

Determination Of The Types Of Conflict Experienced By Student Nurses

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Abstract

Objectives: The objective of this study is to identify the types of conflict experienced by university students and to determine whether demographic factors have an effect on the types of organizational conflicts.

Methodology: The population of the study included 387 students from the Nursing School of Atatürk University between April 2009 and June 2009. The sample group consisted of 323 students who volunteered to participate in the research. Data were collected by using a questionnaire form that included questions about the age, gender, grade level and marital status of the students and educational level of their parents, and applying "Rahim's Organizational Conflict Scale".

Results: According to the results, 27.9% of the students who participated in the research were first-year students, 25.7% were second-year students, 26.3% were third-year students and 20.1% were fourth-year students. The total score mean that the students obtained from the organizational conflict scale was 55.13 ± 7.76 and the highest mean was obtained from the subscale of intra-group conflict. When the scores of intra-group conflict subscale and their distribution according to grade levels were examined, a statistically significant difference was found between the grade levels.

Conclusions: It was demonstrated that the organizational conflict score of the students was of medium level and that the organizational conflict level was affected by characteristics such as age, grade level, and the individuals whom the students experience conflict with. These results indicate that the level of organizational conflict is determined by some individual characteristics, and reveal

the necessity of taking these characteristics into consideration in future studies.

Key words: Conflict, Conflict Types, Student Nurse

Introduction

Conflict is not an event peculiar only to humans. All living beings are in continuous interaction with their environment and they are obliged to get into conflict when necessary in order to survive. If a living organism meets with an obstacle when trying to satisfy a vital need, this situation causes discomfort and, in turn, stress. As for humans, conflict is experienced in states of tension caused by the pressures preventing an individual from satisfying both his/her physiological and socio-psychological needs. However, conflict is one of the difficult concepts to define, because there are different reasons for its emergence and there exist various types of conflicts depending on how it is formed or processed (**Eren 2000; Elma and Demir 2000**). Due to this fact, the concept of conflict has been defined in different ways by different scientists.

When the concept of conflict is considered on general terms, it is possible to say that the conflict arises from an individual's rejection of a person, group, idea or event, or his/her dislike of the mentioned factors. For an individual and group, the change in one's goals in a certain period of time and the emergence of contradicting goals lead the individual to experience conflict while trying to choose one of these goals. Conflict may sound scary as a concept, since it is generally associated with negativities imprinted on our memory, as

well as pains, hostilities and even disastrous wars. There will always be conflict as long as there are differences in the preferences, desires, values, beliefs and interests of social parties that communicate and interact with one another. Since conflict is unavoidable, it is necessary to use the benefits of the emerging conflict and manage conflict in an efficient way to prevent its possible destructive effects. Although differences may be a source of progress and development, in cases of uncertainty about how to cope with certain problems that stem from differences, these differences lead to violence which have destructive consequences for individuals, groups, organizations and even countries **(Hall 1985)**.

Since organizations consist of different individuals with different goals, perceptions, personalities and needs, conflict is inevitable and managers should have knowledge about conflict. Therefore, it is possible to say that management is, in a sense, identified with conflict management. The managers of successful organizations are those who can keep conflicts at an optimal level as soon as possible or at nearly optimal point and who can effectively sustain this approach **(Rahim 1999)**. Any organization in which individuals are in mutual interaction contains a potential environment of conflict within itself. Health Care Institutions include several interaction groups. This interaction may occur between institutions and other institutions, institutions and patients, institutions and families, institutions and visitors, and institutions and doctors. Such interactions often lead to conflicts. Thus, the existence of such environments of conflict requires the presence of managers with qualifications of effective conflict management **(Rahim 1983, Akkirman 1998)**. Consequently, conflicts breed dynamism in an environment and become an indispensable part of progress when appropriate approaches are used. The attitude and skills of the manager is the primary factor in solving conflict problems. From this perspective, nurses play a very important role in this matter. The purpose of this study is to identify the types of conflict experienced by university students and to determine whether demographic factors have an effect on the types of organizational conflicts.

Methodology

This research was designed as a descriptive study and the study population included 387 students from the Nursing School of Atatürk University in the 2008-2009 academic year between April 2009 and June 2009. Sampling method was not used in the research which aimed to reach the entire population. Since 64 students could not be reached due to reasons such as illness, absenteeism and reluctance to participate in the study, the research sample comprised a total of 323 students. Participation rate was 83.46%. Written permission was received from the ethics committee of the Nursing School and verbal permission was received from the students during the implementation of the research.

Research data were collected by using "Rahim's Organizational Conflict Scale" and the two-section questionnaire form which included socio-demographic characteristics in the first section and which was prepared by the researchers after the review of relevant literature. "Rahim's Organizational Conflict Scale" consists of three subscales measuring three dimensions of conflict: intrapersonal conflict, intra-group conflict and inter-group conflict. The dimension which reveals the highest/lowest conflict is determined by looking at the score means of each subscale. The scale consists of 20 items, and the highest and lowest scores in the scale are 100 and 20, respectively. The scale was developed by Rahim M.A. in 1997. The total Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the "Rahim's Organizational Conflict" scale was .78 for this study. Since the scale did not have any cut point, average score was used in statistical assessment. Data were analyzed by percentage, average, one way variance analysis, and Tukey HSD test.

Results

Among the student nurses who were included in the research, 27.9% were first-year students, 25.7% were second-year students, 26.3% were third-year students and 20.1% were fourth-year students. 87.6% of the students were female and 61.9% of the students were from the age group of 21-23 years. Most of the students (96.9%) were

single, 44.9% lived in the city centre for the longest time, 80.2% came from a nuclear family, 27.2% lived with their parents, and 54.5% stayed in the dormitory at that time. 46.4% of the students had 4 or more siblings, 54.5% lived in a dormitory or hostel, 65.6% had an income equal to their expenses, and 63.8% lived off bursaries and student loans. 87.3% of the students had a democratic and supportive family structure, 66.3% experienced some problems within the family, 62.5% experienced problems with their friends and these conflicts decreased their success level (44.3%). Students' mothers were mostly primary school graduates (51.4%) and unemployed (87.9%), while education level was higher among fathers (38.4% were high school graduates) and a considerable number of fathers was retired (34.4%).

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of students' subscale scores obtained from "Rahim's Organizational Conflict" scale. Total score mean of the organizational conflict scale was 55.13 ± 7.76 , and it was determined that students experienced a medium level of intrapersonal (16.39 ± 3.32), intra-group (22.34 ± 3.99) and inter-group (16.39 ± 3.59) conflict. As shown in Table 1, a statistically significant difference was found between the student scores obtained from the subscales ($F = 1.417$ $p < 0.05$).

Table 1 demonstrates Comparison of the organizational conflict subscale scores and grade levels of students. There was no significant difference between the students' grade level and the

subscale of inter-group conflict ($p > 0.05$); whereas a significant difference was found in comparison with the subscale of intrapersonal and intra-group conflict ($p < 0.05$).

It was determined that 62.5% of the students experienced conflict with their friends, and these conflicts did not affect the success level in 47.4% of the students. When the subscale scores of the organizational conflict scale were compared with students' grade levels, a statistically significant difference was found between intra-group conflict score means ($F = 8.503$ $p < 0.05$ Table 2). As demonstrated by a further analysis (Tukey HSD test), this difference was associated with the lower score mean of fourth-year students compared to the score means of other grades.

There was no significant relationship between the attitudes of families and the score means of the conflict scale ($p > 0.05$, Table 1). A significant difference was found between the total score means of intrapersonal conflict about the students' choice of profession ($F = 1.724$, $p < 0.05$). No significant difference was detected between the groups which the students experience conflict with, and the total scale score and the score means of intrapersonal and inter-group subscales ($p > 0.05$), whereas a significant difference was found with respect to the intra-group subscale ($p < 0.05$). As revealed by a further analysis performed to determine the reason of this difference, the reason is that the conflict score means were high among those who experience conflict with their fri-

Table 1. Distribution of students' subscale score means of organizational conflict

Subscale	N	X±SD	F	P
Intrapersonal Conflict	323	16.39 ± 3.32	F= 1.417	p<0.05
Intra-group Conflict	323	22,34 ± 3,99		
Inter-group Conflict	323	16,39 ± 3,59		

Table 2 Comparison of the organizational conflict subscale scores and grade levels

Subscale	Grade Level								F	P
	1 (n=90)		2 (n=83)		3 (n=85)		4 (n=65)			
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD		
Intrapersonal Conflict	16.04	3.71	17.44	3.34	15.91	2.95	16.16	2.96	F=0.734	P=0.393
Intra-group Conflict	22.85	4.59	23.13	3.33	21.78	3.85	21.36	2.83	F=8.503	P=0.04
Inter-group Conflict	23.13	3.33	16.53	3.23	15.80	3.63	16.10	3.54	F=2.273	P=0.134

ends. No significant difference was found between the total score means of answers given about how the conflicts affected students' success ($F=0.996$, $p>0.05$). The students who needed bursary or economic support had higher total score means of conflict scale compared to other students ($p<0.05$). In this study, the highest score in the conflict scale was obtained from students whose mothers were primary school graduates ($17.32 \pm 2,12$); yet, the difference between the groups was not significant ($p>0.05$). On the other hand, a significant difference was detected between intra-group score means in terms of the education level of mothers ($p<0.05$). Although the students whose fathers were high school graduates obtained the highest total scores in all subscales, this finding was not considered statistically significant ($p>0.05$). The total conflict scale scores of students who spent most of their lives in the city centre were high in inter-group subscale but not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Discussion

Conflict is not only an event individuals may experience in every environment throughout their lives, but also a concept which inevitably brings positive and negative consequences in organizational environments and whose presence cannot be denied. In conflict-free environments, innovation, change, creativity and success may be affected negatively; while continuous and major conflicts experienced in organizations have a negative effect on success due to reasons such as delays in decisions or even inability to make decisions, and failure in solving problems by compromise; thereby, the existence of the organization will fall into jeopardy (**Bingöl 1990**). Among the students who participated in this study, 66.3% experienced some problems and 62.5% experienced conflict with their friends. In previous studies **Adrian-Taylor (2007)** reported that 22% of the students experienced conflicts with instructors; **Mamchur and Myrick (2003)** reported that 28.2% of students and 24% of nursing students experienced conflicts with their preceptors, 51% of the students frequently and 84% occasionally experienced conflicts.

Individuals in mutual interaction show differences in their tendencies and value judgments in line

with their personalities. These differences are followed by other factors such as education differences, emotional factors, jealousy, desire to be promoted and accepted, and differences in social background. Above mentioned differences turn into contradictions and excessive discordance in time and create interpersonal conflicts (**Eren 2000; Koçel 1999**). Research findings demonstrated a medium level of conflict in "Organizational Conflict Scale" and the subscales of intrapersonal, intra-group and inter-group conflict. Intra-group conflict arises when individuals fail to comply with the objectives, traditions, habits and rules of the group; while inter-group conflict is caused by the clash between two or more interacting groups (**Şimşek 1987**). When the organizational conflict subscale scores of the students were compared to their grade levels, it was found that intrapersonal and intra-group conflict was high among second-year students and inter-group conflict was high among first-year students. Conflicts of various levels experienced within an organization and the approaches used to resolve these conflicts are among the issues that consume students' time and energy. Therefore, topics on conflict-solving approaches should be included in undergraduate curricula. The review of international literature has demonstrated that topics related to conflict-solving are given very limited space in the curricula of nursing education programs (**Deary et al. 2003; Smith et al. 2001**). **Haydenberg et al. (2003)** demonstrated that conflict management education decreased the time that educators spent dealing with conflicts, had positive influences on the school's atmosphere and the development of students'.

In their study, **Seren and Baykal (2007)** reported that conflict-solving skills were higher among nursing students compared to medical students. Interpersonal relationships, communication and interaction should be a part of the curriculum in nursing education programs. In addition, evaluating patients as a whole, identifying their needs and communicating with them during student practices are effective in developing conflict-solving skills (**Kocaman 1998; Velioglu 1994**). Many of the conflicts arise as a result of uncertainties, perceptual deficits and misuse of communication channels during the process of communication and interaction (**Özcan 1996**). In the present study, female students were observed to experien-

ce more conflicts compared to male students. It is reported in other studies that female students had higher scores of conflict-solving skills compared to male students. The main limitation of this study are, unfortunately, the study included only one school and a limited number of students, the research results cannot be generalized to all nursing students. Because the students' organizational conflict types were limited to those with faculty members they may not reflect how they deal with conflict they experience with managers, peers and their family members.

Conclusion

The school environment has an important role in the socialization of students in the organizational conflict types. Therefore, students need to be supported and encouraged in their use of effective conflict management styles. Thus, students will be facilitated in coping with conflict in their future work and private lives in an effective. In future studies it is recommended that the study be repeated with a larger sample

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Focal Adhesion Kinase: A key Mediator of Cancer Pathogenesis

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Abstract

Focal adhesion kinase (FAK) is a 125 KDa non-receptor protein tyrosine kinase. FAK is localized to focal adhesion plaques where its association with several signalling proteins enables it to work as a scaffold protein. It was implied that FAK exhibits a crucial role in the up-regulation of several cellular signalling responses including spreading, proliferation, migration, and invasion. FAK is implicated in apoptosis through the inhibition of the tumour suppressor protein, p53, also activated FAK functions to up-regulate cell adhesion and migration. Besides that, FAK signalling stimulates the production of matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs), mainly MMP-2 and MMP-9, which have a basic role in cancer invasion and metastasis. Recent research focuses on decoding several signalling pathways involving elevated FAK levels and activated status in the up-regulation of several cellular activities. However, the data obtained are still not well elucidated and need further investigation. Here, we review briefly FAK structure, activation and inhibition, FAK signalling impact on several cellular activities and expression and activation levels in several malignancies. FAK appeared to contribute to the activation of several signalling cascades which are mostly over activated in cancer.

Key words: Focal Adhesion Kinase; p53; matrix metalloproteinases; invasion

Introduction

Focal adhesion kinase (FAK) has been indicated in the development of many types of cancers

(Schaller, 1992, Owen *et al.*, 1995). FAK plays a dual function; it works as kinase and scaffold protein which associates with several signalling molecules controlling several signalling pathways (Schaller, 1996; Beviglia *et al.*, 2003). Two research groups headed by Steve Hanks, Jun-Lin Guan and Michael Schaller discovered FAK independently in 1992. Prior to FAK discovery, previous researches were conducted to examine the involvement of Src in cancer signalling. FAK was identified as a substrate of the viral Src oncogen, and was known to localize at cell adhesion contacts where integrins assemble (Mitra *et al.*, 2005). Following activation FAK was thought to promote tyrosine activation of substrates such as paxillin, and amplify mitogen activated protein kinase (MAPK) signalling in transformed cells. However, FAK inhibition was unable to restore transformed cells original phenotypes (Schaller, 2001; McLean *et al.*, 2005).

Recently, reports have indicated tyrosine kinases in neoplastic development and cancer progression. FAK may contribute to the unrestrained proliferation of cancer cells, tumor development, and progression of metastatic cancers (Olayioye *et al.*, 2000; Demetri *et al.*, 2002). However, despite the crucial contribution of FAK to our present understanding of several cellular signalling pathways, and its recent disclosed involvement to the field of tumor biology, only a limited role for the activated FAK in cancer has been determined. Here, the mechanisms by which FAK activation may participate in malignant transformation and play prominent roles in cancer signalling will be reviewed.