

# Navigating the Dynamics of Conflict in a State University: Analyzing the Types of Conflict and the Reasons Leading to Conflict Situations

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## Abstract

This study critically analyzed the common types of conflicts encountered by respondents in the workplace, specifically in Isabela State University and the reasons behind these conflicts. It utilized the descriptive qualitative method in exploring and analyzing the responses of 46 participants designated as deans and chairs of the different colleges in Isabela State University. The researcher explored the participants' responses by collecting information on their attitudes, beliefs and responses geared towards specific objectives. This method allowed the researcher to gather data from several sources to identify themes or patterns. Responses were collected from participants through an in-depth face-to-face and focus group interview utilizing semi-structured guide questions. The results showed the different types of conflict which are classified into data conflict, relational, value-based conflict and task conflict. It revealed that the varied reasons leading to conflicts are due to cultural differences and ideologies, communication problems, differing goals and objectives, personal differences, values and personal relationships, non-fulfillment of interests and needs, and social and organizational structures and power dynamics. The overall discussion in the study is carefully drawn to show that the objectives are somehow related to each other such that the main objectives of the research are achieved, which are to specifically understand the concept of conflict and its various types, nature and characteristics as well as the reasons leading to conflict. The same may be used as basis for the organization to develop a more effective, responsive and comprehensive conflict handling strategy for a more productive and improved organizational performance.

**Keywords:** Conflict management, conflict dynamics, organizational conflict

## 1. Introduction

According to Riaz et al. [1], workplace conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon in every organization. Different types call for different modes of managing the same. Different levels of conflict may lead to different individual, interpersonal and organizational outcomes and both employees and administrators should have a broad knowledge of the conflict and good conflict management skills in order to properly respond to the same [2]. Valdes [3] expressed that embracing diversity but at the same time making it parallel with organizational goals is important for conflict resolution and positive workplace dynamics. This study critically analyzed the common types of conflicts encountered by participants in the workplace, specifically in a State University, the reasons behind these conflicts and the conditions leading to these conflict situations. The over-all discussion is carefully drawn to show that the objectives are somehow related to and interwoven with each other such that they were able to achieve the main objectives of the

research as a whole, which are to specifically understand the concept of conflict and its various types, nature and characteristics as well as the varied reasons leading to conflict situations in the hope of developing a more holistic and effective conflict management strategy or approach as a result.

In the end, it is expected to point towards developing a conflict handling model or strategy for recommendation to the university laying down all possible scope and area of conflict handling in the organization needing improvement putting altogether the results from the data gathered from responses relating to the other objectives of the research.

## 2. Related Literature

There are several definitions for conflicts in the literature. Robbins [4] defines it as a process that emanates when one perceives that another party has affected or about to harmfully affect that which the first party deems important. Wallensteen [5] defines it as a dispute, disagreement, or contention between two or more entities or incompatibilities between two opposing parties where demands of both cannot be met at the same time. Also, Smith et al. [6] perceive it as a situation in which an action of one person stops, averts or interferes with the actions of another. De Dreu et al. [7] argue that the process leading to disagreement between team members because of real or perceived differences is also considered a conflict.

Accordingly, Haumschild et al. [8] expresses that conflict is expected to occur in the workplace and being able to effectively understand and manage the same leads to new opportunities for all workers to understand each other. Likewise, conflict may trigger tension and the persons involved in conflict must be able to manage these emotional responses to curb a negative outcome. If avoided or managed improperly conflict can have devastating effect. David et al. [9] and Di Stasio et al. [10] support this idea by saying that while some degree of conflict is inevitable and may result to positive outcomes, it may be detrimental to organizational performance if not properly addressed or managed [9]. Additionally, it is said that it can often be managed and resolved with the right interventions [10].

Workplace conflict is a common phenomenon in today's organizations. Conflicts in the workplace are commonly experienced. They are bound to happen sometimes specifically with a diverse workforce dynamic. Workplace conflicts can arise due to several reasons, but they usually come down to differences in values and beliefs and communication problems. When it comes to values and beliefs, people tend to hold onto them quite firmly [11]. According to Haumschild et al. [8], conflicts in values can occur when employees have perceived or actual incompatibilities in their specific belief systems

### 2.1 Types of Conflicts

Haumschild et al. [8] states that conflict issues that occur can be categorized into more than one category. Conflicts involving relationships ordinarily come from personal incompatibilities. Limited resources can also impact relationships and processes. Task conflicts occur when there are disagreements due to misunderstanding about how a particular task is accomplished. Process conflicts typically arise when there is disagreement about how to perform a task, such as methods to be used, group structure, and utilization or allocation of resources. Additionally, it is explained that another kind of conflict, which is data-based conflicts, arises when there is disagreement in the use of data in decision making as opposed to anecdotal evidence.

On the other hand, relational conflicts are described as those involving relationships that typically arise from personal incompatibilities. According to De Dreu et al. [12], relationship conflicts involve indignation about personal taste and interpersonal style. Haumschild [8] added that this kind of conflicts occur as a reaction to an emotional feedback or communication style. Accordingly, De Dreu et al. [13]

and Jehn et al. [14] proposes that relationship conflict refers to the agitation arising from interpersonal incompatibilities in personalities or life values.

To differentiate from others, value conflicts are perceived as that which may arise because of perceived or actual incompatibilities in their belief system, disagreements about political preferences, or opposing values. Moreover, this kind of conflict begins when an individual or group have differences and opposition between him- or herself and another individual or group about interests, beliefs, or values that are important to him or her [15]. Finally, there are also task conflicts which occur if there are disagreements arising from specific viewpoints and opinions about how to perform tasks. This type of conflict emerges when organizational members disagree on their tasks or job is believed to occur when there are opposing views on contents of tasks and goals of works and differences on interpretation of facts and distribution of resources and procedures [16].

## 2.2 Reasons Leading to Workplace Conflicts

Workplace conflict is often the result of cultural differences. The most common cause of workplace conflict is communication problems which may arise when people from different cultures communicate differently. For example, people from different cultures may have different ways of speaking, writing, and body language [17]. The leading causes of workplace conflict are communication problems, differing goals and objectives, and personal differences. Communication problems occur when there is a lack of communication or poor communication. Different plans and purposes can lead to conflict when workers aim towards different goals or have differing ideas about accomplishing those goals [18].

Finally, personal differences can lead to tension when employees have different personalities that collide or have different values and beliefs. When this happens, conflict ensues. For example, if one employee is religious and another is not, they may not agree over the company's policies or how to treat clients. In addition, employees with different personalities may lead to confrontation. For example, if one employee is very outgoing and another is introverted, they may find themselves not agreeing on how to treat customers. Personal differences are perhaps the prevalent cause of workplace conflict [19]. Competing for limited resources can lead to disagreement. Job-related issues can also be a reason for conflict in the workplace [20]. For example, disagreement about who and how to perform tasks can quickly escalate into a serious misunderstanding. Aguinis et al. [21] cites those other possible other causes of workplace conflict results from cultural differences manifested by the lack of understanding or awareness of cultural differences, creating stereotypes for people from diverse cultures, varying values and beliefs regarding work, time management, communication, and diverse expectations or standards in terms of dress, behavior, work ethics among others.

## 3. Research Method

The research used the descriptive qualitative method through in-depth interviews and focus groups employing thematic analysis in analyzing the responses. By collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, qualitative research seeks to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Thematic approach through deductive coding is explicitly researcher-driven allowing the researchers to analyze the data in relation to their theoretical interest in the issues being investigated [22]. The researcher using this approach usually begins the analysis with the identification of themes that are identified by the researcher through a literature review and is theoretically used for identifying, describing, and interpreting patterns. The participants of the study were 15 deans and 31 department or program chairs from different colleges in Isabela State University. To obtain the

necessary data, the researcher used semi-structured guide questions. Informed consent from the participants was requested through a letter and the interviews were conducted accordingly. The qualitative method recognizes human beings from a perspective that emphasizes their humanity and the interpretation of their experiences. This reveals the fundamental reasons and mechanisms behind occurrences [23].

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

Workplace conflict is a universal and prevalent organizational phenomenon. Several researchers expressed that conflict is harmful and destructive to organization and to employees as well, especially when not correctly handled and managed. It prevents the quality of group decision making; hampers creativity and innovation, prevents team success, destroys trust among employees (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). Types of conflict may vary from one organization to another. Varying conflicts may be attributable to the different organizational structure as well as the existing work climate.

Conflict is part of educational institutions due to the functional, structural, and relational characteristics of academic departments [24]. Abiodun [25] visualized educational institutions as “a perfect fertile ground for conflict”, and the conflict at the level of universities is more defined as the organizational structure of any university permits more than two of its units or different groups to share functional boundaries in realizing its specific goals. Universities also have individuals from different segments. There are students, lecturers, faculty members, administrative and technical staff, and from various clients and beneficiaries, which makes it more prone to the possibility of the emergence of conflicts between these groups.

##### **4.1 Types of Conflicts in The Workplace**

Emerging from the responses of the participants are four (4) major overarching categories or themes of conflict, these are data-based, value conflict, relational conflict and task. Conflict issues experienced by them may fall into more than one of these categories.

###### **4.1.1 Data-based Conflict**

Data-based conflicts arise when there is disagreement in the use of data in decision making as opposed to anecdotal evidence [8]. The same happens when a manager or supervisor fails to share an important information with employees, including but not limited to important policies, forms and other significant data about work or when employees interpret same data or information differently from others [26]. Participants often find themselves in conflict when there are miscommunication issues. It is observed by Deep, et al., [27] that occurring communication conflict among employees is a common issue in any organization. As a result, employees find themselves with differing interpretations of the policies which may result to chaos and misunderstanding. Poor communication often leads to misinterpretation of important policies. One of them stated that vague communication styles of leaders in the work place too often lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Another expressed that because of lack of clear and proper instructions, they do not know what to do, and tend to miss deadlines.

Feedback demands that the employee must accomplish a goal and should receive goal-related feedback on his or her actions to improve his performance [28]. Understandably, absence of feedback will likely result to a situation where employees develop a negative attitude leading to poor performance

###### **4.1.2 Relational Conflict**

Relational Conflicts are those involving relationships that typically arise from personal incompatibilities. Relationship conflicts involve irritation about personal taste and interpersonal style [12]. This kind of conflict occurs as a reaction to an emotional response or communication style [8]. Relationship conflict

refers to the tension arising from interpersonal incompatibilities in personalities or life values [13, 14]. Relational conflict within organizations is a multifaceted occurrence that significantly affects workplace dynamics and organizational outcomes. Defined as disagreements or tensions arising from interpersonal relationships between individuals or groups, this kind of conflict often comes in various types to include communication breakdowns, misunderstandings and emotional tensions. A participant claims that a conflict arose because of how a superior unfavorably treats an employee who is too close to another co-worker whom he happens to have a previous grudge. In this case, it is shown that tension is more likely to happen because employees are not comfortable in an environment where unfavorable relationships occur. As a result, conflicts arise because employees experience working in an environment where managers fail to acknowledge and nurture the relationship between and among employees that may exist within the organization. One claims that the type of conflict he usually encounters in the workplace are those that have something to do with how others usually relate with co-workers. Oftentimes they claim that he usually encounters issues which are trivial at the beginning but become too personal in the end

#### **4.1.3 Value-based Conflict**

Value conflicts are those that may arise because of perceived or actual incompatibilities in their belief system, disagreements about political preferences, or opposing values. Moreover, this kind of conflict begins when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between him or herself and another individual or group about interests, beliefs, or values that matter to him or her [15]. The problem of a generationally diverse workplace is common in most workplaces.

One of the challenges that an organization is beset with is the ability to identify the distinct characteristics of each generation of employees in their workplace [29]. Also, employers must be able to advance and develop a work climate that helps productivity for every generation and afford their employees the information and skills needed to understand the generational characteristics of their co-workers to create understanding among them. Organizations must try to make workplace adjustments to foster a productive work environment for all employees regardless of their generation. Inability on the part of administrators to do as above-mentioned is likely to result in an inevitable conflict between and among the employees due to age differences. A participant expressed that one of the conflicts in the department that is most likely to happen is because of age gaps between and among co-workers. For example, he claims that a younger supervisor tends to treat an older subordinate unfairly, elucidating that he no longer wants to assign to her any task because she can no longer perform considering her age. One participant relayed that conflict in the office usually happens because of diverging ideas based on political beliefs, preferences and values. In the midst of bickering, conflict started. Because he voted for another candidate in the last election, the other one got offended because he was made the laughing stock for he voted for the losing candidate. Disagreements result in individuals making an inference of a host of intellectual and ethical shortcomings for those who have opposing views, especially on topics that relate to identity and moral beliefs and value.

#### **4.1.4 Task Conflict**

Task conflicts occur if there are disagreements arising from specific viewpoints and opinions about how to perform a particular task. This type of conflict emerges when organizational members disagree on their tasks or job and is believed to occur when there are opposing views on contents of tasks and goals of works and differences on interpretation of facts and distribution of resources and procedures [30]. Conflicts of this kind involve disagreement about the distribution and allocation of resources, differing



views on procedures and policies that should be adhered to or opposing judgements and interpretations of facts [12].

Excessive and unnecessary demands from supervisors or managers and too little time to accomplish the same leave employees to feel too much pressure to produce good output. With too little time to perform the assignment given, they are often left in frustration and disappointment. One participant shared that meeting the demands of the administration can be so stressful especially when demands are too excessive and improbable to achieve.

Another type of task conflict is manifested when employees seem to have different views on interpreting policy in the workplace. Such a difference in appreciation of policies produces tension and misunderstanding among the members of the organization. Different people may have different understandings of the facts surrounding their job, which can lead them to perform tasks differently and create task conflicts. Other types of task conflicts that occur in the workplace are caused by unclear instructions from supervisors resulting to role ambiguity, unfair division of work assignments, and improper and unequal distribution of resources or deprivation of the use of school facilities.

#### **4.2 Reasons and Conditions Leading to Conflict Situations**

Conflict in state universities may be attributable to a variety of factors and conditions ingrained in organizational dynamics and interpersonal relationships. These conflicts can deeply affect productivity, morale, and the overall work environment or climate of the institution. Understanding the specific reasons and conditions leading to conflict situations is important for effective conflict resolution and organizational management.

Emerging from the responses of participants are six (6) overarching themes: cultural differences and ideologies, communication problems, differing goals and objectives, personal differences, non-fulfillment of interests and needs, and social and organizational structures and power dynamics.

##### **4.2.1 Cultural Differences and Ideologies**

Cultural differences refer to variations in values, beliefs, norms, customs, and behaviors between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. Differing ideologies pertain to conflicting sets of beliefs, principles, or political perspectives. Lozano et al. [31] elucidates that cultural diversity is an increasingly important occurrence greatly affecting not only the social and political dynamics but also the cohesion and efficiency of existing organizations.

An organization that deals with diversity can mean various things that might not be that simple. Diversity would involve different cultures, backgrounds, genders, personalities, values, ethnic groups, race, age, religion, education, etc. [32]. Managing cultural diversity in organizations has been a constant challenge for managers and leaders because it involves not only harmonizing different values, beliefs, credos and customs, and, in essence, human identity which requires a very serious consideration but also aligning all these to organization objectives.

One of the consequences of cultural diversity is the onset of conflicts especially when employees in the organization do not share the same cultural value, beliefs and backgrounds. One of the most common sources of conflict between and among co-workers in a state university setting is miscommunication due to language differences. Cultural differences in communication styles can also lead to conflicts. For example, it is observed that Ibanag tends to be more indirect and respectful, using non-verbal cues to communicate. In contrast, Ilokano communication can be more direct. This can be gleaned from a

statement from participant who stated that a non-Ibanag faculty gets irritated over an Ilocano co-faculty who expresses his thoughts directly and blatantly making his point which is observed during meetings. Ideological conflicts, such as those seen in political or religious contexts, can fuel deep-seated disagreements that may be shown as societal or intergroup conflicts. These conflicts are amplified in multicultural environments where diverse viewpoints come into conflict, challenging unity and cooperation. Participants expressed that they have diverging perspectives because they have different background and experiences, they were placed in one roof who came from different circumstances that is why bickering and misunderstanding cannot be avoided.

In a workplace as complex and multifarious as a state university, creating a culturally diverse workplace may be a challenging endeavor for academic leaders and administrators. When conflicts like these are recurring, it will greatly affect not only the efficiency of workers but the performance of the organization.

#### **4.2.2 Communication Problems**

Effective communication is essential for the smooth functioning of any organization, and its absence can lead to significant conflicts. Miscommunication in state universities can arise from various factors, including language barriers, differing communication styles, and inadequate information dissemination. Conflicts are believed to exist according to Vilas-Boas [33] when an employee is not clear about what is expected of employees to perform, or how to perform the given task, or when task is interdependent of others or when the task given to employees working in a group is not clearly laid down by the supervisor. Accordingly, Deep, et al. [27] is of the view that informal communication and miscommunication usually result to conflicts at the workplace including opposing views from both parties. One of the potential causes of conflicts is that employees do not understand the conflicting situation, that is why they are unable to deal with it effectively. For instance, miscommunication regarding university policies or academic requirements can lead to confusion and conflict among students and faculty members. Statements from respondents highlighted that communication between faculty and administration often is attributed to lack of transparency and insufficient information sharing. An example is when changes in academic policies are not clearly communicated, resulting in faculty members misunderstanding the new requirements, leading to conflicts over its implementation.

#### **4.2.3 Differing Goals and Objectives**

Goal-directed networks require a certain form of governance to utilize the benefits of cooperation among stakeholders. The network specifically shows characteristics of a “participant-governed” structure, which is governed by the involvement of all units coordinating activities and making decisions [34].

Conflicts often arise when employees have differing goals and objectives or when there is a lack of information, misinformation, or different interpretations of information. State universities consist of multiple stakeholders, each with their own goals and objectives. When these goals do not align, conflicts can arise. The fact that there are multiple actors in decision making, conflict inevitably may arise. The goals of the decision makers, these are the school heads, deans, chairmen and others, may differ with other stakeholders, the parents, community and other organizations.

Faculty members, for example, may prioritize academic freedom and research, while university administrators might focus on financial stability and institutional rankings. The university administration might focus on increasing enrollment numbers to boost revenue, while faculty members may be more concerned with maintaining academic standards. The lack of alignment in goals leads to tension and conflict, particularly when faculty feels pressured to lower admission standards.

Differing interpretations of information, such as budget allocations or strategic plans, can exacerbate these conflicts. For example, a misalignment between the administration's budget priorities and the faculty's resource needs can lead to disputes over funding and resource distribution. This coincides with the findings of Abiodun [25] that very often, the possibility of conflict increases substantially when departments in the organization have different or incompatible goals. This is expressed by a participant when she shared that they need more allocation for classroom repairs and equipment but the administration has other priorities to attend to so they cannot do anything but wait until there is sufficient budget to spend.

These may exist because there are conflicts of interests which are due to existing competition over perceived or actual incompatible needs. These conflicts may be over issues of money, resources, or time. Parties often mistakenly believe that to satisfy their own needs, others' needs must be sacrificed or compromised. This idea further enforces the claims of Hussein et al. [35] and Marzouk [36] which explains that a conflict is where parties have incompatibility between their interests, and each of them yearns to obtain benefits that completely contradict the other person's yearning, and this results in an inability to issue any decision due to the aggravation of conducting the comparison process and selecting the appropriate alternative from among the available alternatives

#### **4.2.4 Non-fulfillment of Interests and Needs and Denial or Violation of Rights**

Denial or violation of rights and the struggle for elimination of these violations are at the heart of many conflicts. Ultimately, the repeated denial of rights may lead to violent conflict.

When the interests and needs of individuals or groups within a university are not met, conflicts are inevitable. This may include issues such as unfair treatment, lack of resources, or denial of rights. For example, it is said that conflicts often arise when faculty members feel that their academic freedom is being infringed upon or when students believe their rights to free speech are violated. Non-fulfillment of needs, such as inadequate support for mental health or financial aid, can also lead to significant discontent and conflict.

When conflicts arise, the immediate expectation of parties involved would be fair resolution of the same. When leaders or managers make a decision which does not favor one, the other party may feel aggrieved. This argument is strongly supported by O'Leary et al. [37] that unmet needs of employees typically tend to leave some parties satisfied while others frustrated, ready to consider ways to get even, dissatisfied with a compromise situation. Managers are left with thinking about coming up with an interest-based collaborative problem solving offering the potential of developing creative solutions that respond to the procedural, substantive, and relationship or even psychological needs of the parties involved.

On the other hand, deans, program chairs, and heads of the departments may also feel frustrated when faculty members are not responsible in fulfilling their tasks efficiently and effectively. This is when managers feel dissatisfied and dismayed. Inability on the part of faculty members vary from not being able to finish tasks on time, non-submission of reports and other necessary accomplishments on time, no prompt and proper action on matters needing immediate attention, neglect or disregard of work assigned, carelessness in decision making and poor performance falling short of the department heads' expectation, according to the gathered responses. Participants claimed that conflict begins when after they demanded submission of reports, faculty members will not immediately comply because of many reasons. Similarly, another chair of the program shares that an employee leaves the office not asking permission. When his attention is called upon, he gets offended and will no longer speak to anyone.

#### **4.2.5 Personal Differences, Relationships, and Values**

Personal differences and relationships, as well as differing values, can significantly influence conflict dyn-



amics within state universities. Conflicts may arise from personality clashes, differing values, or personal disagreements. One of the most common reasons or conditions leading to conflicts and disagreements may come in the form of clash between and among employees because of difference in taste and personal styles or may be as serious as relating to one's personal relationships. Conflicts arising from relationships conflicts occur when there are misperceptions, strong negative emotions or the belief that the other person's actions are motivated by malice or an intent to harm the other. Personal conflicts mean conflicts which exist between employees and happens because of a difference between employees' personality traits [38].

According to the responses, respondents expressed that one of the reasons leading to conflict situation in the college relates to those arising from differing values regarding teaching methods. In this instance, they explained that some faculty members preferred traditional lecture-based approaches, while others advocated for more innovative, student-centered teaching methods. These differing values led to ongoing conflicts within academic departments. This happens despite an ongoing effort of the university to adopt varied teaching techniques which may be useful to student learning experiences.

Folger et al. [39] believes that conflict-averse individuals believe that there is some underlying incompatibility with other people and that this incompatibility could lead other people to obstruct their own wishes, objectives, comforts, or communication styles. The parties are in a conflict-prone situation if they believe there is incompatibility, regardless of whether it is true or not. Conflict is likely to arise whether one employee truly obstructs a colleague's promotion or if the colleague believes the employee's actions are impeding his advancement [39]. The ability to shape and sustain the perceptions that drive conflict behavior makes communication crucial

In addition, participants also enumerated without further elaboration "lack of cooperation, stubbornness, no respect for authority, lack of accountability and cooperation, pride and belief in being superior among others as reasons and conditions leading to misunderstanding and eventually escalate into conflicts in their workplaces". Consequently, value differences do not always result in conflict. Despite having differing values, people can coexist peacefully for years. However, when one individual tries to impose their values on others, conflict may always arise as a result.

#### **4.2.6 Social and Organizational Structures and Power Dynamics**

The social and organizational structure within state universities, including power dynamics, play an important role in the emergence and escalation of conflicts. Hierarchical structures and power imbalances often present environments where conflicts can exist.

State universities typically operate within a hierarchical structure where power and authority are distributed across various levels. This structure includes university administration, faculty, staff, and students. Conflicts happen between and among the following: administrators vs. faculty, faculty vs. faculty and faculty vs. students.

Typically, in administration vs. faculty case, the administration, including university presidents, directors, and deans, holds significant decision-making power due to hierarchical structure. Faculty members, on the other hand, are responsible for instructions, research and other activities. Conflicts often arise when faculty feel their academic freedom or professional autonomy is compromised by administrative decisions. Many researches highlight how top-down administrative decisions can lead to faculty dissatisfaction and conflict. Respondents claim that when they are not satisfied with decisions made by the top management, they have the tendency to keep it to themselves.

In case of faculty vs. students, power imbalances between faculty and students can also lead to conflicts where students may feel powerless in addressing grievances related to academic performance, discrimination, or harassment. Participants are of the view that faculty holding significant influence over students' academic outcomes have the tendency to misuse intentionally or unintentionally this power, leading to conflicts.

Significantly, as observed by majority of participants, faculty members and other faculty members often have differing roles and responsibilities, leading to potential conflicts. This dynamic exposes an organization into a workplace culture rife with tension and misunderstanding. Participants relayed that this happens during accreditation, ISO audit, RQUat, enrolment, distribution of workload and other major activities in the school between and among supervisors and their subordinates, supervisors and other supervisors as well as peers vs peers.

According to Abdul Aziz [40], power is believed to be a key mechanism that has the capacity to affect decision and organizational outcomes in organizations. It is also considered to be one of the predominant sources of workplace conflict happening between subordinates and supervisors and proven as an energy to dominate conflict [41, 42].

In addition, according to Westmaas [43], status inconsistencies between the parties may also be a manifestation of power imbalance which may result to conflicts. For instance, non-managerial staff members do not have the right to take personal time off during workdays to do errands or for other purposes, whereas managers in many firms do. In this case, one can only imagine how this might affect non-managers' perceptions of organizational justice and policies.

Additional experiences laid down by participants showed that role incompatibility and unfavored leadership are also reasons for ensuing conflict happening in the workplace. When asked to elaborate, they manifested disappointment over supervisors who do not seem to efficiently perform their duties, takes on a leave of absence whenever he pleases but watches over faculty members who seldom ask permission for leave on emergency cases, never stays in the office and roams around the campus, but is cynical of faculty members' whereabouts. When there is a misuse of power, the result would be a conflict. When each party aims to maximize the amount of influence or power over other members, conflict happens.

Power imbalances in state universities can be shown in decision-making, resource allocation and employment practices during hiring and promotion. The social and organizational structures within state universities, characterized by hierarchical frameworks and power imbalances, contribute significantly to conflicts. Understanding these dynamics and implementing strategies for inclusive governance and transparent communication can help mitigate these conflicts. As state universities continue to evolve, addressing these issues will be crucial for fostering a more harmonious and productive academic environment.

## 5. Conclusion

Conflict in all aspects unavoidably happens in all levels, between supervisor vs supervisor, supervisor vs. subordinates, and peer vs peer. It seems that types of conflict may vary from one organization to another, and its variety may be attributable to the different organizational structure as well as the existing work climate, available resources and attitudes of leaders, power imbalance and unstable power dynamics

The classification of conflicts into whether it is data-based conflict, relational, value-based conflicts or task conflicts may be based on their experiences attributable to vague communication styles leading to misinterpretation of policies and missed deadlines, and absence of timely feedback. These may also

account for personal incompatibilities, unfavorable relationships and differences in personal taste and style and attitude as well as diverging political preferences and opposing values or perceived differences due to age or seniority. The difference may also lie in the attitudes of school managers who make excessive demands, unclear instructions from supervisors resulting to role ambiguity and unfair division of work assignments as well as improper and unequal distribution of resources or deprivation of the use of school facilities. All these may all too well be because there will always exist an incompatibility or disagreement between and among employees not only as to managing expectations from each other which sometimes lead to unmet needs but also disagreement caused by differing views on interpretation of policies. Sometimes, as participants claimed, conflict may be too personal or a simple one, developing into a more serious disagreement which may be due to a negative or bad attitude or a personal dislike or bias or judgement.

Reasons leading to conflict situation include cultural differences and ideologies, communication problems, differing goals and objectives, non-fulfillment of interests and needs, personal differences, relationships, and values and social and organizational structures and power dynamics. It is concluded that uneven and unstable power dynamics and power imbalance exist in the organization, and these are typical reasons of animosities and tension between and among the members due to the hierarchical nature of academic institutions.

It can be concluded that conflict in every organization is unavoidable and inescapable. To be able to arrive at a clear understanding of the nature and types of conflicts as well as the reasons leading to conflict situations, one can also begin to fully grasp and relate the same to the conflict handling management school leaders tend to adopt as a response. Considering all these, it is hoped that the outcomes may help school managers to eventually respond to the occurrence of conflict of whatever nature. Thus, the same may be used as basis for the organization through its school managers to develop a more effective, responsive and comprehensive conflict handling strategy in the future to contribute to a more productive academic work environment and improved organizational performance.

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