Evaluation of a conflict in a learning environment: Does it always fetch a negative outcome?

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Abstract- Conflict is a disagreement between two individuals or groups in an environment where one party's goals and aspirations are incompatible with the other party's interests and aspirations to achieve their desired outcome. Conflicts permeate every sector of an institution or take place even in a learning environment regardless of class, position, age, race, caste, or gender. It is started by a person who is antagonistic to another person in an effort to achieve a goal that is in opposition to their core values and interests. Even though the premise of it suggests a negative outcome, it ultimately has either a positive or negative result. This paper evaluates each stage of an institutional conflict that began as an interpersonal conflict, turned into an external conflict, and was finally settled by exterior intervention followed by a constructive outcome. It also depicts the entire conflict cycle on a sketch map, using the observational approach to draw conclusions based on both primary and secondary data. This article provides some background information and stimulates some thought about the life sketch of a conflict occurred in an academic setting and its resolution mechanisms.

Index Terms- Conflict, escalation, stalemate, de-escalation, and resolution.

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is something we must deal with every day whether we are interacting, working, learning, volunteering, or participating in any other capacity in an institutional setting, even though we would like to avoid it. It can occur even in an educational environment, whether they are located locally or internationally, because it is undoubtedly a crucial aspect of human interactions. It may occur due to the difference of viewpoint, opinion, or perspective between two people or groups or among institutions represented by some or groups of people who remain opposing goals and aspirations, which an antagonist sparks to another to achieve a targeted goal. According to Pruitt and Kim (2003), a perceived divergence of interest, a belief that the parties' current aspirations are incompatible, is considered as conflict, and when it happens in an educational environment, it is termed as academic conflict. This academic conflict may be various in nature and manifested in multifaceted ways depending upon the context or environment of the academic institution.

Generally, an individual or group experiences both internal and external conflict while socializing, interacting, working, volunteering, and performing in academic institutional contexts. Internal conflict indicates the mental, emotional, or spiritual struggles a person that he/she faces internally like, Character versus Self. On the other hand, external conflict is the struggle of an individual or among/within groups that face(s) against an exterior force(s). Conflict can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, or intergroup depending on its internal and external meaning. However, it is very typical for one story to contain both sorts of conflict. In reality, internal conflict occasionally causes external conflict, and vice versa. Conflict naturally results from differences in interest, belief, and perception; therefore, if it is not managed, it may be destructive. Only effective and efficient conflict management can transform a destructive conflict into a constructive one. Therefore, conflict management techniques, and occasionally third-party interventions, are crucial for managing the conflict constructively in a learning environment, particularly for determining which characters are intervening in what manner, and at what stage of escalation.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how a conflict occurred in an educational setting, like the one outlined below, which began as interpersonal conflicts, progress to group conflicts that are exacerbated by additional competing factors, and eventually lead the parties seeking for an intervention by third party to resolve the conflict in a manner that advantages all parties. In addition to the idea of conflict and its stages, styles, and methods, this article also discusses conflict behavior, escalation, and resolution procedures, with a particular emphasis on institutional conflict. Using different conflict resolution approaches, a conflict can be addressed constructively or destructively depending on whether the parties involved work to improve society, settle disputes, or eventually deepen a group's sense of unity.

To evaluate the ensuing conflict and determine its underlying causes and means of resolution, this study poses the following important questions:

Who were the main characters or parties in the mentioned conflict? What was the parties underlying interest and aspiration? What was their goal and why did they want to achieve this goal?

What steps did the parties take to work toward achieving their goals? What triggered the parties to involve in dispute that was originated from a conflict? What were the other elements that prevent the parties' to achieve their goal? Why did the antagonist or antagonistic force oppose the other party in conflict? How was the conflict resolved? Was there a clear winner from this conflict?

In addition to determining the answers to the questions stated above, this study also examines the following queries using synchronizations of the questions indicated above:

What is conflict and conflict management? What is the nature of the conflict? What is underlying interest and aspiration in a conflict? What are the common categories of conflict? What are the common sources of conflict? What are the strategies in conflict? Why people involve in conflict? How do parties respond to conflict? What modes do parties use to address conflict? What are the key issues that affecting the decision making in conflict? What the moderating factors of escalation of conflict? What are the dual models in conflict? How contentious model of conflicts works in escalation of conflict? What is constructive and destructive conflict? Why power is exercised and how it works in the process of conflict? What are the strategic distinctions between players with high and low power in a conflict? How trust works in conflict? When conflict stabilizes? What is stalemate? What are the reasons for stalemate and its effect? What motivates the parties involved to resolve the conflict? What are the common mechanisms of settlement of a conflict occurred in a learning environment in a constructive way?

II. METHODOLOGY

The conflict in issue is addressed and evaluated in this article in a qualitative approach using primary and secondary data to achieve the article's goal and to investigate the relevant questions. Primary data was gathered using the observational technique, with individuals, parties, political elite, and court as a mediator or intervener as the unit of observation. As a direct and participatory observation and longitudinal process, the observer kept track of the situation for two years, as well as the conflict's resolution for six months. Additionally, the observer also took notes and recorded all that was witnessed. Since this is a fact, the identities of the parties to the conflict, the group of individuals who support them, and the names of relevant organizations were used under pseudonyms to protect individual privacy and to adhere to the ethical standards of this writing.

The secondary data sources include prior studies, discussion papers, books on conflict analysis and management, journals, the internet, e-journals, numerous tools and websites for conflict management, and conflict resolution-focused magazine articles. The data were gathered longitudinally in an unstructured setting.

III. THE FACTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT

It was around 20 years back when Rahim (pen name) was a student of class x, and his Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination was knocking at the door. At the time, Zahid (pen name), the Head Master (Head Teacher) of his school, retired, leaving the position vacant. As required by school policy, the School Managing Committee published an advertisement in national dailies seeking a Head Master to fill the position. The advertisement included every criteria needed for the position. All qualified Bangladeshi nationals were eligible to apply. His teacher, Mr. Karim (pen name), who also applied for the position of Head Master while serving as an Assistant Head Master, was one of the other applicants. The neighborhood where the school was located was Mr. Karim's hometown. Additionally, he was the brother of a political elite in Bangladesh. He consequently always displayed greater influence than his competitors. Although an oral and written appointment examination was held on the scheduled day, Mr. Zabbar was chosen by the school managing committee after placing first in the examination. Mr. Karim was incensed when he saw the outcome and, as a result, he could no longer stand Mr. Zabbar, the recently appointed Head Master. Even then, conflicts occasionally sprang out between them over trivial matters, which upset the other faculty members and disrupted the school's atmosphere. Almost all of the pupils had some awareness of this problem. In general, the newly appointed Head Master, Mr. Zabbar, was more well-liked and approachable among the faculty, staff, and students.

One day, Rahim was startled to hear a commotion in the headmaster's office, and he quickly realized that Mr. Karim was berating Mr. Zabbar. In just a few minutes after the news traveled around the campus, all of the school's personnel and kids gathered on the school field and started to feel nervous. After hearing such information, the second group of people—who were Mr. Zabbar's supporters—entered the school and made an effort to denigrate Mr. Karim. Rahim and other faculty members at the school were aware of the situation's deteriorating state and reported it to the police station. Soon after, police arrived at the school and quickly took charge of the situation. Police recorded the first information and filed a case. Rahim represented the students at the school at that time. The cops recorded his identity as a witness. Mr. Karim and his politically influential brother exerted pressure on Rahim to testify during the witness gathering phase of the continuing legal dispute between Mr. Zabbar and Mr. Karim. Though Rahim was in a fear if he would not give his testimony in favor of Mr. Karim, he might have to face some political harassment, but his mind/conscience did not give the consent to produce testimony against Mr. Zabbar. So, after consulting with his family members and considering that entire thing Rahim was determined not to give testimony in favor of Mr. Karim. When the date of producing of the witness came, Rahim left his city and moved to the capital city, and returned after a few days. When Mr. Karim and his brother found him they showed their heated behave on him. During his SSC final exam, that political elite had created some uncomfortable situation for him, but nobody dare to say anything against that political elite, even the local executive officer; because the concerned political elite was the Chief executive of his local jurisdiction. Rahim obtained his Secondary School Certificate and was accepted into a college in the nation's capital. When Rahim moved to the city to finish his higher secondary education, Mr. Karim forewarned him that he would be keeping an eye on Rahim's performance there. Until the dispute was handled in a

positive way with the help of the court's intervention, Mr. Karim even started to express his irritation and annoyance toward Rahim whenever Rahim encountered him or made eye contact with him in person.

To figure out the best possible responses to the aforementioned questions and to assess the fact that is mentioned earlier, this paper also congruently explores the following significant words and brief notes that are emphasized in the accompanying flowchart (Figure 1):[1]

Figure 1
Conflict and Conflict Management Model

Conflict and Conflict Management Cycle
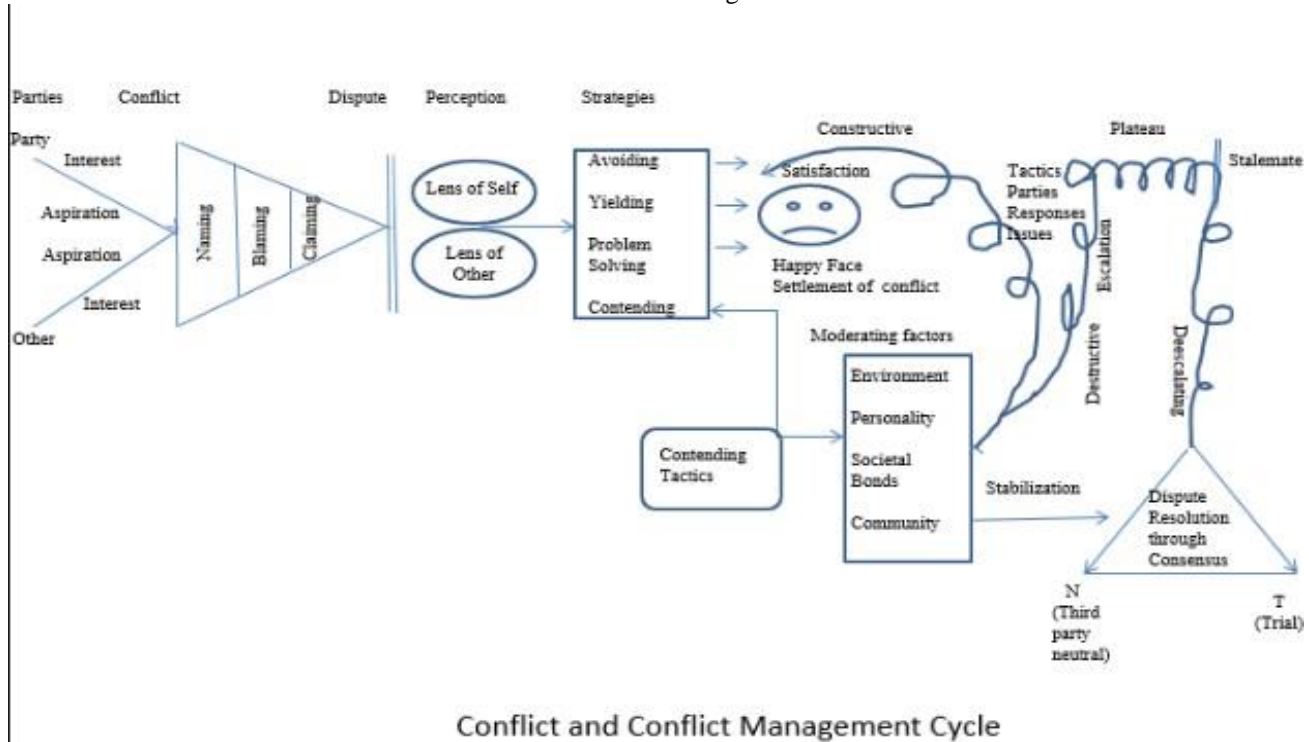
The flowchart, designed-above from left to right, outlined each stage of a conflict happened in an educational environment and its management by pointing out just its essential components. It portrayed how the underlying interests and aspirations between parties at some point clash and create interpersonal conflict, eventually leading to a group conflict due to external factors and finally coming to a settlement.

Like the mentioned conflict and conflict management model, the mentioned fact also embraces two parties: they are Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar. Their interpersonal conflict eventually turned as group conflict, which was finally resolved by the intervention of the court in a constructive way.

IV.   ANALYSIS OF THE CONFLICT

Conflict analysis is a technique to plan, carry out, and assess the dynamics, participants, causes, effects, and resolution mechanisms of conflict between the parties, groups, society, and the state. In a similar fashion to how doctors examine patients, conflict analysts also do so. The conflict analysts assist the conflicting parties, groups, or states in resolving their conflicts by increasing their ability to comprehend of how to promote changes in the conflicting parties by minimizing the negative effects of conflict or modifying the conflict to make some positive changes to ensure social justice. The following subheadings provide further explanation and evaluation of the stated conflicting fact:

i.   Conflict
Regardless of the fact that social psychology considers conflict as one of the most significant areas of study (Katz &

[1] Note: This flow-chart is prepared as per the draft-chart presented in class on April 18, 2019 in the course of Conflict and Conflict

Management by Professor Richard C. Ruben, University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law, USA.

Kahn, 1966; Lewin, 1948), the question of what constitutes conflict has not yet been resolved (Tjosvold, 2008). In common parlance, conflict can be characterized as physiological or physical encounter between two opponents who are actively striving to impose their will on one another. Conflict is a disagreement between two or more parties (individuals or groups) if at least one of them is offended, or feels disturbed by the other (Van de Vliert, Euwema, & Huismans, 1995). According to Pruitt and Kim, conflict arises when parties believe their current goals are irreconcilable and there is a perceived difference in their areas of interest (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.8). Conflict can be termed as an incompatible activity where one person's actions block, interfere with, or otherwise conflict with another person's action (Patricia, Martin & Lourdes, 2017; Deutsch, 1973).
Conflict can be manifested through the following equation:

Parties'/Characters + Perceived interest and aspiration + Achieving a certain goal + Opposed by the other parties'/characters = Conflict

Therefore, conflict can be defined broadly as a difference in the interests and objectives of two people or a group of people in the pursuit of an aspirational end. The two people involved— Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar—along with their followers on the outside were engaged in conflict over how best to pursue their individual aspirated goal in an academic setting. In order to better understand how the discussed conflict functions as a conflict cycle, the following basic aspects of a conflict will be addressed in detail:

ii.   Parties/characters of a conflict

The entities like, individuals, groups, organizations, governments etc. that are capable of making decisions, or play role, or directly or indirectly related to the conflict are considered as parties' in a conflict. Generally, there are two parties' or characters are involved in a conflicting situation: one is antagonist and another is defender. However, there are three major types of parties may appear in any conflict situation:

a) **Primary parties'**: The key players in the conflict whose perceived goals or aspirations are incompatible with other in pursuit of their objectives (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.15; Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines & Procedures, (2012, May), p. 27; Brahm, 2003)

b) **Secondary parties**: The parties who have vested interest in or may be affected directly by the conflict and its outcome, but for some reason are not directly involved. Secondary parties are potential coalition members, and may become primary parties at some point (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.15; Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines & Procedures, (2015, December), p.41; Brahm, 2003).

c) **Peripheral parties**: The parties who have an interest in the conflict and outcome but are not affected directly like public and media (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.15; Conflict Analysis Framework: Field Guidelines & Procedures, (2015, December), p.41).

In the above-mentioned fact, Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar were the primary parties and rest of the faculties, students and other actors were the secondary and peripheral parties. In general, conflict involves two parties but others often get involved in creating persecution, victim and rescuers. When two people have an interaction and each influences the other and is affected by the other then they considered as actors or active party. Sometimes, a third party gets involved through exacerbating the situation creates a negative triangle and making matters worse also be termed as active party.

iii.   Conflict of interest and aspiration

A conflict, whether it may be the social or institutional, it requires a difference in the interests and goals of two parties in a particular circumstance, case, fact, or topic. When the objectives and priorities of two parties diverge, the situation is said to be conflicting, and the issue is said to be a conflict. In a conflict situation, both parties prefer to look for solutions to their problems rather than caving in or cutting off communication since their interests are at odds or they don't necessarily desire the same things. This incompatibility of aspiration and conflict of interest are the underlying reasons to involve in conflict by two individuals working together in an institution. Conflicts can start when goals are obstructed or when there is ambiguity over how to achieve that goal. Conflict also arises when a person or group pursues a goal that is seen as impeding the pursuit of a different party's goal/objective.

From the mentioned fact it shows that initially Mr. Karim had a latent intention to be the Head Master of the concern School and through participating in the job appointing examination his underlying intention was manifested as an aspiration to acquire the post. So, this was the combination of interest and aspiration of an individual to reach a goal or achieve of an objective with certain endeavor. On the other hand, Mr. Zabbar as an aspiring candidate for the same post he was possessed the similar interest and aspiration to achieve that objective through fulfilling certain requirements of appointment. Therefore, in a sense, it was a latent or interpersonal clash of interest and aspiration between Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar to attain their own objectives. Until it's manifestation through certain action it cannot be considered as external conflict. So, from this notion conflict may be divided as internal and external conflict.

iv.   Perceived interest, aspiration and certain goal

In a conflict, the interest and aspiration of the parties are to be perceived, felt, manifest and have an aftermath affect. So, non-perceived interest and aspiration that is, the issues which occur are unaware by the parties' cannot be termed as conflict. In terms of defining of a conflict, the emphasis is always given on the non-manageable disagreement of interests and aspirations of the parties (Onyesom & Emeke, 2015, p. 250). Therefore, interests indicate something that tends the parties to think and action, forming the core of many of their attitudes, goals and intentions. One the other hand, it can be considered as the parties perceptions or internal representation about what are they desire (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.15; Austin & Vancouver, 1996, p. 338). Interests have several dimensions like, tangible, intangible, specific and universal (Pruitt

and Kim, 2003, p.16). Power, honor and recognition come within the purview of intangible category due its abstract nature (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.16). The indicated conflict is very much intangible in nature because it was initially started to acquire for a post or designation or rank and that ultimately triggered as a groups conflict amalgamation of other power related issue. But, the aspiration of the parties' must be understood as the manifestation of the underlying interests. On the other hand, it can be said as the mental representations of the parties, or goal or objective which the parties strived for or perceived to be achieved (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.16). In the mentioned case the goal of both Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar were to achieve the post of a Head Master in anyway, so they had a strong and perceived aspiration. So, conflict appears when a party experiences his interest and goal or aspiration is incompatible with other (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.16).

v. Internal and external conflict

One of life's most difficult facets is dealing with internal or interpersonal conflicts. Even while everyone would prefer avoid it, it exists everywhere, has a cause and effect (Coser, 1956), and may either be destructive or constructive. Knowing its underlying causes increases the likelihood of finding integrative solutions to problems, which might allow all parties to achieve their goals (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991; Rahim, 2001). It is the struggle a person goes through inside that affects their thoughts, emotions, interest, and aspirations to achieve his/her targeted goal. Likewise, the interpersonal issues which affect the actions, motivations and interactions of an individual with other may be termed as interpersonal conflict. Generally, the conflict management expert does not consider the latent/internal conflict as a conflict, because sometimes it may not be manifested through further actions.

A conflict on an interpersonal scale, may be provoked by some of the external actors. It may be a political, economic, or social nature (Sandole, 1998). In general, a conflict between an individual or group of individuals and any other external force, such as a villain, or the government, is referred to as external conflict. External conflict can be intergroup, intragroup, and inter-organizational conflict (Thakore, 2013). Intergroup conflict may be very difficult since it often involves people from different groups or institutions who are either emotionally or substantively driven to struggle. According to the fact given, Mr. Karim initially went through internal conflict because of his ambition for fame and power, which ultimately led him to get involved in an external conflict or intergroup conflict.

vi. Reasons for arising conflict

Conflicts typically have the same tone and underlying causes whether they occur at a place of worship or a school. Experts have been disputing for a long period of time whether conflict is a result of sociopolitical and economic causes or an innate human characteristic (Collier, 1975). Some scholars claim that human biology is one of the main reasons on what causes conflict. Such a strategy is known as individual characteristic theory, according to Schellernberg (1996), and it concentrates on the person performing the act rather than its surroundings. McCauley (1990) supports this assertion and mentioned that

people engage in violent conflict because it is hereditary. On the other hand, anthropologists have successfully used these ethnographic studies to disprove and expose the insufficiency of the biologically based explanation of the causes of conflict.

However, Conflict may arise in so many reasons like, scarcity of resources (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.21), rapidly changing of aspiration due to its expansion (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.21), zero-sum thinking or fixed pie assumption (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.22), ambiguity about nature of power (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.22), invidious comparison (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.23), and status inconsistency (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.24), distrust (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.25), lack of normative consensus (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.26), dilemma of security (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.25), issues of social identity (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.28-30), social structure (Ruben, 2019, January 29), social aggression (Ruben, 2019, January 29), needs (Ruben, 2019, January 29), struggle over resource (Ruben, 2019, January 29), craving for long term happiness (Ruben, 2019, January 29),biological reason (Schellenberg, 1996, p. 43), and group mobilization (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.32). People's different styles of thinking, perceptions, perspectives, understanding, principles, values, beliefs, and slogans are also the reasons of disagreement (De Bono, 1985). Sometimes, high concern about self-esteem and concerned with fear, force, fairness or funds are also the reasons arising conflict between the parties (De Bono, 1985). In the institutional level sometimes high stress workplaces, ambiguous roles and responsibilities, situations with several bosses, and a predominance of cutting-edge technology (Kirchoff and Adams (1982), also creates conflicting environment if is not managed properly. According to Filley (1975), a number of variables, such as communication barriers, conflicts of interest, incompatibilities in goals and jurisdiction, reliance on one party by a group or an individual, organizational differences, affiliations and specialties of the parties, behavior regulation, and unresolved prior disputes, may lead to conflict situations in an institution. It is typical for members of a team or institution to experience stressful conditions as a result of confusion and pressure, which can sometimes result in conflicting scenarios (Thakore, 2013).

In the instant case, both Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar have only one goal to achieve the post of a Head Master. So, there was limited resource available and the aspiration to achieve that resource/ post rapidly changed their perceptions and they felt it just like a zero-sum game. Moreover, as an invidious comparison Mr. Karim thought himself more knowledgeable/qualified and more powerful than Mr. Zabbar, which ultimately triggers the internal conflict to the external conflict. So, among the mentioned reasons, some are internal and some are external reasons which in fact trigger someone to involve in the conflict. Internal reasons may be arise from emotion, ego and other psychological reasons. On the other hand, power, identity, security and group mobilization are the external reasons of a conflict. Basically, external conflict can be motivated by survival, by pride, love, morality or duty, or number of other factors. This sort of external conflict pits one individual against another, albeit the origin of the conflict can vary. There are times when both parties want the same thing, sometimes both want different things, but one or both hinder the other's success, sometimes one side wants to destroy or hinder

the other, sometimes one side wants to harm, hate the other out of malice or greed, and sometimes one party wants what another party has. So, from this perspective external conflict may be Individual versus Individual, Individual versus Society, Individual/group of people versus Nature, Individual/group versus Machine, and Individual/group versus Fate/Supernatural conflict. In the depicted fact it shows that initially it was just like an interpersonal conflict and that finally triggers into as groups conflict.

vii.   Conflict and its transformation as dispute

Conflicts in today's environment can take many different shapes and cover a wide spectrum of viewpoints. These "systemic" features of conflict are the overt or obvious manifestations of the aggrieved group's dissatisfaction with the other group(s) and are intended to hurt or degrade the other group(s). The ability of the parties to settle their disagreements on their own, without the external involvement or outside support, is tough and complex when this form of conflict occurs on a bigger scale. Most often, a larger-scale conflict manifests as a dispute that needs the intervention of a third party or outside help to be resolved. Though conflict and dispute runs together, but all conflict is not the dispute. Generally, a dispute is the mature formation of a conflict. According to Costantino and Merchant (1996), "conflict is a fundamental disagreement between two parties, whereas, a dispute is one the possible outcome of a conflict." A dispute is a short term disagreement that might lead to an agreement between the disputants; it involves issues that are negotiable (Keator, 2011; Burton, 1990). Contrarily, conflict may lasts a long time and involves core issues that are viewed as "non-negotiable." (Burton, 1990). The primary idea is that a dispute can quickly escalate into a conflict if left unresolved and unaddressed. However, without assistance, conflicts rarely turn into dispute (Keator, 2011; Burton. 1990). In general conflict does not escalate until parties' take any further action regarding escalation. This escalation process is also called as transformation of conflict to a dispute, which occurs through process of naming, blaming and claiming (Felstiner, Abel & Sarat, 1980). These three process in accordingly help to transform the conflict to a dispute. In the illustrated dispute, Mr. Karim pointed his finger to Mr. Zabbar and indicated that if Mr. Zabbar would not apply for the post he would get the job. So, Mr. Karim's naming, blaming and claiming approach in fact, triggers the conflict as a dispute.

viii.   Lens of conflict

One of the most fundamental inborn conflicts that people encounter is between their own concerns and those of others. People frequently focus on themselves and seek out their own interests first. However, conflict arises when there is another person out there who shares the same aspirations and is ready to employ any method necessary to achieve those goals. Short-term self-interest may push us to act selfishly and take advantage of others' goodwill without giving something in return (Jhangiani & Stangor, 2022). Nevertheless, it can be detrimental in the long run due to its inherent conflict nature. The self-concern model includes the naming, blaming, and claiming issues, which are also the contentious behavior characterized as one of the Lens of Conflict. On the other hand, having knowledge of and awareness of how others perceive you (other-concern) is another lens of conflict that aids in bridging the understanding gap and encouraging a constructive resolution. In fact, the lens of conflict is a conflict management tool that is based on self-perceived personality and how a person makes out himself/herself to have behaved (lens of self) which may differ from how others perceived the behavior (lens of other). Through this lens of conflict a party may identify two tangible conflicts they were tangled in, and then open the door to perceive about what they worked, belief and thought during the conflict and about the aftermaths of each conflict.

In the aforementioned conflict, which started as an interpersonal conflict but later turned into a group conflict as a result of putting a higher focus on self-interested factors in order to achieve a goal.

ix.   Styles of conflict

For resolving the aforementioned conflict as perceived by the parties through applying their lens of conflict, parties' may use various styles that are terms as styles of conflict. According to Pruitt Dean & Kim (2003, p.42), "conflict style is the way a person most commonly deals with conflict." These strategies are categorized by the behavior of the parties like, contending, yielding, problem solving, enacting and withdrawing (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.5; Thomas and Kilmann, 1974). Although there are many ways to resolve conflicts, Mary Follett was the first to make an effort to do so when she proposed dominance, compromise, and integration as the three main strategies in the 1940s (Chinyere, 2018). This effort took full shape when she later added avoidance and suppression as conflict management styles, which caused a paradigm shift in the field of human resource management (Chinyere, 2018). Other researchers have developed styles ranging from two to eight (Chinyere, 2018), suggesting that no single style is sufficient to resolve a conflict because it depends on the viewpoint of the parties involved as well as the circumstances.

Given this fact, Thomas and Kilmann's (1974) model of conflict management styles and Pruitt and Robin's (1986) conflict management model are both used to further the explanation of how conflict styles can be used and when they should be used. So, the following diagram can be used to better comprehend the conflict management styles as well as the dual-concern model:

Figure 2
Conflict Management Styles and Dual-Concern Model
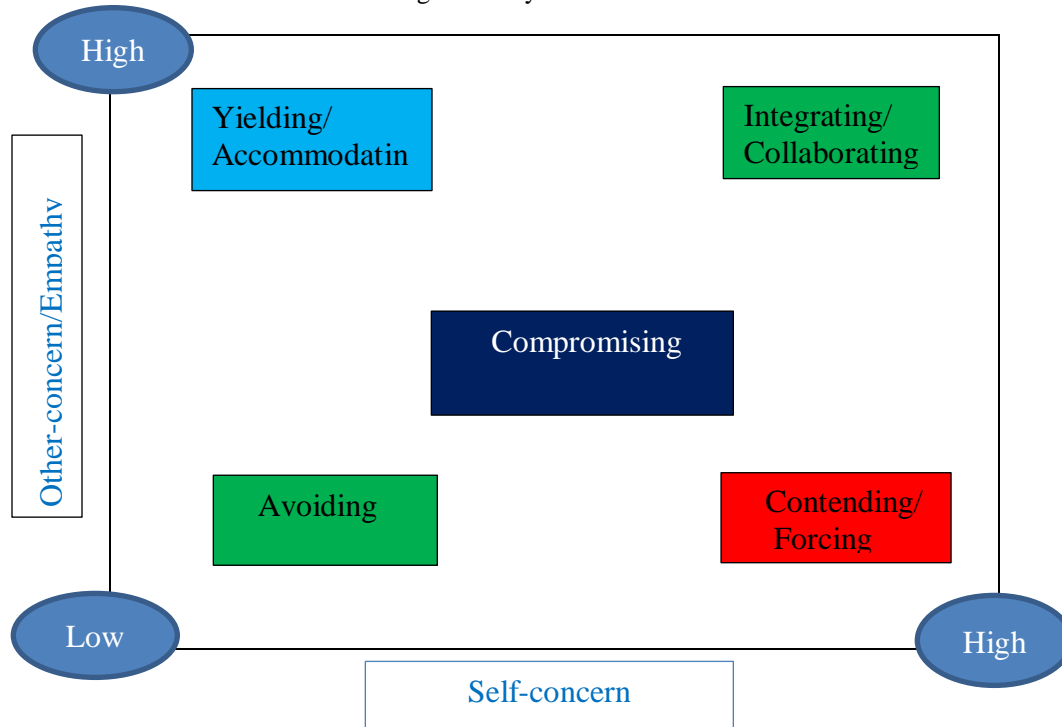
The mentioned model has two components, assertiveness (self-concern) and empathy (concern of others). Empathy is designated on the y-axis, whereas assertiveness is on the x-axis. The model is used to produce five distinct conflict management styles that people might employ to handle issues that they may encounter on a regular basis. The model portrays five styles for resolving conflicts: competing, avoiding, compromising, accommodating, and cooperating. The x axis depicts competing and avoiding styles, which indicate assertiveness, while the y axis depicts accommodating and collaborating styles, which indicate empathy. Compromises can be formed where there is a balance between being cooperative and assertive.

As per the model, low concern for oneself and others characterizes the avoidance style, whereas high self- and low other-concern characterizes the accommodating style, high levels of self- and low levels of other-concern characterize the forcing style, and a compromising style indicates concern for both, respectively. These conflict resolution styles indicate a person's degree of concern for self and for the others and the level of their satisfaction.

According to the mentioned model, if parties' use a competing style, then they might force the others to accept 'their' solution, but this acceptance may be accompanied by fear and resentment (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.7). If they accommodate, the relationship may proceed smoothly, but they may build up frustrations that their needs are going unmet. If they compromise, they may feel comfort about the outcome, but still harbor resentments in the future. If they collaborate, they may not gain a better solution than a compromise might have yielded, but they are more likely to feel better about their chances for future understanding and goodwill. And if they avoid discussing the conflict at all, both parties may remain clueless about the real underlying issues and concerns, only to be dealing with them in the future.

In the illustrated conflicting parties' initially used the contentious techniques and finally they applied the problem solving approach through a third party neutral like, court proceedings. The mentioned conflict was very much related with the strategies of contending, where both parties' adopted the contentious techniques (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, pp. 63-84) through applying their active strategies like, threat, tit for tat, and engaging in a violent activities (both instrumental and in group violence) (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, pp.79-80) in a relatively consistent and coherent manner that ultimately lead them to reach a solution.

x.   **Constructive and destructive conflict**
It is clear that a conflict has had negative outcomes when both parties believe they have lost as a result of the conflict. Similar to this, an educational institutional conflict or conflict occurs in a learning environment has positive outcomes if everyone involved is happy with their outcomes and feels like they have benefited from the conflict. This is what Morton (1969) refers to as "the greatest good for the greatest number" in a single sentence. It does not necessarily mean that conflict is a negative thing. It is far from being necessarily dysfunctional. Moreover, a certain degree of conflict is essential for group formation and persistence of group life (Coser, 1956, p.31). Sometimes, it facilitates the reconciliation of peoples' legitimate interests (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.10), discourages premature group decision making (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.11), and a sine qua non of reflection and ingenuity (Dewey, 1930, p.300). Generally,

differences in opinion over organizational tasks, rules, and other issues commonly lead to conflicts that have a constructive outcome as opposed to conflicts that are typically instigated by members and result in verbal abuse, racial tension, and sexual harassment (Chinyere, 2018, p. 25). Usually, avoiding, yielding and problem solving strategies promote the parties to a constructive outcome and where both the parties' become happy for settlement of dispute through consensual mechanism. On the other hand, contending style of conflict, parties usually achieve the negative outcome.

The aforesaid conflict though initially started as a contending style, nonetheless, it facilitated the substantive dialogue between Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar through adopting the court-mediation process, it fostered mutual understanding, and finally it reached to an integrative solution through resolution of dispute by the mechanism of court-mediation. So, it can be said that it was a constructive conflict, rather than the very opposite nature of destructive conflict.

xi.   Escalation of conflict

Escalation of conflict indicates the intensification of conflicting nature between individuals or groups in interpersonal relationships, or it may refer to the acceleration of hostilities in a large societal context. In another sense it can be said that it is a situation when conflict heightens in a grade to which one party dehumanizes the other. Eckert (2003) pointed out that every conflict has the potential to escalate, from the process of escalating interpersonal disagreements to the inhumane treatment of relationship between groups or states to the point when violence, terrorism, and war are engaged. As an idiosyncratic features conflict may be escalated due to the competition, exasperation, impulsion and for retaliatory mindset of the parties (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p. 129). Moreover, tendency toward strong need for social approval, feel guilty about aggression, high empathy with more reflectiveness may be the causes of escalation of conflict. In addition, strong group bondage or association, limiting norms of the communities, cultural differences, age, gender and divergence of power play a significant role in terms of escalation of conflict. Among the mentioned features of escalation power imbalance is the key factor that helps the strong party or group to exercise dominance, control, and autonomy over the weaker party or group through using his/their advanced information, connectivity, role and strength (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, pp.144-146). This power may be the personal power and relationship power, which accrues from the deep rooted structure of the society like, role, history and hierarchy and interdependence of group goal. The party with high power beliefs in superior competence than the individual with low power and tries to marginalize him through using heavy techniques of under-estimation. On the other hand, the low power holders through using the techniques of cohesion, organization and motivation try to mitigate the power imbalance. In addition, environmental conditions (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, pp. 126-128), idiosyncratic features (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, pp. 128-129) of the parties, social bond (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p. 134) and relation with the larger communities (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p. 136) play a significant role in terms of escalation of conflict. In terms of escalation of conflict, the contender-defender model (where one

side behaves as a defender and the other as a contender), the contentious model (where both parties are interested in struggling to attain the goal), and the stereotyping and mirror imaging model (parties project images onto others, and this creates a stereotype of the other) are commonly seen in the area of conflict management. So, from the mentioned viewpoints, conflict escalation can be demarcated as an increase in a conflict's severity in relation to the degree that is seen and the methods that are employed (Richard, 2017).

In the mentioned fact, Mr. Karim's insulting attitude to Mr. Zabbar created a contentious atmosphere, and then the defensive attitude of Mr. Zabbar created it a spiral one, that is as a destructive conflict spiral model. As a cycle of escalation the associated group of Mr. Karim attacked on Mr. Zabbar, which created a huge emotional change regarding Mr. Zabbar image. Thereafter the associated group of Mr. Zabbar rushing to the spot escalated the conflict more rapidly. So, this **spiral of conflict** was both the combination of defensive and retaliatory, where each party punished the other for actions it found aversive. According to Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim (2003, pp.119-120), "*a cycle of escalation might, for example, start with Party's receipt of what it considers to be an insult from other. If this makes Party angry and fearful about its image of adequacy, these emotional changes could produce a return result from Party. This might then produce similar emotional changes in other, encouraging still another insult. This cycle would then be complete, but it could be followed by further cycles, causing the conflict to become increasingly escalated.*"

From the above mentioned observation of Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim, it shows that the current factual overview also portrays the similar issues of **conflict spiral** (combination of contender-defender model, conflict spiral model and structural change model) with the involvement of other emotional issues, goals and responses of each party's associated group of people. Moreover, as per the factual overview, when the two groups (Mr. Karim's group and Mr. Zabbar's group) took their preparation to attack one another, then the police rushed to the spot and arrest some of them and lodged a criminal case. As a representative of the school and informer of the incident Rahim was one of the witnesses of the mentioned case. In fact, this was the **peak point** of the illustrated conflict, and after that the mentioned conflict persisted for a long time as a **plateau**, and then in one point it reached as a **stalemate**.

xii.   Stalemate of conflict

Stalemate is a condition when parties understand they are not willing to continue the conflict, or further endeavor to success through escalation are unfeasible (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.172) or imprudent (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.172).This situation may be termed as the ripeness of conflict (Marieke, 1994). It may be categorized as perceived and non-perceived. As a mechanism of settlement negotiation and mediation usually developed from perceived stalemate (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, pp.129-146). This type of stalemate occurs when the tactics of the parties are failed, or exhausted due to lack of necessary resources that required for using the tactics or loss of support from the associated members

or group, or high cost and risk to continue (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p. 188).

As seen by the provided fact, both parties to the conflict eventually became weary and believed that continuing with the litigation was not in their best interests as academics and should be put to an end. This impasse in the conflict is referred to as a stalemate since both sides are waiting for a favorable or prestigious resolution. However, this stalemate situation can occasionally lead to escalating violence due to outside interference and instigation.

xiii.   De-escalation conflict

De-escalation periods saw the deployment of less violent force than even "normal" times when the sides were allies (Mitchell, 1990). The good behaviors are amplified at this stage to make the issue easier to resolve. This viewpoint holds that two parties in a conflict scenario can collaborate or compete to resolve the disagreement by altering either their own behaviors or how they view the actions of the other party (Dunaetz, 2010). After passing few years of litigious condition, both Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar perceived that the case tarnished their image in the school, and that would not ultimately carry any fruitful outcome due to cost and other social effect. This tendency may be termed as de-escalation of conflict (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, pp. 126-128). Generally speaking, de-escalation signifies the behavior of the parties involved in conflict which is intended to escape from the further escalations of conflicts. It is one of the meaningful turning points of conflict resolution.

In the given fact, both Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar were mutually hurt from the incidence, so at this point, as a theory of ripeness (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.188) they were pushed by the judge to solve the case through court mediation process.

xiv.   Outcome and the resolution of conflict

The styles a conflict is handled determines its outcome. (Deutsch, 1949). Each conflict produces a specific set of outcomes and depending on the method used to solve the problem, these outcomes change. Whitfield (1994) pointed out that depending on the management style used by an institution, the outcome of a conflict can either be detrimental or beneficial. From this point of view, conflict does not fetch a bad thing always that has to be avoided. Instead, it should be viewed and handled positively to encourage creativity, innovation, better performance, and improved interpersonal relationships by reducing its negative effects within an institution. (Rahim, 2002).

Every institution, regardless of size, complexity, or simplicity, has a variety of systems or processes for handling conflicts and resolving disputes. Along with tactics and ways for resolving the dispute, it also identifies approaches and strategies for managing the conflict. Dealing with conflict and managing conflict are both parts of conflict resolution. Therefore, conflict management and negotiation are two separate components of conflict resolution that must be combined to produce favorable results. When hostile attitudes have diminished and conflicting or destructive behavior has been curbed, the conflict management or settlement, takes place. The conflict's root issues must to be

addressed, though. However, there is still room to address the conflict's underlying issues. Following a reduction in the level of conflict, the next stage is to employ negotiation or problem-solving techniques to reach a solution that is acceptable to both sides. At this stage, the interests of the parties involved in the conflict are changed or modified in order to resolve the issue. Finally, the conflict management processes, as well as third-party involvement such as a judge, arbitrator, or mediator may be employed to resolve a conflict or dispute finally. Negotiation is another alternative process where either integrative (win-win) or distributive (win-loss) mechanism is used to resolve the conflict or dispute.

In the aforementioned conflict, as a theory of contractual intervention (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.227) used by a professional mediator or judge, Mr. Karim and Mr. Zabbar eventually came to a constructive resolution of their disagreement after going through the mediation process and withdrew their lawsuit.

V.   CONCLUSION

Conflict can occur at any point in an institutional or a learning environment, making conflict management crucial to the growth of an institution, preserving peace and security, and ensuring equal access to institutional justice. Even though conflict by definition implies something negative outcome, the particular conflict in question was settled in a constructive way. Generally, constructive behaviors like, mutual understanding, integrative, and cooperative relationships will be very beneficial; yet, this is the most difficult problem because the parties' interests and aspirations are so different. Therefore, in terms of decision-making and conflict resolution, emphasis should be placed on approaches that enable constructive conflict management, such as civil discourse, trust building, and constructive controversy among/within the groups, and disregard approaches like autistic hostility, like autistic hostility (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.160), group or community polarization (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, pp. 163-164), group think syndrome (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.113), overlapping bonds (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.139), stereotype behavior (Schaller & Neuberg, 2008; Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005, p.3), dehumanization (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p.111) and de-individuation (Pruitt and Kim, 2003, p. 111). Moreover, to facilitate social interaction between and among the parties to a conflict, conflict analysis and management are vital (Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.227). In reality, both contractual and emergent intervention (Conlon & Meyer, 2004; Pruitt & Kim, 2003, p.227) are crucial for addressing the conflict constructively, especially for identifying the parties' roles and levels of intervention throughout the phase of escalation. In light of the fact that the constructive or problem-solving approach is the best way to resolve conflict in academic settings, this study also recommends further research to identify all underlying causes of conflict of a similar nature in academic settings in order to improve the edifying qualities of an educational institution.

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Note: 1

[46] This flow-chart is prepared as per the draft-chart presented in class on April 18, 2019 in the course of Conflict andConflict Management by Professor Richard C. Ruben, University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law, USA.

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