRO** dated 28/3/2014.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a highly rapid, industrial and globalized era where tensions prevail due to diverse culture, differences due to experience and demography exists at the work place, ‘Conflict’ is a regular force to be reckoned with. A conflict-free organization has never existed and never will. The research entitled “Conflict Management Styles of Academicians: An Empirical Study of Mangalore Business Schools” was an attempt to study the various conflict management styles adopted by Mangalore B-school academicians to address conflict. Conflict management styles vary based on demography and experience. Against this backdrop the researcher is keen to study how academicians managed conflict at their work place.

Latest literature reveals that there exists numerous ways to respond to conflict situations. Behavioral scientists, Thomas and Kilmann (1975), have identified five styles of responding to conflict - competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance, and accommodation. Hence, major focus of the research is to identify which style academicians adopt to address conflict. Adopting the appropriate one will enable the management to better achieve their objective in maintaining organizational harmony and good unity.

The primary objective of the study is to find out how the Mangalore B-School academicians respond to different conflict handling styles, as social behavior is normally implanted and entrenched in a given society. The study also seeks to explore the impact of the demography of academicians in adopting conflict handling styles. The research seeks to identify

the existence of other factors that influence the satisfaction level of academicians with respect to managerial norms & policies which include employee compensation, training & development, work flexibility, fringe benefits, working conditions and avenues for growth & promotion. Finally the ultimate objective is to recommend to the top management the appropriate strategies to be implemented in order to maintain organizational harmony that promotes growth and unity.

The present study was confined to eight leading B-Schools which are affiliated under Mangalore University. Sampling units were faculties among the chosen B-Schools. A total sample size of 79 respondents were the responded for present research study. Data was collected through personal interview using a structured questionnaire.

The major findings of the study highlighted that the conflict management style that was predominant among the teaching faculty in the B-Schools under Mangalore University was 'Collaborating' style followed by 'Competing' style. It is not common to see B-School faculty members either totally compromising or avoiding a conflict situation. Thus management of various B-Schools should therefore focus on training the faculty members in handling conflicts through collaboration. Since collaboration involves in a win-win situation for all concerned. Present research findings explored eight latent factors defined as competing, accommodating, avoiding, resignation, collaborating, withdrawal, participating and compromising through factor analysis in comparison to the traditional five methods of handling conflict. Thus if the management exposes the teaching fraternity to training programs, counseling sessions, seminars and workshops on the pros of adopting collaborative style of managing conflict, it is certain to go a long way in preserving integrity among faculty fraternity and strengthening institutional harmony for effective educational management in the years to come. Satisfying academicians with respect to managerial norms & policies which include employee compensation, training &

development, work flexibility, fringe benefits, working conditions and avenues for growth & promotion is no simple task and hence the management must seek ways to promote a healthy environment thereby ensuring that conflicts are professionally handled at the workplace. The four styles of handling conflict such as competing, collaborating, avoiding and accommodating had a significant impact on level of satisfaction; whereas, in the case of compromising mode of handling conflict the outcome was insignificant. Thus management must focus on programmes that train academicians to handle conflict appropriately as demanded by the situation and not just surrender either out of fear or force.

This research study assumes significance in current times because the quality of higher education imparted depends on several characteristics. An effective and efficient education system results from a healthy learning environment. Conflict is an integral part of higher education and managing conflict strategically today, will pave the way for effective educational management in the years to come.

Date Principal Investigator

Signature of the Principal