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Leadership Creativity in Styles of Facing Organizational Conflicts among the Secondary Schools' Principals in Jordan

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Abstract

This descriptive survey examines teachers' perceptions of creative leadership styles used by secondary-school principals to address organizational conflicts. The study uses a 10-item questionnaire completed by 451 respondents and compares conflict management, resolution, and transformation across gender and experience. It reports moderate overall practice, with conflict management rated higher than conflict resolution and transformation, and no reported main-effect differences. The study recommended the provision of organizational support for the purpose of developing the principals' creative skills, as well as leveraging their performance levels while facing the organizational conflicts, mainly when following the effective procedures for solving conflicts and transforming them into interactive & ongoing efforts.

Keywords

Leadership Creativity, Organizational Conflicts, Public Education, Jordan

1. Introduction

The excellency indicators within the educational institutions depend on the type of influential educational leadership that would have an impact on teachers' potentials and their job-related motives. Nwokedi (2015) indicated that leadership is the creativity degree in realizing reality and foreseeing the future. Kantabutra & Rungruang (2013) indicated that it represents the cornerstone for success & excellency, and for removing differences among the employees, in addition to being an integral part within the team (employees), when considering the perspective of integration and interaction among the team members. Taylor et al. (2014) added

that the creative leaders assign visions before starting their work, and therefore leadership is called the creativity in shaping clear, significant & meaningful visions for the institution. Kirkpatrick (2004) said that leadership has a creative perspective when identifying the employees' needs and values. That would increase their satisfaction, commitment and cooperation for the purpose of achieving the targeted goals, as well as decreasing the level of conflicts among them (Lee & Kim, 2013). So, leadership, as highlighted by Molina (2018), is considered to be the creative capability for blending the vision with the leader's self-skills, and the ability to implement it without facing conflicts that would hinder the achievement of the targeted goals, and this aligns with what James & de Lourdes Machado-Taylor (2010) stated that leadership is the utilization of creative skills for the purpose of provoking the employees' motivation, in accordance with a clear vision that would foster the achievement of targeted goals. That would consequently increase the employees' confidence in their leaders and their ability to solve their problems and be effective team members.

Hence, the creative leader has a huge impact on the institution's success, achieving harmony among the employees, satisfying their needs, decreasing the stress levels, and spreading harmony, without facing any contradictions or personal or organizational conflicts. The conflicts among workers within the same institution are considered one of the factors that would hinder the institution's development, considering the employees as a major basis for achieving production, success and excellency. Here comes the role of creative leadership in facing or dealing with the institution's organizational conflicts, as these types of conflicts, as stated by Bader (1995), are considered an inevitable social & organizational phenomenon. It sometimes may be needed for this institution, and it may also be negative, having a bad impact on the institution & its employees. This depends on the nature & styles of leadership followed when facing conflicts. Bahadir (2006) asserted that conflicts are a basic element in every human environment where relations are founded, therefore, it is inevitable that leaders would face such multi-dimensional conflicts within their institutions, but what is necessary is to understand the content of this conflict and to identify the resolution strategies.

Hence, conflicts represent a humanitarian nature that appear automatically as a result of various factors that are related to the conflict's nature & type.

Conflict as a concept refers to the existence of contradictions in interests or needs, and it may be a result of incompatibility in the goals of the conflict's parties, or because of these parties' lack of awareness of their goals (Khairy, 2007). On the other hand, Braman (1999) indicated that the conflicting situation between two parties appears when their visions differ. In the same context, Greenberg & Baron (2003) clarified that the organizational conflict is considered a case of organizational tension that hinders the decision-making process, where the institution would face difficulties in making decisions through choosing the best alternative. Ayasreh & Bani Ahmad (2008) stated that the organizational conflicts may result from many causes like vagueness or lack of clarity in the employees' responsibili-

ties or authorities, weakness in the organizational structure & managerial control and lack of clarity in information & communications. They may also happen as a result of the nature of decisions made. On the other hand, Al-Mousawi (2005) highlighted different types of conflicts, like the ones related to contradictions in personalities, the ones related to the nature of tasks, the ones that are related to work style, or leadership style, and the ones that are linked to contradictions in developmental or creative ideas.

Organizational conflicts in nature refer to the disagreement among the conflict's parties regarding a particular case, and that would lead to factors that may impact the course of work or accomplishment level within the institution. One of its causes is the decisive stances taken when making mutual decisions, or the divergence of goals between the individuals and the organization, or vagueness in employees' roles within the institution, or having unnatural conflicts. Conflicts among individuals are seen as a triangle that has 3 main components: contradiction, position, & behavior, as illustrated in **Figure 1**:

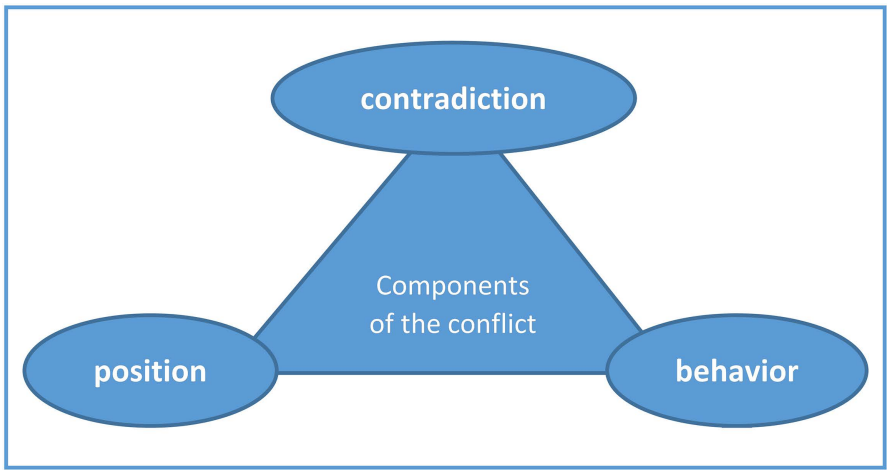


Figure 1. Components of the conflict.

The contradiction is the basic conflict case that includes disagreement in goals among the conflict's parties, and this contradiction is identified through 2 dimensions: a symmetrical conflict which is the contradiction & inconsistency between the parties' apparent interests, and an asymmetric conflict which is the contradiction & inconsistency in the hidden interests & relations. The position represents the parties' misconceptions about themselves and each other, and these could be positive or negative, but in violent conflicts contradicting parties would tend to form professional stereotypes about each other. Positions are often influenced by emotions like fear, hatred or anger, and that would cause the position to include the emotional items (feelings), cognitive items (belief), and psychomotor items (desire & will), while we find that the behavior, the 3rd component, includes cooperation or duress or the gestures that indicate rapport or hostility. Hence, complete conflicts should include all the 3 components, but they are dynamic and

changing. So, the intensity of contradiction or behavior or position fluctuates between high and low levels, leading to identifying the appropriate styles of facing these conflicts in accordance with their strength levels.

Based on what has been indicated in related literature in that conflicts are organizational in nature, it needs styles for dealing with them, and that is positively reflected on the institution & its individuals. That is achieved when managing, containing, and controlling them, as well as reducing their negative impact or solving them when eliminating the causes or transforming them through attacking its sources by taking creative leadership procedures. Zayed (2006) clarified that there are multiple styles for facing conflicts, such as searching for the conflict's source, active listening for the conflict's parties, investigating the conflict's cause, identifying the mutual goal between the conflict's parties, and then choosing the appropriate one. Özen et al. (2016) added that one of the strategies for facing organizational conflicts is the ability to deal with the current conflict, following a leadership style that aligns with this conflict, or avoiding conflicts, or complying to the other party's interests. This requires creative leadership skills for facing these organizational conflicts. While Barakat (2020) highlighted that one of these skills is to actively listen to the conflict's parties, analyze data, as an analyst, as well as the social intelligence skill for understanding the emotions of the parties in order to be able to manage the conflict, in addition to patience so that you could precisely identify the causes of the conflict. Tricia (2004) indicated that the leadership practices that are based on humanitarian aspects like respecting the parties' values, effective communication between them, and analytical thinking contribute to facing, managing & resolving conflicts peacefully, as well as transforming them into positive relationships among the parties. Also, Brenda (2007) introduced some of the leadership strategies followed by leaders when facing or solving conflicts, mainly negotiation, mediation, and forgiveness. The aim is to let the parties avoid self-centeredness & adherence to rigid positions, and encourage them to reach mutual understanding and interest-alignment, leading to achieving goals through mutual unified efforts, making their relations stronger.

Therefore, we find that the styles used for facing organizational conflicts may have 3 main dimensions: first, managing the conflict when identifying its causes & containing it, second, resolving the conflict when identifying the resolution procedures, and finally, conflict transformation, when changing it from a conflict into a joint competition that is characterized by permanent positive relationships. In light of this, this study aimed at clarifying the importance of educational leaderships and their creative role in facing or mitigating organizational conflicts in schools, and how to positively use them to maintain success in educational institutions, as well as creating an educational environment that is featured with cooperation & harmony among employees working in schools.

The significance of the study has 2 aspects: theoretical & practical. The theoretical aspect includes the related literature, identifying new styles and strategies for

dealing with organizational conflicts & facing them, and the effective mechanisms for managing relationships among the individuals within the institution. Regarding the practical aspect, the study results & recommendations may suggest taking the appropriate procedures for facing organizational conflicts for the purpose of creating a healthy environment that is characterized by cooperation among individuals. They may also suggest designing some developmental programs for improving the leaders' skills and leveraging their creative leadership competencies in education.

The study is confined to identifying the creative leadership styles used by Jordanian Secondary Schools' principals in Zarqa while facing the organizational conflicts, from the perspective of a sample of teachers who work at the First Zarqa Educational Directorate during the year 2026.

2. Research Problem

The research problem of the present study arises from the idea of having divergent creative leadership styles adopted by the schools' principals while facing the organizational conflicts. Some of them adopt the style of conflict-management which is based on understanding the nature of the conflict, and containing it to prevent its escalation in accordance with perfectly intersecting lines, while others follow the conflict-resolution style which entails setting solutions to get rid of its impact on work & workers in accordance with relatively intersecting lines. Others practice the conflict-transformation style, which is considered a creative leadership style that is based on transforming the conflict into a competition, removing its causes, in accordance with continuous lines. Figure 2 clarifies this idea upon which the study question is based.

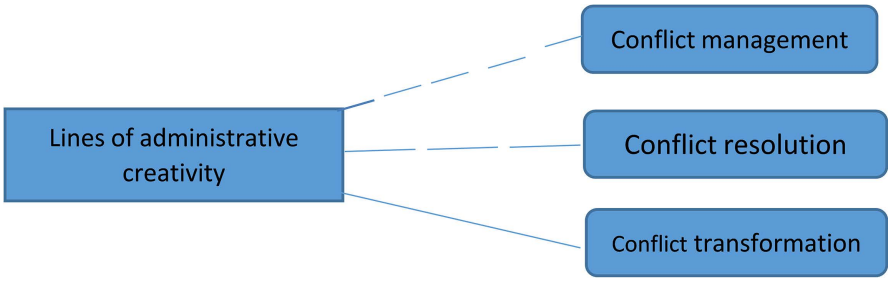


Figure 2. Lines of administrative creativity.

This divergence in the styles adopted by the schools' principals while facing conflicts in educational institutions, ranging from rushing in choosing the proper solution for the conflicts or the challenges that would merge, without demonstrating patience or caution before taking measures or decisions that are based on precise data, as well as following burdensome measures like conflict-settlement or conflict-avoidance, is considered a key starting point for identifying the study question, in addition to scarcity in studies conducted in this domain.

In light of this, the study question entails answering the following questions:

1) What are the creative styles adopted by the secondary schools' principals for facing organizational conflicts from the perspective of teachers?

2) Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level of (a = 0.05) between the teachers' responses regarding the creative leadership styles adopted by the schools' principals while facing the organizational conflicts, in accordance with the variables of (gender & experience)?

3. Methodology

The study followed the descriptive analytical approach, which is based on collecting data from a sample of the population and analyzing it to reach results that would help in answering the study questions, and identifying the creative leadership styles of managers in facing organizational conflicts, as well as identifying the differences between their responses according to the variables of gender and experience.

3.1. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all teachers in secondary schools affiliated with the Zarqa First District Education Directorate—comprising 109 schools—totaling 1459 teachers for the 2026/2027 academic year (783 females and 676 males). A simple random sample of 451 teachers was selected, representing 30% of the total population; this sample included 247 females and 204 males, with 257 teachers having less than 10 years of experience and 194 having 10 years or more.

3.2. Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection tool, based on an extensive review of relevant literature, previous studies, and theoretical frameworks. The tool comprised two main sections: the first section was designed to determine the sample data in terms of gender and experience, and the second section was designed to measure the creative leadership styles while facing the organizational conflicts. Initially, it included 12 items distributed across three domains: conflict-management, conflict-resolution, and conflict-transformation.

Responses on the tool items were recorded using a five-point Likert type scale as follows: very high (5), high (4), moderate (3), low (2), and very low (1). Scoring intervals were defined as: 1.00 - 1.80 (very low), 1.81 - 2.60 (low), 2.61 - 3.40 (moderate), 3.41 - 4.20 (high), and 4.21 - 5.00 (very high).

3.3. Validity of the Instrument

The instrument, including its items and domains, was reviewed by a panel of ten experts in education and educational administration from Jordanian universities. They evaluated the relevance and clarity of each item in relation to the constructs being measured. Based on their feedback and suggested modifications, two items

were removed from the Methods for dealing with organizational conflicts scale, resulting in a total of 10 items distributed across three domains: conflict management (3 items), conflict resolution (3 items), and conflict transformation (4 items).

The instrument was administered to a pilot sample of 20 individuals drawn from the study population. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between each item and its corresponding domain, as well as with the overall scale, the creative leadership in conflict management, item-domain correlations ranged from 0.62 to 0.77, and item-total correlations from 0.73 to 0.84. For the creative leadership in conflict resolution, item-domain correlations ranged from 0.65 to 0.78, and item-total correlations from 0.67 to 0.82. For the creative leadership in conflict transformation, item-domain correlations ranged from 0.59 to 0.79, and item-total correlations from 0.65 to 0.84. All coefficients were statistically significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level.

Additionally, the internal consistency validity of the domains themselves was examined by calculating Pearson correlation coefficients between each domain and the overall instrument score. The domain correlations were: conflict management (0.70), conflict resolution (0.82), and conflict transformation (0.77). All these coefficients were statistically significant at the $\alpha = 0.01$ level.

3.4. Reliability of the Instrument

To assess reliability, the instrument was administered to a separate pilot sample of 25 individuals drawn from the study population. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to examine internal consistency. the reliability coefficients for the three domains were: conflict management (0.80), conflict resolution (0.78), and conflict transformation (0.74). The overall reliability coefficient for the entire Methods for dealing with organizational conflicts scale was 0.81. All reliability coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant, indicating that the study instrument is valid and reliable for measuring the constructs under investigation.

4. Results

4.1. First Research Question

What are the creative approaches to dealing with organizational conflicts among high school principals from the perspective of teachers?

To answer this question, means and overall percentage scores were calculated for the three domains of creative approaches to organizational conflict resolution. The overall mean score was 3.39 out of 5, with a percentage of 67.8%, indicating a moderate level of practice. When examining the three domains individually, conflict management ranked first with a mean of 3.95 (79.0%, high level). Conflict resolution ranked second with a mean of 3.38 (67.6%, moderate level). Conflict transformation ranked third with a mean of 2.99 (59.8%, moderate level). **Table 1** illustrates these results.

Table 1. Means and percentages arranged in descending order, for creative methods in dealing with organizational conflicts.

No	Rank	Dimension	Arithmetic Mean	No. of Item	Means	Percentage	Level
1	1	conflict management	11.85	3	3.95	79.00%	High
2	2	Conflict resolution	10.14	3	3.38	67.60%	moderate
3	3	Conflict transformation	11.96	4	2.99	59.80%	moderate
		Total	33.9	10	3.39	67.80%	moderate

4.2. Item-Level Results by Domain

Conflict Management Domain: The overall mean for this domain was 3.95 (high). All three items received high ratings. The item "Working to contain conflict by identifying its causes" ranked highest (mean = 4.18, high), followed by "Containing the conflict to control it" (mean = 3.85, high), and "Accurate understanding of the nature of conflict to prevent its escalation" (mean = 3.82, high).

Conflict Resolution Domain: The overall mean was 3.38 (moderate). Only one item received a high rating: "Using law and authority to eliminate conflict" (mean = 3.45, high). The remaining two items received moderate ratings: "Relying on the leader's personal influence to end conflict" (mean = 3.39) and "Achieving the public interest in conflict resolution" (mean = 3.31).

Conflict Transformation Domain: The overall mean was 2.99 (moderate). All four items received moderate ratings. The item "Providing group activities for participation and interaction among conflicting parties" ranked highest (mean = 3.19), followed by "Seeking functional integration among conflicting parties" (mean = 3.13), "Establishing dialogue and understanding among conflicting parties" (mean = 2.84), and "Transforming conflict into fair competition among conflicting parties" (mean = 2.79). Table 2 illustrates these results.

In summary, teachers perceived that schools' principals practice styles of leadership creativity in dealing with organizational conflicts at an overall moderate level, with conflict management being the only domain practiced at a high level, while conflict resolution and conflict transformation were practiced at moderate levels.

Table 2. Means sorted in descending order and standard deviations for items in the areas of creative methods in dealing with organizational conflicts.

Dimension	No.	Rank	Items	Means	SD	Level
Conflict management	1	1	working to contain conflict by identifying its causes.	4.18	1.07	High
	3	2	containing the conflict to control it.	3.85	1.04	High
	2	3	accurate understanding of the nature of conflict to prevent its escalation.	3.82	1.08	High
			Total	3.95	0.93	High

Continued

Conflict resolution	3	1		3.45	1.10	High
	2	2		3.39	0.96	moderate
	1	3		3.31	0.92	moderate
			Total	3.38	0.85	moderate
Conflict transformation	2	1		3.19	1.00	moderate
	1	2		3.13	1.03	moderate
	3	3		2.84	1.01	moderate
	4	4		2.79	0.96	moderate
			Total	2.99	0.90	moderate

4.3. Second Research Question

Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level of (a = 0.05) between the teachers' responses regarding the creative leadership styles adopted by the schools' principals while facing the organizational conflicts, in accordance with the variables of (gender & experience).

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated first. Descriptive statistics showed minor differences. For gender, females scored slightly higher on average in conflict management, while males scored higher on average in conflict resolution. Males and females scored equally on average in conflict transformation, and the overall mean score trended towards males. As for experience, those with 10 or more years of experience scored higher on average in conflict management, while those with less than 10 years of experience scored higher on average in conflict resolution and transformation. The overall mean score trended towards those with 10 or more years of experience, and Table 3 illustrates these results.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of teachers' average scores in the areas of organizational conflict resolution methods according to the variables of gender and experience.

variables	Means & SD	conflict management	Conflict resolution	Conflict transformation	Total
Males	Means	3.9493	3.4199	2.9902	3.4069
	SD	0.9359	0.88817	0.93569	0.84937
females	Means	3.9568	3.3603	2.9949	3.3931
	SD	0.92926	0.82595	0.87171	0.80546
Experience (less than 10 years)	Means	3.904	3.406	3.0068	3.3957
	SD	1.03596	0.95829	0.9681	0.92341
Experience (10 years or more)	Means	4.0189	3.3625	2.9742	3.4041
	SD	0.76869	0.69438	0.80356	0.67439

To determine statistical significance, a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted on the three domains of (Methods for dealing with organizational conflicts). The results showed that for gender, the Hotelling's trace value was 0.005 with a significance level of 0.506, indicating no statistically significant differences across any of the three domains: conflict management (F = 0.029, $p = 0.865$), conflict resolution (F = 0.598, $p = 0.440$), and conflict transformation (F = 0.001, $p = 0.975$). For experience, the Hotelling's trace value was 0.017 with a significance level of 0.057, and the univariate F-tests revealed no statistically significant differences: conflict management (F = 1.703, $p = 0.193$), conflict resolution (F = 0.340, $p = 0.560$), and conflict transformation (F = 0.142, $p = 0.706$). The interaction between gender and experience also showed no statistically significant differences across all domains: conflict management (F = 0.396, $p = 0.529$), conflict resolution (F = 0.605, $p = 0.437$), and conflict transformation (F = 0.383, $p = 0.536$), with a Hotelling value of 0.001 and a significance level of 0.893. Table 4 illustrates these results.

Table 4. Results of the two-way multiple variance analysis of teachers' responses on areas of organizational conflict resolution styles according to gender and experience.

variables	Dimension	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender, Hotelling, = 0.005, p = 0.506	conflict management	0.025	1	0.025	0.029	0.865
	Conflict resolution	0.437	1	0.437	0.598	0.44
	Conflict transformation	0.001	1	0.001	0.001	0.975
Experience, Hotelling, = 0.017, p = 0.057	conflict management	1.478	1	1.478	1.703	0.193
	Conflict resolution	0.249	1	0.249	0.34	0.56
	Conflict transformation	0.116	1	0.116	0.142	0.706
Gender* Experience, Hotelling, = 0.001, p = 0.893	conflict management	0.344	1	0.344	0.396	0.529
	Conflict resolution	0.443	1	0.443	0.605	0.437
	Conflict transformation	0.312	1	0.312	0.383	0.536
Error	conflict management	388.76	448	0.868		
	Conflict resolution	327.708	448	0.731		
	Conflict transformation	364.546	448	0.814		
Total	conflict management	7439.222	451			
	Conflict resolution	5503	451			
	Conflict transformation	4404.188	451			

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted on the overall organizational conflict resolution methods (all domains combined). The results confirmed no statistically significant differences for Gender (F = 0.029, $p = 0.866$)

or for Experience (F = 0.009, $p = 0.924$), And the interaction between the variables (F = 0.525, $p = 0.469$). Table 5 illustrates these results.

Table 5. Results of two-way ANOVA of organizational conflict resolution styles according to combined domains according to gender and experience variables.

variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squar	F	Sig
Gender	0.02	1	0.02	0.029	0.866
Experience	0.006	1	0.006	0.009	0.924
Gender* Experience	0.359	1	0.359	0.525	0.469
Error	306.042	448	0.683		
Total	5517.59	451			

Thus, there were no statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of organizational conflict resolution methods among school principals based on gender and experience.

5. Discussion of Results

The results of the first research question indicated that the degree of creative leadership styles while facing organizational conflicts among schools' principals was moderate. The domain of conflict management ranked first at a high level, followed by conflict resolution and conflict transformation, both at moderate levels. These results are consistent with Hadi (2025), who demonstrated that effective conflict management strategies significantly contribute to enhancing job satisfaction. The high level of conflict management (containing conflicts) supports Onyekwelu et al. (2026), assertion that managing conflict by containing and limiting its escalation is a primary strategy. However, the moderate levels of conflict resolution and transformation align with Espeño (2025), who found that emotional management and conflict resolution practices vary depending on the nature of the conflicts encountered.

The finding that conflict transformation received the lowest rating (moderate) is understandable given the complexity of transforming conflicts into constructive competition. These results are supported by Brenda (2007), who noted that strategies such as negotiation, mediation, and forgiveness require sustained effort to move conflicting parties from rigid positions toward mutual understanding. It also resonates with Nadziroh et al. (2025), who found that conflict resolution skills such as empathy, peaceful negotiation, and ethical thinking can be improved but require structured interventions. The moderate level of conflict transformation in the present study may also reflect the difficulty of achieving what Onyekwelu et al. (2026) described as "transforming conflict by addressing its deep-rooted sources," a process that takes time and strategic leadership.

In conclusion, Fan (2026) stated that resolving disputes among students in ed-

ucational institutions is a crucial strategy for achieving student satisfaction and enhancing their educational competencies. Roberts & White (2004) noted a lack of effective programs for student-oriented conflict transformation and found that the concept of "transformative power" helped students develop an internal transformative capacity, enabling them to lay the foundations for a just community within their classrooms.

These interpretations are consistent with the second research question findings, which showed no statistically significant differences in respondents' perceptions of conflict management approaches based on Gender and work experience. This mirrors the pattern observed in the second research question and further supports the notion that faculty members share similar expectations and evaluations of leadership behaviors, regardless of their individual demographic characteristics. This finding is also in line with Hanifi and Ferat (2021), They found that respectful behavior and empathetic tendencies explain a large part of the skills needed to confront, manage, resolve, and transform conflicts in positive and effective ways, without strong demographic differences.

In summary, creative leadership and school principals who adopt methods that suit work and employee-related situations may have an impact on the success of the institution in achieving goals and reducing contradictions and incompatibility that may appear among employees and create organizational, functional and personal conflicts. The study by Canli & Özdemir (2022), also indicated that creativity in management affects the provision of a healthy organizational climate characterized by positive human relations and free from various organizational contradictions and conflicts.

6. Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1) Supporting higher-level leadership in empowering lower-level leadership, particularly school principals, by providing the necessary organizational resources and requirements for both work processes and employees. This is a key factor in achieving high levels in creative leadership practices when dealing with various circumstances, including confronting organizational conflicts.

2) Guiding school principals to effectively manage and resolve conflicts, with an emphasis on transforming them into constructive competition and collaborative work environments.

3) Conducting similar studies in both educational and non-educational institutions, incorporating additional variables that may be influenced by or related to creative leadership styles and practices, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, or employee motivation.

4) Utilizing mixed-method approaches, including interviews and case studies, to gain deeper insights into how academic leaders perceive and practice creative leadership in conflict situations, as recommended by Muhimmah et al. (2022).

5) Examining the moderating or mediating effects of variables such as academic

qualifications, training, or institutional support on the relationship between wise leadership and conflict management.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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