

# Clout of Professional Education and Religion on Conflict Resolution Style

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## Abstract-

**I**ndia is a multi-cultural and multi-religion county. Due to the globalization, professional qualification evolved in India and started getting lot of due importance. India has become the global hub of the professional institutes, which imparts quality education and training to their students. It is a well established fact that culture/religion and education majorly influence communication and more importantly conflict resolution style. It can also be said that communication gets lot importance in professional qualification/training and students are well trained to adopt the appropriate communication and conflict resolution style. In this study we have considered the sample of professionally qualified people belonging to two major religious communities of India i.e. Hindu & Muslims and with the help of in-depth quantitative analysis studied the pattern of conflict resolution styles which are specific to the mentioned communities.

**Key Words:** Religion, Education, Professional qualification, Conflict resolution styles

## I. INTRODUCTION

We all live in a society and interact with each other for various purposes. When people interact or communicate difference of opinion can't be avoided and which ultimately leads to disagreement. Reasons behind this difference of opinion/disagreement could be difference in clarity while communicating, different educational and cultural backgrounds or may be of conflicting interests. This difference of opinion or disagreement leads to conflict between interacting parties. This conflict needs to be resolved amicably and must arrive at the acceptable outcome for the parties involved. Various researchers in the past have focused on conflict resolution and have tried to understand the preference of conflict resolution styles.

Certain factors like education, culture, age and gender creates an impact on conflict resolution process [1]. India being a diverse country has rich cultural background and religion has a major influence on culture. In India there are many religions practiced however the majority group is Hindu community which is followed by Muslim community.

In addition to culture, education also plays a significant role in the way individuals communicate with each other and eventually affects the preference for a conflict resolution style. Education imparts us the knowledge, exposure and helps us in gaining necessary skills to be successful in current competitive era. It also influences our thought process, understanding and approach related to various aspects of life. Professional institutes/ courses certainly lead the educational paradigm. In India there are plenty of quality professional institutes which are imparting top notch professional training to their students and mould them not only to do better for themselves but also to serve nation. In these professional institutes students are trained not only in technical skills but also in personal and life skills. Thus, if someone is professionally qualified, he is expected to have better conceptual understanding and exposure in dealing with various scenarios and possess surpassing communication and behavioral skills. Considering these capabilities of professionally qualified people, it becomes interesting to assess that does religion still plays an important role in preference of conflict resolution styles or achieving professional qualification nullifies the effect of religion. So the purpose of this study is to examine that does people who are professionally qualified belonging to different religious groups have differing preferences for conflict resolution styles or not. In this study, professionally qualified person, means Doctors, Engineers, Chartered accountants, Company secretaries, Management professionals, etc.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

In this study, following research questions was framed in order to have an understanding of influence of professional education.

RQ: Does professionally qualified individuals differ in their preference for five conflict resolution styles?

Various researchers [2],[3],[4],[5], [6] have suggested that dominant culture will try to dominate in case of a conflict and minority group will try to avoid conflict. Based on this information, the researchers have formulated the following hypothesis to find answers to RQ2:

H1: Hindu professionally qualified participants are less likely to adopt avoiding conflict resolution style than Muslim professionally qualified participants.

H2: The preference for adopting compromising style by Hindu and Muslim professionals

H3: Hindu professionally qualified participants are more likely to adopt competing conflict resolution style than Muslim professionally qualified participants.

H4: The preference for adopting collaborating style is same for Hindu and Muslim professionals

H5: The preference for adopting accommodating style is same for Hindu and Muslim professionals

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Thomas Kilman [7] proposed five conflict resolutions styles based on Blake and Moutan's [8] managerial grid. They are competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising and also proposed MODE scale for predicting conflict resolution styles. Other researchers have also proposed conflict resolution style scales like Hall [9] Conflict Management Survey (CMS), Ross-DeWine[10] Conflict Management Message Style (CMMS), Putnam – Wilson[11] Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI), Rahim [12] Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II). However, all the above mentioned scales are suitable only in organization setting, a new scale was formed for assessing conflict styles in any setting. The scale had six questions for each five style, thus in total 30 questions. Respondents had to respond on a 7 point likert scale where 7 means extremely likely, 6 means very likely, 5 means likely, 4 is indifferent, 3 is unlikely, 2 is very unlikely and 1 is extremely unlikely. The scale was tested for content validity and reliability on a sample size of 50. The alpha reliability for Avoiding scale is 0.72, competing 0.74, collaborating 0.80, Accommodating 0.79 and Compromising 0.84. The reliability for this comes out as well acceptable and this scale was appropriately used in this study.

#### A. Data Analysis

The research sample included 200 participants having professional qualification. The sample consists of 100 Hindus and 100 Muslims. As the professional qualification was a requirement for the study to be conducted, purposive sampling method was adopted. Out of 100 Hindu respondents, 31 were female and 69 were males and in Muslim community sample 28 were females and 72 were males.

To check the significant differences between Hindu professionals and Muslim professionals in terms of conflict resolution styles, t-test was conducted using SPSS tool. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Analysis Of Religious Deifferences In Terms Of Conflict Resolution Style

Conflict resolution style	Hindu Professionals		Muslim Professionals		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
<b>Avoiding</b>	3.295	0.4774	3.399	0.5600	-1.413
<b>compromising</b>	4.488	1.432	5.27	0.5416	-5.106**
<b>Competing</b>	5.157	0.6052	5.16	0.551	-0.041
<b>Collaborating</b>	6.087	0.5084	6.027	.4142	0.920
<b>Accommodating</b>	3.356	0.6780	3.332	0.7237	0.242

\*\*p<0.01

#### B. Findings

In H1, it was predicted that Hindu professionals will be less likely to adopt avoiding style than Muslim professionals. By observing the table with avoiding style as dependent variable, religion was not significant ( $t = -1.413, p > .05$ ). So it indicates that Hindu and Muslim professionals do not differ in preference for following avoiding style. This is the different from what we predicted.

In H2, it was predicted that Hindu and Muslim professionals do not differ in their preference for compromising conflict resolution style. By observing the table with compromising style as dependent variable, religion was significant ( $t = -5.106, p < .01$ ), it indicates that Hindu professionals are less likely to adopt compromising style as compared to Muslim professionals. This is the different from what we predicted.

In H3, Hindu professionally qualified participants are more likely to adopt competing conflict resolution style than Muslim professionally qualified participants. H3 was not supported ( $t = -0.041, p > .05$ ). So researchers were unable to find a significant difference between the religions in terms of the preference for competing conflict resolution style.

In H4, it was predicted that Hindu and Muslim professionals do not differ in their preference for collaborating conflict resolution style. By observing the table with collaborating style as dependent variable, religion was not significant ( $t = 0.920, p > .05$ ). So it indicates that Hindu and Muslim professionals do not differ in preference for following collaborating style.

In H5, it was predicted that Hindu and Muslim professionals do not differ in their preference for accommodating conflict resolution style. By observing the table with accommodating style as dependent variable, religion was not significant ( $t = 0.242, p > .05$ ). So it indicates that Hindu and Muslim professionals do not differ in preference for following accommodating style.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Hindu professionals are less likely to adopt compromising style as compared to Muslim professionals. This could be because Muslims are less risk taking in financial matters [13] so they might be interested in suggesting a trade off in order to resolve the conflict and maximize their gains and minimize their losses.

In this study, researchers were unable to find difference for preferring competing, collaborating, avoiding and accommodating conflict resolution style by both the communities. Previous studies have suggested that both culture and education influence the preference for conflict resolution styles, however in this study when we were trying to examine any dissimilarity in preference of professionally qualified group, we found that religion is not creating any significant impact for competing, collaborating, avoiding and accommodating conflict resolution style. The possible reason behind this could be that as both the groups considered here are professionally qualified, the influence which religious identification has on preference of style is nullified because of professional qualification.

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