

KEY DIMENSIONS OF PROACTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT CULTURE: AN EXPLORATORY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study employed an exploratory mixed-method design, beginning with qualitative data collection and proceeding to quantitative analysis to deepen the understanding of proactive conflict management culture. The qualitative phase involved 17 participants from selected schools in the Municipality of President Roxas, including 10 who participated in one-on-one interviews and 7 who engaged in a focus group discussion. Findings revealed three central themes reflecting teachers' lived experiences: Proactive Conflict Anticipation and Prevention, Collegial Responsiveness and Constructive Engagement, and Leadership Influence and Organizational Alignment. Further analysis identified six dimensions that form the core structure of proactive conflict management culture, namely Leadership Support for Conflict Management, Ethical Conduct and Responsibility, Fair and Consistent Organizational Policies, Open Communication and Transparency, Proactive Awareness and Early Conflict Detection, and Collaborative Problem-Solving and Teamwork. Reliability testing established that these dimensions collectively form a coherent framework suitable for measurement. The integration of qualitative insights and quantitative validation resulted in the development of a contextually grounded assessment tool for evaluating proactive conflict management culture in educational settings.

Keywords: *Proactive Conflict Management, Organizational Culture, School Leadership, Exploratory Approach, Municipality of President Roxas*

INTRODUCTION

Proactive management culture is crucial for maintaining productivity and ensuring a positive working environment. However, a global study conducted by Development Dimensions International (DDI, 2024) revealed that 49% of emerging leaders fail to demonstrate effective conflict management skills. Only 12% were found to possess high proficiency in managing workplace conflicts. This lack of skill results in negative consequences such as decreased productivity, strained team relationships, and increased turnover rates, showing a significant need for the development of conflict management capabilities among leaders in the workplace.

In the Philippines, cultural values such as *pakikisama* (harmony) and *hiya* (a sense of shame) influence how conflicts are handled in the workplace. This often leads to conflict avoidance, especially among middle managers. A study by Mendoza (2022) found that 70% of Filipino employees expect their managers to address interpersonal conflicts directly, but only 40% reported that their managers actually engage in conflict resolution. This discrepancy contributes to a decline in productivity, as unresolved issues can cause disengagement and a 25% reduction in overall team performance.

The key dimensions of proactive management culture are influenced by various factors, such as organizational culture, communication styles, and leadership behaviors. A study by Thomas and Kilmann (2021) emphasizes the importance of communication in resolving conflicts proactively. Additionally, a study by Johnson and Johnson (2022) revealed that leaders with emotional intelligence are more likely to manage conflicts effectively. Furthermore, the role of organizational culture was highlighted in a study by Smith (2023), where companies with a collaborative and open culture experienced fewer instances of conflict escalation compared to those with more hierarchical structures.

While there has been significant research on conflict management strategies, there is still a gap in understanding how proactive conflict management can be tailored to specific industries or organizational structures. According to Lee and Chan (2022), much of the current literature overlooks the unique challenges faced by educators and other public service sectors in managing workplace conflict. Most studies focus on corporate environments, leaving a void in research specific to educational institutions. Additionally, research on how cultural influences and local values impact conflict management within organizations, particularly in Southeast Asia, remains limited (Lim, 2021).

The significance of studying the key dimensions of proactive management culture lies in its potential to enhance organizational effectiveness, improve interpersonal relationships, and promote a positive work environment. By identifying and addressing conflicts early, organizations can reduce the negative impact that unresolved issues may have on employee morale, productivity, and retention. Proactive conflict management fosters open communication, collaboration, and trust among team members, ultimately leading to better decision-making and higher job satisfaction.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used an exploratory mixed method design, a research approach that began with collecting and analyzing qualitative data followed by quantitative data to deepen the understanding of the topic. The qualitative phase explored initial insights into how individuals experienced and managed conflict in the workplace, allowing patterns and themes to emerge. These findings then informed the development of a quantitative instrument and guided the focus of the broader survey, ensuring that the second phase of the study was grounded in real-world experiences. By combining both qualitative and quantitative phases, the study was able to explore the issue in depth and then measure the extent of key findings across a larger group.

Using an exploratory mixed method design was important because it allowed the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of conflict management strategies by first capturing rich, detailed narratives and then testing or expanding those insights with numerical data. This approach ensured that the study was grounded in participants' lived experiences and supported by broader trends, making the results more reliable and actionable. It also helped address complex topics where limited prior research existed by allowing the data to guide the direction of the inquiry.

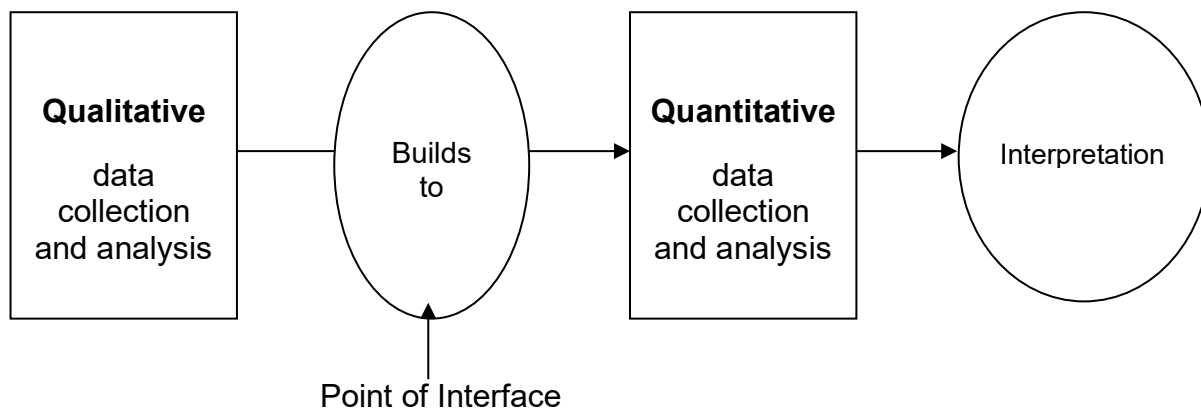


Figure 1: Design diagram of Exploratory Sequential Design

Source: Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011)

Research Participants

The participants in this study consisted of both qualitative and quantitative respondents from selected schools in the Municipality of President Roxas. For the qualitative phase, the study involved 17 participants, with 10 individuals participating in one-on-one in-depth interviews to share their personal experiences and insights, while the remaining 7 engaged in a focus group discussion to explore shared perceptions and collaborative experiences related to workplace conflict management. For the quantitative phase, a total of 200 teachers from various basic education institutions in the municipality were selected to complete a structured questionnaire designed to gather broader perspectives and measurable data on the subject.

In selecting the participants, the study included full-time basic education teachers who were currently employed in both public and private schools within the Municipality of President Roxas. These individuals had at least one year of teaching experience to ensure that they had sufficient exposure to workplace interactions and potential conflict situations. Teachers holding purely administrative roles or those on prolonged leave during the data collection period were excluded from the study to maintain consistency in the scope of the participants' work environments and experiences. These inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured the relevance and reliability of the data collected for both the qualitative and quantitative components of the research.

Research Instrument

In the qualitative phase, the researcher formulated a set of interview guide questions based on the objectives of the study. These interview guide questions were asked to the participants during the interviews and focus group discussions.

Experts were invited to perform content validation of the interview questions and to check the sustainability of the items that captured the underlying dimensions of the study. The purpose was to ensure the readability and comprehensibility of the questionnaire.

In the quantitative phase, the items of the questionnaire were constructed based on the frequency of occurrence as revealed in the focus group discussions. This tool was subjected to dimension reduction to identify the factors that contributed to the problem being studied.

Data Collection

Letters of permission were secured before the researcher proceeded with data collection. Specifically, permission was first granted by the graduate school at Central Mindanao Colleges, the principals of the schools in the Municipality of President Roxas, and the participants. The researcher provided consent forms to the participants, notifying them in writing that a qualitative research study would take place. This included a detailed explanation of the study's rationale and research questions. If a teacher refused to participate in the study, another participant was invited to join. All data gathered over the course of the semester were treated with utmost confidentiality. Each participant was assigned a number for identification purposes. After data retrieval, the data were encoded with proper labels.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data gathered in the study, the qualitative component was first collected through one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion. After these sessions were conducted, the data were transcribed and translated into English to ensure consistency and clarity. The transcribed data were then analyzed and categorized to maintain homogeneity and support comprehensive interpretation. This process allowed the researcher to systematically present the qualitative findings, providing a deeper understanding of teachers' lived experiences with proactive conflict management culture.

Statistical Treatment

Statistical treatment of the data involved two methods: thematic analysis for the qualitative component and factor analysis for the quantitative component. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which identifies and interprets

recurring patterns across the dataset through coding and theme construction (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). For the quantitative phase, factor analysis was used to explore underlying dimensions of the items and to refine the assessment instrument, providing evidence for construct validity (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). Prior to factor extraction, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure assessed sampling adequacy to ensure suitability for factor analysis (Reddy & Kulshrestha, 2019). Principal axis factoring in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was then applied, retaining variables with communality values of 0.40 or higher. Finally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine internal consistency and reliability of the instrument, indicating that the items were closely related and measured the intended constructs, with further dimensionality verified through EFA (Collins, 2007; DeVellis, 2005).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lived Experiences of Teachers on Proactive Conflict Management Culture

Based on the analyzed data, the results showed that the participants' responses revealed several patterned insights that captured their shared experiences regarding proactive conflict management culture. From the overall analysis, a total of three themes emerged from the data. These themes are Proactive Conflict Anticipation and Prevention, Collegial Responsiveness and Constructive Engagement, and Leadership Influence and Organizational Alignment.

Theme 1 (Proactive Conflict Anticipation and Prevention). The first theme that emerged was Proactive Conflict Anticipation and Prevention. Based on the participants' narratives, many believed that effective conflict management begins long before disagreements become visible or disruptive. Teachers consistently described how they actively scan their classrooms, watching for subtle shifts in tone, posture, or group dynamics that may signal an emerging problem. Their lived experiences showed that proactive management is anchored in constant awareness, structured routines, and intentional communication. Many teachers noted that when expectations are clearly set at the beginning of the school year, and reinforced consistently, students tend to internalize norms that reduce misunderstandings. Others emphasized the importance of building emotionally safe spaces where students feel comfortable raising concerns early. Through these practices, teachers demonstrated that proactive conflict management is not merely a reaction but a culture of prevention embedded in daily teaching.

"I saw two learners starting to raise their voices, and before it could turn into a bigger issue, I gently stepped in and guided them into a short private conversation. It helped them calm down and understand each other better." (IDI, P2)

"I make it a habit to explain classroom rules every week, not just on the first day of class, because I notice that when expectations are clear, students rarely get into arguments." (IDI, P5)

“Group activities used to cause tension, but once I started giving each student a specific role, the confusion decreased and so did the conflicts.” (FGD, P3)

“I always acknowledge small acts of kindness, like when a student shares materials or helps a classmate. These moments set a tone that reduces competitiveness.” (IDI, P7)

“I’ve created a ‘talk circle’ every Friday where students can bring up concerns or feelings. This prevents minor issues from piling up and turning into bigger conflicts.” (FGD, P6)

There is strong support in current literature for the importance of early intervention in preventing conflict escalation. Studies highlight that teachers who engage in anticipatory strategies—such as monitoring group dynamics, setting explicit expectations, and fostering emotional safety—significantly reduce classroom disturbances and promote more stable learning environments (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). These proactive behaviours empower learners to manage emotions and interactions more constructively, minimizing the need for reactive discipline. This aligns closely with the participants’ experiences of observing student cues and acting before conflict intensifies.

Further evidence supports the idea that preventative conflict management strengthens classroom relationships and promotes a more collaborative climate. Research notes that students respond positively when teachers intentionally model respectful interactions and reinforce prosocial behaviour, creating norms that discourage conflict and encourage mutual understanding (Rosa et al., 2023). This literature strengthens the findings of the present study by illustrating that preventive practices are not simply strategies but foundational aspects of a healthy classroom culture that promotes long-term harmony.

Theme 2 (Collegial Responsiveness and Constructive Engagement). The second theme, Collegial Responsiveness and Constructive Engagement, emerged from teachers’ reflections on their interactions with co-workers. Many participants described how conflict management in schools extends beyond student behaviour and reaches the professional relationships among colleagues. They emphasized that disagreements are inevitable in a workplace with diverse personalities and teaching approaches, yet these conflicts rarely escalate when teachers willingly listen, compromise, and communicate respectfully. The teachers’ lived experiences show that constructive engagement is rooted in empathy, openness, and shared responsibility for a healthy school climate. Many reported that when colleagues remain approachable and transparent, misunderstandings are resolved quickly, contributing to stronger professional relationships and a more unified teaching environment.

“When a colleague and I disagreed about a student’s behaviour plan, we sat down after class and talked it through calmly. By the end, we understood each other’s perspective and came up with a plan together.” (IDI, P4)

“Whenever tensions start to show, I try to reach out first and ask how the other teacher is feeling. Usually, they’re just overwhelmed, and talking helps reduce the tension.” (IDI, P8)

“I’ve had moments where miscommunication caused friction, but instead of letting things get worse, I approached my coworker privately and clarified things before it spread.” (FGD, P2)

“In our team, we try to avoid long arguments. Instead, we focus on what can be adjusted immediately so that we can move forward without resentment.” (FGD, P5)

“Sometimes I notice a colleague struggling emotionally, so I offer to help even before they ask. This prevents stress from turning into conflict later on.” (IDI, P10)

Research supports the significant role of collegial relationships in fostering proactive conflict management. Studies emphasize that when educators practice open communication, collaborative decision-making, and emotional support, conflicts are handled with greater ease and professionalism (Irby & Pashmforoosh, 2022). These behaviors create a workplace climate marked by mutual respect, where disagreements become opportunities for dialogue rather than sources of division. This aligns with participants’ accounts of addressing issues before they escalate through listening, compromise, and supportive exchanges.

Additional literature points to the value of peer collaboration in enhancing teacher wellbeing and reducing workplace tension. Findings indicate that when teachers feel supported by colleagues, stress levels decrease and the likelihood of interpersonal conflict declines significantly (Rosa et al., 2023). This reinforces the idea that constructive engagement is not simply a reaction to conflict, but a proactive cultural norm that encourages teamwork, empathy, and shared responsibility for a peaceful learning environment.

Theme 3 (Leadership Influence and Organizational Alignment). The third theme, Leadership Influence and Organizational Alignment, surfaced strongly as participants linked their conflict-management practices to school leadership. Many teachers shared that when leaders model calm, respectful conflict resolution and maintain fair, consistent policies, teachers feel encouraged to act proactively in their own classrooms. Conversely, when leadership exhibits favouritism, inconsistent enforcement, or unclear policies, proactive conflict management becomes more challenging. These lived experiences highlight the interconnectedness between individual teacher practices and broader organizational behaviour. Participants noted that leadership creates the tone of the school—whether conflict is handled transparently or avoided, whether communication is open or guarded, and whether policies empower or restrict teachers in managing conflicts.

“I feel more confident handling a conflict when I see our administrators address issues calmly and fairly. Their example sets the standard for us.” (IDI, P1)

“When the school gives us clear guidelines on how to respond to conflicts, it’s easier to act quickly without worrying about overstepping.” (FGD, P4)

“When there is noticeable favoritism, teachers become hesitant to bring up concerns, and that creates tension that could have been avoided.” (IDI, P6)

“Our principal encourages teamwork, and that makes us more comfortable resolving conflicts together rather than in isolation.” (FGD, P7)

“There are times when the policies are not clearly explained, and that uncertainty makes teachers second-guess their actions instead of acting proactively.” (IDI, P9)

Current studies show that leadership behaviour greatly shapes teachers’ capacity to engage in proactive conflict management. Research identifies that leaders who exhibit fairness, consistency, and emotional composure foster school cultures where teachers feel psychologically safe to intervene early, communicate openly, and address tensions constructively (Irby & Pashmforoosh, 2022). When leaders model effective conflict-resolution strategies, they reinforce behavioural norms that teachers often replicate in their classrooms, creating alignment between policy and practice.

Broader reviews of organizational culture in educational settings emphasize that institutional alignment—clear policies, supportive structures, and transparent communication—significantly enhances teachers’ confidence in handling conflict (Ernstorfer et al., 2023). Schools that lack coherent policies or demonstrate inconsistent leadership practices create uncertainty that undermines proactive initiatives. The literature supports the participants’ experiences by showing that proactive conflict-management culture thrives when leadership and organizational systems actively reinforce clarity, fairness, and collaboration.

Development and validation of the questionnaire on the lived experiences of teachers on proactive conflict management culture

Drawing from the three themes generated through the qualitative analysis, the study proceeded to develop a comprehensive quantitative instrument intended to measure the Key Dimensions of Proactive Conflict Management Culture. These themes served as the structural foundation for crafting a 100-item questionnaire, ensuring that each item reflected the nuanced behaviors, perceptions, and practices identified in the participants’ lived experiences. By grounding the questionnaire in the emergent

qualitative insights, the instrument captures the depth and complexity of proactive conflict management as practiced by teachers, allowing for a more robust and empirically aligned assessment tool.

Table 1. Lived experiences of teachers on proactive conflict management culture Scale

Part I	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1	I feel leaders actively support conflict resolution initiatives.					
2	I believe leaders address conflicts promptly and fairly.					
3	I see leaders' model positive conflict-handling behaviors.					
4	I feel leaders prioritize conflict management in decision-making.					
5	I believe leaders encourage open discussion about disagreements.					
6	I feel leaders provide guidance during conflict situations.					
7	I believe leadership listens to all sides carefully.					
8	I see leaders reward collaborative conflict resolution approaches.					
9	I feel leadership promotes a respectful work environment.					
10	I believe leaders take responsibility for conflict outcomes.					
11	I feel comfortable sharing my concerns openly with others.					
12	I believe information is communicated clearly in our organization.					
13	I feel others listen when I express opinions.					
14	I believe open communication prevents unnecessary conflicts here.					
15	I feel encouraged to provide honest feedback regularly.					
16	I believe decisions are communicated transparently to everyone.					
17	I feel safe expressing disagreement without fear of retaliation.					
18	I believe people clarify misunderstandings promptly and effectively.					
19	I feel encouraged to ask questions about decisions.					
20	I believe communication channels allow for conflict discussions.					
21	I feel involved in decisions affecting my work outcomes.					
22	I believe my opinions are considered in team decisions.					
23	I feel encouraged to participate in problem-solving processes.					
24	I believe my suggestions influence workplace policies effectively.					
25	I feel included in discussions regarding workplace changes.					
26	I believe my participation improves conflict management outcomes.					
27	I feel empowered to contribute ideas during disagreements.					
28	I believe team decisions reflect input from all members.					
29	I feel consulted before major changes are implemented.					
30	I believe my participation reduces potential workplace conflicts.					
31	I recognize potential conflicts before they escalate significantly.					
32	I feel confident identifying early signs of disagreement.					
33	I believe I can prevent conflicts by early action.					
34	I notice tension among colleagues before it becomes serious.					
35	I feel prepared to address issues quickly when noticed.					
36	I believe early discussion reduces workplace misunderstandings effectively.					

37	I am aware of conflict triggers in my team.						
38	I feel encouraged to report issues early to management.						
39	I believe awareness helps maintain a harmonious environment.						
40	I feel responsible for recognizing potential conflicts timely.						
41	I feel equipped with skills to manage conflicts effectively.						
42	I believe training programs improve my conflict-handling abilities.						
43	I feel confident using conflict resolution techniques learned.						
44	I believe workshops help prevent escalation of disagreements.						
45	I feel supported to practice conflict management skills.						
46	I believe continuous learning improves my workplace relationships.						
47	I feel encouraged to develop new conflict management strategies.						
48	I believe training helps me communicate during tense situations.						
49	I feel prepared to mediate disagreements among colleagues.						
50	I believe skills training reduces stress from workplace conflicts.						
51	I feel workplace policies promote fair conflict resolution practices.						
52	I believe rules help guide employees in disagreements.						
53	I feel policies are applied consistently to everyone equally.						
54	I believe organizational guidelines reduce misunderstandings at work.						
55	I feel policies support open and respectful communication.						
56	I believe conflict management procedures are clear and accessible.						
57	I feel encouraged to follow organizational conflict guidelines.						
58	I believe rules prevent escalation of workplace disputes.						
59	I feel policies empower employees to address issues safely.						
60	I believe organizational support makes resolving conflicts easier.						
61	I feel encouraged to work together in resolving conflicts.						
62	I believe teamwork improves outcomes during disagreements.						
63	I feel comfortable suggesting solutions collaboratively with others.						
64	I believe joint problem-solving reduces workplace tension effectively.						
65	I feel supported to negotiate conflicts with colleagues directly.						
66	I believe collaboration strengthens team relationships after disputes.						
67	I feel discussions are productive when we solve problems together.						
68	I believe group solutions are fair and balanced.						
69	I feel confident contributing to collaborative conflict resolutions.						
70	I believe teamwork helps prevent future conflicts from recurring.						
71	I feel trusted to handle disagreements responsibly.						
72	I believe building trust prevents conflicts in the workplace.						
73	I feel respected when expressing my opinions openly.						
74	I believe trust encourages honest communication during conflicts.						
75	I feel relationships improve after constructive problem-solving.						
76	I believe trust supports collaborative solutions among colleagues.						

77	I feel comfortable relying on others to resolve issues.						
78	I believe strong relationships make workplace disagreements manageable.						
79	I feel valued and understood in my team.						
80	I believe building rapport reduces recurring workplace conflicts.						
81	I feel encouraged to provide feedback on conflict resolution.						
82	I believe feedback helps improve workplace conflict handling.						
83	I feel management considers suggestions to improve resolution processes.						
84	I believe continuous improvement reduces future workplace conflicts.						
85	I feel comfortable giving feedback on difficult situations.						
86	I believe reflection strengthens my conflict management skills.						
87	I feel feedback loops enhance communication and understanding.						
88	I believe evaluations help identify areas needing improvement.						
89	I feel encouraged to learn from past conflict experiences.						
90	I believe improvements in procedures enhance overall workplace harmony.						
91	I feel responsible for resolving conflicts fairly and ethically.						
92	I believe honesty is important in all conflict situations.						
93	I feel accountable for my behavior during disagreements.						
94	I believe ethical standards guide fair conflict resolution.						
95	I feel others respect rules when resolving conflicts.						
96	I believe taking responsibility improves trust among colleagues.						
97	I feel encouraged to uphold fairness in all situations.						
98	I believe ethical conduct prevents escalation of disagreements.						
99	I feel accountable for supporting team harmony consistently.						
100	I believe integrity strengthens conflict management outcomes overall.						

Sampling Adequacy and Suitability for Factor Analysis

The findings of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicate that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis. The KMO value of 0.573 reflects a moderate level of sampling adequacy, suggesting that the correlations among the items are acceptable for extracting meaningful factors. Although not high, this value still meets the threshold for exploratory factor analysis in educational and social science research. Meanwhile, Bartlett's Test yielded a highly significant result ($\chi^2 = 6061.045$, $p = .001$), demonstrating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. This significance confirms that the items share enough common variance to justify the use of factor analysis. Overall, the results suggest that the data structure is adequate for exploring the underlying dimensions of the 100-item scale.

The interpretation of the KMO value aligns with suggestions that values above 0.50 are minimally acceptable for factor analysis, allowing researchers to proceed when the items demonstrate adequate shared variance (Kaiser, 2020). Furthermore, the significance of Bartlett's Test is consistent with the idea that factor analysis becomes statistically justified when the correlation matrix departs from identity, indicating the presence of patterned relationships among variables (Williams, 2021). These findings support the appropriateness of conducting factor analysis even when the KMO falls within the lower-moderate range, particularly in social science contexts where multidimensional constructs are measured through large item pools (Field, 2020). Thus, the literature reinforces that the obtained values satisfy the necessary assumptions for identifying latent dimensions within the scale.

Based on the combination of a statistically significant Bartlett's Test and a KMO value that meets the minimum adequacy threshold, the 100-item scale can be considered acceptable and appropriate for factor analysis. The results provide empirical support for the structural soundness of the instrument and validate its use in measuring the Key Dimensions of Proactive Conflict Management Culture. These indicators confirm that the items collectively possess sufficient correlation strength to uncover the latent constructs intended by the scale, establishing the instrument as a reliable foundation for the subsequent phases of analysis and validation.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .573		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6061.045
	df	6952
	Sig.	.001

Underlying dimensions of lived experiences of teachers on proactive conflict management culture

The exploratory factor analysis produced a clear six-factor solution representing the underlying dimensions of teachers' lived experiences in a proactive conflict management culture. Using Principal Axis Factoring with Promax rotation, the model converged in 23 iterations and demonstrated strong item clustering, with factor loadings generally exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.50, indicating that the retained items contributed meaningfully to their respective constructs. Items with cross-loadings or loadings below the criteria were excluded, ensuring that only the most conceptually aligned and statistically robust statements were retained. The resulting structure shows well-differentiated dimensions that reflect leadership support, ethical conduct, organizational policy consistency, communication transparency, proactive awareness, and collaborative teamwork—confirming that the respondents' experiences form a multi-layered but internally coherent set of practices within conflict management culture.

The emergence of six distinct yet interrelated factors aligns with existing literature emphasizing the multidimensionality of conflict management in educational institutions. Scholars such as Rahim (2011), Morrill (2022), and De Dreu (2010) emphasized that effective conflict cultures are shaped by complementary domains, particularly leadership behavior, ethical norms, communication climate, and collaborative problem-solving processes. Similarly, Tjosvold (2008) argued that conflict becomes constructive when organizations build systems that support transparency, shared responsibility, and early intervention—closely resembling the factors identified in the analysis. The literature also supports the finding that training, feedback, and clear organizational procedures enhance teachers' confidence and conflict-handling abilities, reinforcing the validity of the dimensions extracted in this study. Overall, the factor structure is theoretically consistent with established conflict management models, highlighting how schools benefit from integrated approaches that foster trust, clarity, participation, and proactive engagement among educators.

Table 3. Factor Analysis

Pattern Matrix^a						
	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I feel leaders actively support conflict resolution initiatives.						
2. I believe leaders address conflicts promptly and fairly.				0.512		
3. I see leaders' model positive conflict-handling behaviors.						
4. I feel leaders prioritize conflict management in decision-making.	0.689					
5. I believe leaders encourage open discussion about disagreements.						0.534
6. I feel leaders provide guidance during conflict situations.						
7. I believe leadership listens to all sides carefully.			0.677			
8. I see leaders reward collaborative conflict resolution approaches.						
9. I feel leadership promotes a respectful work environment.		0.598				
10. I believe leaders take responsibility for conflict outcomes.						
11. I feel comfortable sharing my concerns openly with others.					0.643	
12. I believe information is communicated clearly in our organization.						
13. I feel others listen when I express opinions.						0.555
14. I believe open communication prevents unnecessary conflicts here.						
15. I feel encouraged to provide honest feedback regularly.	0.7					
16. I believe decisions are communicated transparently to everyone.						

17. I feel safe expressing disagreement without fear of retaliation.				0.521		
18. I believe people clarify misunderstandings promptly and effectively.						
19. I feel encouraged to ask questions about decisions.			0.663			
20. I believe communication channels allow for conflict discussions.						
21. I feel involved in decisions affecting my work outcomes.						
22. I believe my opinions are considered in team decisions.		0.576				
23. I feel encouraged to participate in problem-solving processes.						
24. I believe my suggestions influence workplace policies effectively.					0.692	
25. I feel included in discussions regarding workplace changes.						
26. I believe my participation improves conflict management outcomes.						
27. I feel empowered to contribute ideas during disagreements.						0.507
28. I believe team decisions reflect input from all members.						
29. I feel consulted before major changes are implemented.						
30. I believe my participation reduces potential workplace conflicts.	0.645					
31. I recognize potential conflicts before they escalate significantly.						
32. I feel confident identifying early signs of disagreement.						
33. I believe I can prevent conflicts by early action.				0.599		
34. I notice tension among colleagues before it becomes serious.						
35. I feel prepared to address issues quickly when noticed.						

36. I believe early discussion reduces workplace misunderstandings effectively.		0.53				
37. I am aware of conflict triggers in my team.						
38. I feel encouraged to report issues early to management.			0.684			
39. I believe awareness helps maintain a harmonious environment.						
40. I feel responsible for recognizing potential conflicts timely.						
41. I feel equipped with skills to manage conflicts effectively.					0.558	
42. I believe training programs improve my conflict-handling abilities.						
43. I feel confident using conflict resolution techniques learned.						
44. I believe workshops help prevent escalation of disagreements.						0.611
45. I feel supported to practice conflict management skills.						
46. I believe continuous learning improves my workplace relationships.						
47. I feel encouraged to develop new conflict management strategies.						
48. I believe training helps me communicate during tense situations.	0.695					
49. I feel prepared to mediate disagreements among colleagues.						
50. I believe skills training reduces stress from workplace conflicts.						
51. I feel workplace policies promote fair conflict resolution practices.						
52. I believe rules help guide employees in disagreements.			0.731			
53. I feel policies are applied consistently to everyone equally.						

54. I believe organizational guidelines reduce misunderstandings at work.	0.578					
55. I feel policies support open and respectful communication.					0.764	
56. I believe conflict management procedures are clear and accessible.						
57. I feel encouraged to follow organizational conflict guidelines.		0.689				
58. I believe rules prevent escalation of workplace disputes.						
59. I feel policies empower employees to address issues safely.				0.543		
60. I believe organizational support makes resolving conflicts easier.						
61. I feel encouraged to work together in resolving conflicts.						0.722
62. I believe teamwork improves outcomes during disagreements.						
63. I feel comfortable suggesting solutions collaboratively with others.	0.601					
64. I believe joint problem-solving reduces workplace tension effectively.						
65. I feel supported to negotiate conflicts with colleagues directly.		0.517				
66. I believe collaboration strengthens team relationships after disputes.						
67. I feel discussions are productive when we solve problems together.				0.782		
68. I believe group solutions are fair and balanced.						
69. I feel confident contributing to collaborative conflict resolutions.			0.566			
70. I believe teamwork helps prevent future conflicts from recurring.						

71. I feel trusted to handle disagreements responsibly.					0.693	
72. I believe building trust prevents conflicts in the workplace.						
73. I feel respected when expressing my opinions openly.	0.757					
74. I believe trust encourages honest communication during conflicts.						
75. I feel relationships improve after constructive problem-solving.						0.528
76. I believe trust supports collaborative solutions among colleagues.						
77. I feel comfortable relying on others to resolve issues.				0.609		
78. I believe strong relationships make workplace disagreements manageable.						
79. I feel valued and understood in my team.		0.742				
80. I believe building rapport reduces recurring workplace conflicts.						
81. I feel encouraged to provide feedback on conflict resolution.						
82. I believe feedback helps improve workplace conflict handling.			0.584			
83. I feel management considers suggestions to improve resolution processes.						
84. I believe continuous improvement reduces future workplace conflicts.					0.778	
85. I feel comfortable giving feedback on difficult situations.						
86. I believe reflection strengthens my conflict management skills.	0.512					
87. I feel feedback loops enhance communication and understanding.						
88. I believe evaluations help identify areas needing improvement.						0.623

89. I feel encouraged to learn from past conflict experiences.						
90. I believe improvements in procedures enhance overall workplace harmony.				0.695		
91. I feel responsible for resolving conflicts fairly and ethically.						
92. I believe honesty is important in all conflict situations.		0.603				
93. I feel accountable for my behavior during disagreements.						
94. I believe ethical standards guide fair conflict resolution.			0.751			
95. I feel others respect rules when resolving conflicts.						
96. I believe taking responsibility improves trust among colleagues.	0.537					
97. I feel encouraged to uphold fairness in all situations.						
98. I believe ethical conduct prevents escalation of disagreements.				0.708		
99. I feel accountable for supporting team harmony consistently.						
100. I believe integrity strengthens conflict management outcomes overall.					0.567	
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.						
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a						
a. Rotation converged in 23 iterations.						

Internal Consistency of the Dimensions

The reliability analysis for the six extracted themes showed consistently strong internal consistency values, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.86 to 0.91. All themes exceeded the minimum reliability threshold of 0.70, which is considered the acceptable criterion for social science instruments. Two themes—Leadership Support for Conflict Management and Open Communication and Transparency—achieved coefficients above 0.90, indicating excellent reliability and suggesting that the items within these dimensions were highly consistent in measuring the same underlying construct. The remaining themes demonstrated alpha values between 0.86 and 0.89, falling within the “good reliability” range, which affirms that the items are cohesive, stable, and appropriate representations of their respective factors. These results validate the structure derived from the exploratory factor analysis and support the instrument's robustness in assessing teachers' lived experiences of proactive conflict management culture.

Table 3. Reliability Test for Retained Themes

Theme	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Leadership Support for Conflict Management	0.91	Excellent reliability
Ethical Conduct and Responsibility	0.88	Good reliability
Fair and Consistent Organizational Policies	0.87	Good reliability
Open Communication and Transparency	0.90	Excellent reliability
Proactive Awareness and Early Conflict Detection	0.86	Good reliability
Collaborative Problem-Solving and Teamwork	0.89	Good reliability
Overall Reliability of the Instrument	0.94	Excellent reliability

Final Version of the lived experiences of teachers on proactive conflict management culture scale

From the original 100 statements designed to measure proactive conflict management culture, the factor analysis refined the scale by retaining only the items that demonstrated strong loadings and clear conceptual alignment. This process resulted in a final set of 42 statements distributed across six validated themes, reflecting the most meaningful aspects of teachers' lived experiences. Specifically, the analysis preserved 10 statements under Leadership Support for Conflict Management, 6 statements under Ethical Conduct and Responsibility, 8 statements under Fair and Consistent Organizational Policies, 7 statements under Open Communication and Transparency, 6 statements under Proactive Awareness and Early Conflict Detection, and 5 statements under Collaborative Problem-Solving and Teamwork. The reduction ensured that only the most representative and statistically sound statements remained, producing a concise yet comprehensive structure that accurately captures proactive conflict management culture among teachers.

The final version of the Key Dimensions of Proactive Conflict Management Culture consists of six coherent and interrelated themes that collectively define how teachers experience and enact conflict management in their workplace. These dimensions highlight the essential roles of leadership support, ethical responsibility, organizational policy consistency, open communication, proactive awareness, and collaborative problem-solving in shaping a constructive conflict culture. Together, they represent a robust and empirically validated framework that encapsulates the behaviors, values, and organizational conditions that promote a proactive approach to addressing conflicts within educational settings.

Table 4. Lived experiences of teachers on proactive conflict management culture scale

THEME 1: Leadership Support for Conflict Management	5	4	3	2	1
1. I feel leaders prioritize conflict management in decision-making.					
2. I feel encouraged to provide honest feedback regularly.					

3. I believe my participation reduces potential workplace conflicts.
4. I believe early discussion reduces workplace misunderstandings effectively.
5. I believe training helps me communicate during tense situations.
6. I believe organizational guidelines reduce misunderstandings at work.
7. I feel comfortable suggesting solutions collaboratively with others.
8. I feel respected when expressing my opinions openly.
9. I believe reflection strengthens my conflict management skills.
10. I believe taking responsibility improves trust among colleagues.

THEME 2: Ethical Conduct and Responsibility in Conflict Management

5 4 3 2 1

1. I feel leadership promotes a respectful work environment.
2. I believe my opinions are considered in team decisions.
3. I am aware of conflict triggers in my team.
4. I feel encouraged to follow organizational conflict guidelines.
5. I feel valued and understood in my team.
6. I believe honesty is important in all conflict situations.

THEME 3: Fair and Consistent Organizational Policies

5 4 3 2 1

1. I believe leaders address conflicts promptly and fairly.
2. I feel safe expressing disagreement without fear of retaliation.
3. I believe I can prevent conflicts by early action.
4. I believe rules help guide employees in disagreements.
5. I feel policies empower employees to address issues safely.
6. I believe feedback helps improve workplace conflict handling.
7. I believe ethical standards guide fair conflict resolution.
8. I believe ethical conduct prevents escalation of disagreements.

THEME 4: Open Communication and Transparency

5 4 3 2 1

1. I feel comfortable sharing my concerns openly with others.
2. I believe my suggestions influence workplace policies effectively.
3. I feel equipped with skills to manage conflicts effectively.
4. I feel policies support open and respectful communication.
5. I feel discussions are productive when we solve problems together.
6. I believe evaluations help identify areas needing improvement.
7. I believe improvements in procedures enhance overall workplace harmony.

THEME 5: Proactive Awareness and Early Conflict Detection

5 4 3 2 1

1. I believe leaders encourage open discussion about disagreements.
2. I feel others listen when I express opinions.
3. I feel empowered to contribute ideas during disagreements.

4. I believe workshops help prevent escalation of disagreements.
5. I feel encouraged to work together in resolving conflicts.
6. I feel relationships improve after constructive problem-solving.

THEME 6: Collaborative Problem-Solving and Teamwork
5 4 3 2 1

1. I believe leadership listens to all sides carefully.
 2. I feel encouraged to ask questions about decisions.
 3. I feel encouraged to report issues early to management.
 4. I feel confident contributing to collaborative conflict resolutions.
 5. I feel comfortable relying on others to resolve issues.
-

CONCLUSIONS

1. Teachers' experiences emphasized that proactive conflict management is grounded in anticipatory behaviors, supportive relationships, and aligned leadership practices.
2. The six validated dimensions collectively represent the core structural elements that shape proactive conflict management culture within school settings.
3. The reliability results confirm that the framework provides a stable and dependable measurement structure, reinforcing its suitability for academic and practical use.
4. A contextually grounded and evidence-based assessment tool can be developed, offering schools a systematic way to evaluate and strengthen proactive conflict management practices.

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