

Conflict Management Styles and Resiliency among Nursing students from different cultures

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Abstract

Background: Nursing students are exposed to various types of conflicts while studying at the university. Their conflict resolution strategies and their resilience to such conflicts may be influenced by many factors, including culture and ethnicity. **The aim of study** was to assess conflict management styles and resiliency among nursing students from different cultures. **Setting:** faculty of Nursing affiliated to the Modern University for Technology and Information. **Research design:** A cross sectional design was conducted on a sample of 162 Egyptians and 54 Nigerian nursing students during academic year 2018/2019. **Tools of data collection:** Conflict mode instrument and resiliency questionnaire. **Results:** the result revealed that Regarding types of conflict used by the nursing students in study groups, indicates, the inter-personal conflict was major in both groups the Egyptian students and Nigerian students, the Egyptian students highly used of compromising and competing (99.4%) while, Nigerian students highly used of compromising (98.1%), avoiding (98.1%) collaborating, Egyptian students high level in reflective/adaptive (91.4%) with subtotal of bounce back academic (77.8%), also subtotal of individual the Egyptian students high 94.4% and Nigerian students had a high level in individual education 94.4%. Moreover the Nigerian students have a high level in total resilience 87.0%, while the Egyptian students had low level in total resilience 81.5%. **Conclusion:** The study findings demonstrate a high experience of various types of conflict, particularly the interpersonal type, among Egyptian and Nigerian nursing students, significantly more among the formers. The compromising conflict management style is the most commonly used by both, with more use of the competing style by Egyptians. The level of resilience is mostly high, with no significant differences between them. Hence, different cultures could influence the type of conflict and its management style. **Recommendation:** Training courses in conflict management strategies and resilience are urgently needed for all students (Egyptian and Nigerian students). Summer courses and co-curriculum activities need to be developed to help nursing students improve their conflict resolution strategies and utilized use of resilience.

Keywords: Nursing students - Conflict- Resilience.

Introduction:

A conflict which is expected result of human communication is generally well-defined as the significance of real or

apparent differences in mutually exclusive goals, values, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, expectations or actions within the individual or between two persons or parties (Cook et al., 2014).

Conflict is a commonly reported in educational institutions like in all organizations (*Kantek and Kartal, 2015*). Conflict occurs in and out of the classroom in educational institutions stem from difference in personal characteristics of student, their classmates, lecturers and other medical personnel during their education, and in their value, beliefs, and attitudes, crowded classroom, inadequate quality of education, insufficient teaching aids, and limited source of education (*Chan et al., 2014*). In these situations, conflicts can happen for diverse causes as lack of openness, time or feedback, communication problems, anger and frustration, low performance and responsibilities, and defiance to the rules and policies (*Kantec and Gezer, 2009*).

Resilience is the ability of an individual to adjust to adversity, maintain equilibrium, retain some control over the environment, and move in positive direction self-development strategies including positive nurturing professional relationships and networks, maintaining positivity, developing emotional insight, achieving life balance and spirituality, and becoming more reflective. Resilience is defined as the ability to bounce back The personal attributes of resilient people include an internal locus of control, pro-social behavior, empathy, positive self – image, optimism, and the ability to organize daily responsibilities (*Terzil, 2013*).

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and becoming more reflective. Resilience is defined as the ability to bounce back (*Stephens, 2017*). The personal attributes of resilient people include an internal locus of control, pro-social behavior, empathy, positive self –image, optimism, and the ability to organize daily responsibilities (*Reyes et al., 2015*).

Significance of the study

Current university environment characterized by culture diversity, faculties of nursing in Egypt are not an exception, Hence, students from different countries and cultures enrolled in nursing study.

Conflict is inevitable and invisible between students, culture affect conflict as observed by the researcher and supported by Conflict Management Styles Used by Nursing Student with Different Cultures and Their Perception Regarding Resilience.

Also, emerging evidence suggests that resiliency can strengthen student nurses coping with conflict. Little is known about conflict management styles of student and relationship to resiliency and the implications for managing study conflict (*Mary Jones et al., 2012*).

For this reason, the study is an attempt to investigate conflict management styles used by nursing students with different cultures and their perception regarding resilience.

Aim of the Study:

The aim of the study is to assess conflict management styles and resiliency among nursing students from different

cultures Assessing resiliency among nursing students from different cultures.

Research question:

Are conflict types, conflict management styles and resiliency among students from different culture different?

Subjects and Methods:

Research design

A cross-sectional analytic design was used in carrying out this study.

Setting

The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing affiliated to Modern university for Technology and Information.

Subject

Sample criteria: All full-time Egyptian and Nigerian students enrolled in: faculty of Nursing affiliated to the Modern University for Technology and Information University during the academic year 2018/2019 were eligible for inclusion in the study. Their total number was 162 Egyptian students and 54 Nigerian students.

The operational design includes the details of the preparatory phase, pilot study, and fieldwork.

Preparatory Phase

The researcher reviewed the current and past, national and international related literatures in order to be more acquainted with the theoretical background knowledge of the various aspects of the study topics. This was

carried out using textbooks and articles in scientific journals, as well as internet search. This was necessary for the preparation of the data collection tools, and in writing the literature review.

Tool validity and reliability:

For validation of the data collection form, the two the conflict scales used was standardized, and with known validity (*Thomas et al., 1974, Pines et al., 2011; Tonkin, 2016*). Moreover, several studies have supported their validity and reliability (*Ben yoav and Banai, 1992; van de vliet and Kabanaff, 1990*), for resilience scale. The prepared tool was presented to a panel of experts for face and content validation. The panel consisted of seven experts in Nursing Administration, Psychiatric Nursing. They included two professors and two assistant professors from Ain Shams University, one professor from Cairo University, one professor and one assistant professor from MTI University. They reviewed the tools for relevance, comprehensiveness, applicability, and logical sequence. Minimal modifications were done according to their suggestions in the form of rephrasing some items.

The reliability of the scales was tested in the present study by examining their internal consistency. The demonstrated good levels of reliability as shown below.

Pilot study

A pilot study was carried out to test the clarity and applicability of the tool, and estimate the time needed to fill the questionnaire sheet. It was conducted on 22 of the nursing students representing about 10% of study sample. Since no modifications were done in the data

collection tool, the pilot subjects were included in the main study sample.

Fieldwork

After securing all needed official permissions, the researcher visited the study settings to recruit students. She introduced herself to them, explained the aim of the study and its procedures, and invited them to participate after informing them of their rights. Those who consented were handed the data collection form and instructed in how to fill it. The researcher was present all the time for any calcification. This was also necessary to avoid communication among students that would influence their responses. Then, the filled forms were collected and the researcher checked each form to ensure completeness of data filling,

The actual fieldwork lasted from 1 October to 31 December 2019. The work was done 3 days per week. The average time taken by each student to complete the questionnaire was 15-20 minutes. On average, 4 to 5 students completed forms per day.

Administrative design

Before starting on study implementation, an official letter was issued from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, to the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Modern University for Technology and Information, to obtain permission for carrying out the study. The letter explained the aim of study, and a copy of the data collection tool was attached to it. Moreover, the researcher met with the Faculty administration, explained the aim of the study and its procedures, and arranged for the schedule of data collection.

Ethical considerations

Prior to study conduction, an ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University. Oral informed consents were obtained from the participants. They were informed about their rights to refuse or withdraw from the study with no consequences. They were reassured about the anonymity and confidentiality of the information collected, and that it would be used only for the purpose of scientific research.

Data Collection Tools:

The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire with two different scales, namely a conflict mode instrument, and a resilience questionnaire. Hence, the self-administered questionnaire form consisted of the following parts.

Part I: This was for collection of data about the personal characteristics of the nursing students such as the academic year and semester, age, gender, pre-university education, marital status, previous study of conflict, and work during study.

- **Section 1:** Types Conflict Measurement Form: This form was developed by *Thomas et al (1974)* to measure conflict and to determine its types. It includes 16 items equally subdivided into four scales of 4 items each.
- ❖ **Scoring system:**

The items are checked on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “seldom” to “always.” These are scored from 1 to 5 respectively. For each type, the scores of the items were summed-up and the total divided by the number of items, giving a mean score for the part. Then, these scores were converted into percent scores. The respondent’s exposure to the type of conflict was considered high if the percent score was 60% or higher, and low if <60%. Moreover, the predominant type of conflict faced by the student was defined as the type having the highest total score.

- **Section 2:** Conflict Resolution Strategies Form: This was aimed at identifying the conflict resolution strategies used by the nursing students. It was developed by *Marquis and Huston, (2012)*.
- **Scoring:** The items are checked on a five-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” These are scored from 1 to 5 respectively. For each type, the scores of the items were summed-up and the total divided by the number of items, giving a mean score for the part. These scores were converted into percent scores. The respondent’s use to the conflict resolution style was considered high if the percent score was 60% or higher, and low if <60%. Additionally, the predominantly used style of conflict resolution was defined as the style having the highest total score.

Part II: Conflict mode instrument: This tool was used in identifying the types of conflicts students face, and the conflict management styles used. The tool thus includes two sections as following.

- Section 1: Types Conflict Measurement Form
- Section 2: Conflict Resolution Strategies Form

Part III: Resilience questionnaire: This tool was developed by *Pines et al. (2011)* and *Tonkin (2016)* to assess the resilience profile among nursing students. It consists of

60 items categorized into three main dimensions.



Scoring system:

The responses range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", scored from 5 to 1 respectively. The total score for each student was calculated and converted into percent score by dividing the total score by the number of corresponding items to provide a mean score for each student. These were converted into percent scores. The student’s resilience was considered high if the percent score was 60% or higher, and low if <60%.

Results:

The sample size consisted of 216 nursing students whose age ranged between 18-26 years as presented in table 1. Approximately two thirds of Egyptian students were male 61.7% while, more than half of Nigerian students were female 57.4% and the great majority of them were from general education single (Egyptian student, 96.9 and Nigerian students 88.9), most of them single Egyptian student 99.4% and Nigerian student 87.0%, semesters have equal in number in Egyptian students and highest percentage for Nigerian students in semester 8 (27.8%) and studied conflict more in Nigerian students 42.6% and Egyptian students 11.1% and attended conflict courses more them in Nigerian students 27.8% and Egyptian students 9.9%, moreover the majority of students not work with the (Egyptian students 77.2% than Nigerian students 87.0%).

Regarding types of conflict used by the nursing students in study groups, table 2 indicates, the inter-personal conflict was major in both groups the Egyptian students 100.0% while Nigerian students 90.7%) which indicates the high level of total conflict among two groups (Egyptian students 89.5% and

Nigerian students 64.8%), on the other hand predominant conflict type its highest in intergroup 25.9% and mixed conflict 30.9% in Egyptian students, while in mixed conflict 35.2% and interpersonal 24.1% in Nigerian students.

Table (3): demonstrates, the Egyptian students highly used of compromising and competing (99.4%) while, Nigerian students highly used of compromising (98.1%), avoiding (98.1%) collaborating (98.1%). The equal use of collaborating strategies among two group (98.1%). On other hand the Predominant conflict resolution strategies

highly used in mixed among two groups (Egyptian students 33.3% and Nigerian students 38.9%).

Table (4): Shows that the Egyptian students high level in reflective / adaptive (91.4%) with subtotal of bounce back academic (77.8%), also subtotal of individual the Egyptian students high 94.4% and Nigerian students had high level in individual education 94.4%. Moreover the Nigerian students have high level in total resilience 87.0%, while the Egyptian students had low level in total resilience 81.5%.

Table (1): Demographic characteristics of nursing student in the two groups.

| | Nationality | | | | X ² test | p-value |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|---------------------|---------|
| | Egypt (n=162) | | Nigeria (n=54) | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Age: | | | | | | |
| 20-22+ Range | 103 | 63.6 | 27 | 50.0 | | |
| Mean±SD | 59 | 36.4 | 27 | 50.0 | | |
| Median | | 18-26 | | 18-26 | 3.12 | 0.08 |
| | | 19.9±1.4 | | 21.7±3.6 | t=11.03 | |
| | | 20.0 | | 20.5 | | |
| Gender: | | | | | | |
| Male | 100 | 61.7 | 23 | 42.6 | | |
| Female | 62 | 38.3 | 31 | 57.4 | 6.05 | 0.01* |
| Pre-university education: | | | | | | |
| General | 157 | 96.9 | 48 | 88.9 | | |
| Technical | 5 | 3.1 | 6 | 11.1 | Fisher | 0.03* |
| Marital status: | | | | | | |
| Single | 161 | 99.4 | 47 | 87.0 | | |
| Married | 1 | 0.6 | 7 | 13.0 | Fisher | <0.001* |
| Studied conflict: | | | | | | |
| No | 144 | 88.9 | 31 | 57.4 | | |
| Yes | 18 | 11.1 | 23 | 42.6 | 26.10 | <0.001* |
| Attended conflict courses: | | | | | | |
| No | 146 | 90.1 | 39 | 72.2 | | |
| Yes | 16 | 9.9 | 15 | 27.8 | 10.56 | 0.001* |
| Work with study: | | | | | | |
| No | 125 | 77.2 | 47 | 87.0 | 2.44 | |
| Yes | 37 | 22.8 | 7 | 13.0 | t=0.07 | 0.12 |
| Work years: Range | | 1.0-4.0 | | 1.0-9.0 | | |
| Mean±SD | | 1.8±0.6 | | 2.6±2.9 | | |
| Median | | 2.0 | | 2.0 | | 0.79 |

(*) Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Table (2): Types of conflict used by the nursing students in study groups.

| Conflict types (high: 60%): | Nationality | | | | X ² test | p-value |
|---|-------------|-------|---------|------|---------------------|---------|
| | Egypt | | Nigeria | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Intrapersonal Interpersonal Inter-group Intra-group | 158 | 97.5 | 46 | 85.2 | Fisher | <0.001* |
| Total conflicts: High | 162 | 100.0 | 49 | 90.7 | Fisher | 0.001* |
| Low | 141 | 87.0 | 46 | 85.2 | 0.12 | 0.73 |
| Total Conflicts | | | | | | |
| High | 153 | 94.4 | 45 | 83.3 | Fisher | 0.02* |
| Low | 145 | 89.5 | 35 | 64.8 | | |
| | 17 | 10.5 | 19 | 35.2 | 17.78 | <0.001* |

(*) Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Table (3): Types of conflict resolution strategies used by the nursing students in study groups.

| Conflict management styles highly used (60%+): | Nationality | | | | 2 test | p-value |
|--|---------------|------|----------------|------|--------|---------|
| | Egypt (n=162) | | Nigeria (n=54) | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Accommodating | 160 | 98.8 | 52 | 96.3 | Fisher | 0.26 |
| Collaborating | 159 | 98.1 | 53 | 98.1 | Fisher | 1.00 |
| Compromising | 161 | 99.4 | 53 | 98.1 | Fisher | 0.43 |
| Competing | 161 | 99.4 | 47 | 87.0 | Fisher | <0.001* |
| Avoiding | 159 | 98.1 | 53 | 98.1 | Fisher | 1.00 |

(*) Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

*Not Mutually exepoveses

Table (4): Resilience among nursing students in the two study groups.

| High resilience (60%+) | Nationality | | | | X ² test | P- value |
|---------------------------|------------------|------|-------------------|------|------------------------|-------------|
| | Egypt (n=162) | | Nigeria (n=54) | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Ability to bounce back | 88 | 54.3 | 22 | 40.7 | 2.99 | 0.08 |
| Academic: | | | | | | |
| Perseverance | | | | | | |
| Reflective/adaptive | 109 | 67.3 | 35 | 64.8 | 0.11 | 0.74 |
| Negative affect | | | | | | |
| Subtotal | 148 | 91.4 | 42 | 77.8 | 7.05 | 0.008* |
| Individual: | | | | | | |
| Personal skills | 89 | 54.9 | 27 | 50.0 | 0.40 | 0.53 |
| Peer support | 126 | 77.8 | 37 | 68.5 | 1.88 | 0.17 |
| Social skills | | | | | | |
| Family support | | | | | | |
| Spiritual | | | | | | |
| Education | 141 | 87.0 | 43 | 79.6 | 1.76 | 0.18 |
| Cultural | | | | | | |
| Subtotal | 138 | 85.2 | 36 | 66.7 | 8.87 | 0.003* |
| | 142 | 87.7 | 42 | 77.8 | 3.13 | 0.08 |
| | 109 | 67.3 | 39 | 72.2 | 0.46 | 0.50 |
| | 138 | 85.2 | 44 | 81.5 | 0.42 | 0.52 |
| | 139 | 85.8 | 51 | 94.4 | 2.86 | 0.09 |

(*) Statistically significant at p<0.05

*Not Mutually expcoveses

Discussion:

The aim of the study was to investigate conflict management styles used by nursing students with different cultures and their perception regarding resilience. It involved Egyptian and Nigerian students. The results revealed that the majority in both groups experienced high conflicts, used various conflict management styles, and had high resilience. Significant differences were

revealed between the two groups in conflict types and conflict management styles, but not in resilience.

The study sample consisted of 216 nursing students whose age ranged between 18-26 years. Approximately two thirds of Egyptian students were male while, more than half of Nigerian students were female and the great majority of them were from general education single ,most of them, semesters have

equal in number in Egyptian students and highest percentage for Nigerian students in semester 8 and studied conflict more in Nigerian students than Egyptian students and attended conflict courses more than in Nigerian students than Egyptian students, moreover the majority of students not work with the study.

According to the present study results, the interpersonal type of conflict was the most commonly experienced by both Egyptian and Nigerian nursing students. This is quite expected given that students, even the Egyptian ones, are coming from different cultures and socioeconomic levels so that they might have opposing opinions about various issues. Moreover, they may be competing to achieve different goals often in the absence of sufficient resources. However, interpersonal conflict should not be confused with interpersonal violence. In agreement with this, *Selter et al. (2011)* in a study reported the interpersonal type of conflict was the most common type in learning environment and daily life in American study in United States of a American.

In the present study, the predominant type of conflict experienced by the nursing students was determined by the type having the highest score. When the scores of the four types were equal, this was considered mixed. Thus, the results revealed that the highest percentages of nursing students in both groups were having a mix of the four types of conflict. This reflects the multiplicity and variation of the sources and causes of conflict among them and the inter-relations among the different types, which is supported by the significant positive correlations among the four types of conflict.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian students' most predominant type of conflict was the inter-group type, whereas the interpersonal type, was the most predominant among their Nigerian colleagues, and the difference was statistically significant. This might be explained by the differences in the numbers of students between the two nationalities. Thus, the large numbers of Egyptian students would allow the sub-division to many sub-groups, and this would increase the chances of inter-group conflicts. Such inter-group conflicts are often the result of the deterioration of peaceful intergroup relations as a consequence of biological and cultural factors as reported by *De Dreu et al. (2020)* in a Chinese study at china.

According to the present study results, the compromising conflict management style was the style that was highest among both the Egyptian and Nigerian students. This is expected in a university students' collegial community as it is one of the most peaceful approaches to conflict management, where both parties take into account the needs and concerns of each other. On the same line, *Walace (2016)* in a study in @@ found that the most frequently used conflict management style by nursing students in an academic environment was the compromising style. Similar findings were also reported from studies in @@ (*Ahanchian et al., 2015*), and in Oman (*Labrague et al., 2018*).

According to the current study, the ability to bounce back was the lowest dimension of resilience. This was noticed both among Egyptian and Nigerian nursing students, with no significant differences. This indicates the need to improve this area of resilience through more incorporation of the subject

of resilience in undergraduate curricula. In congruence with this, *Low et al. (2019)* in a study in Canada emphasized that training nursing students in resilience would help them as future nurses to deal with occupational stressors. Therefore, these authors recommended the integration of resilience teaching in undergraduate nursing education programs.

Nevertheless, the present study findings demonstrated that the reflective/adaptive academic resilience was high in both groups, but significantly higher among Egyptian students in comparison with their Nigerian colleagues. Having high reflective/adaptive resilience is of major importance in nursing as it enhances nurse's reflective and adaptive skills as highlighted by *Hurley and Linsley (2012)*. Thus, the nursing students possessing such type of resilience are more able to reflect in their future practice and their competencies are better as their social-affective capabilities are enhanced (*Hwang and Shin, 2018*). Moreover, the positive impact of resilience on the wellbeing of nursing students was put into evidence in a recent systematic review, which underscores the importance of its inclusion in undergraduate training programs.

Conclusion

The study findings demonstrate a high experience of various types of conflict, particularly the interpersonal type, among Egyptian and Nigerian nursing students, significantly more among the formers. The compromising conflict management style is the most commonly used by both, with more use of the competing style by Egyptians. The level of resilience is mostly high, with no significant differences between them.

Hence, different cultures could influence the type of conflict and its conflict management style.

Recommendations

In view of the main study findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

- Training courses in conflict management strategies and resilience are urgently needed for all students (Egyptian and Nigerian students).

Further research:

- Is proposed to examine the effectiveness of training in resilience on experience of conflict and its proper management.

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