



## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

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This is a comparative study on conflict resolution among Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) University students. The tool used in this study is from the extensive work of Marcus Hennings (2008). Results revealed that among the various causes of conflicts, the institutional cause was the most sought out cause, while social causes were the least preferred cause of the conflict among the universities students. Male students of both the Universities tend to prefer *Consideration* style when individual data were analysed. However, comparative data revealed non-significant outcomes on any dimension of the AMU and JMI. On the contrary, the female students of AMU outshone their female counterparts of JMI in using *Consideration* and *Power* styles while resolving conflicts. Significant results were obtained in the Social Sciences and Sciences stream students of AMU, whereas in JMI, only Arts stream students showed significant differences. The students of the **Social Sciences** stream used the *Power* style; **Science** stream students preferred *Consideration* and *Doubt* styles while the atmospheric style was adopted by **Arts** stream students.

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### Keywords:

Conflict;  
Conflict resolution;  
AMU;  
JMI;  
University students.

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### 1. Introduction

*"Conflict is inevitable among humans; when two or more social entities come into contact with one another in attaining their objectives, their relationship may become incompatible or inconsistent."*

~Rahim (2001).

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Conflict is an inevitable part of one's social life. Conflict may occur within the educational institutions, between educational institutions, between students and governing political party, between the students and teachers, among co-workers or among supervisors and subordinates etc. According to Shantz & Hartup (1992), conflicts are the part of life that started from infancy and continued throughout the life of an individual. At the adolescent stage also, conflicts play an important role which can be in the form of moodiness, independence and discipline. (Ballenski and Cook, 1982).

Insufficient communication between the teachers and their students or the predominance of teachers while interacting with students may be the reason for the conflict in the institution. According to Ghada M. H et al. (2012), University students are the ones who are known to experience aggravating issues throughout their education. These cause a state of "student unrest". The unrest position can be said to have a dominos effect. That is, any unrest in one institution will trigger the same in other institutions. The impacts of unrest may lead to uncertainty for every individual who is a part of the institution, including the management, staff, students and the whole community (Mashauri M. M., 2013).

History revealed that the Indian freedom movement would not have been possible without the contribution of student leaders like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Dhanvantri and Ehsan Ilahi (Swadeshi-1905, Non-cooperation-1920, Quit India-1942). This shows that students are the catalyst of social change and are not passive and submissive citizens. Even in the present scenario, students confront many conflicts. These protests may be in the form of hunger strikes or rallies. Some of the cases highlighted are in the headlines of the news, such as "IIMC students start a hunger strike on campus after a standoff with administration over suspensions" (**India Express, 2020**); "Students Across the Country Protest Police Violence in Jamia Millia" (**The WIRE, 2019**); "Delhi: Students protest at Mandi House against CAA, NRC" (**TOI, 2020**) and "Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019: Why has it triggered protests" (**Times of India, 2019**).

Among all these incidences, the incidence that was world-shattering was the students' protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. A peaceful protest of students had faced police brutality. This was reported in **Times of India (2019)** as "Students across India had expressed solidarity against the police crackdown on Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University that took place on December 15, 2019, when students in these two campuses were protesting against the controversial Citizenship act (Amendment Act 2019)".

This protest instigated a ripple effect worldwide which raised the voice of students all over the country and globally. **The Economic Times Politics (2019)** reported as "from Oxford to Harvard, universities abroad see protests against police crackdown in JMI and AMU".

Though, these incidences were one of the biggest issues in which students have firmly stood against the law passed by the governing political party. And the universities that were greatly affected during this protest were Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University. Due to this, students from different parts of the country and abroad came forward in support of JMI and AMU students.

This was a world shattering incidence which had left a great impact over the minds of university students. Keeping the whole incidence in mind the investigators were prompted to select this topic in order to know how university students justify the cause of conflict and what kind of conflict resolution styles they adopt in order to resolve their major and minor issues.

#### **Conflict-Handling Styles by Rahim (1983)**

The four conflict-handling styles identified by Rahim (1983) are:

- i. Consideration (= integrating) which is consistent with the idea of deep concern for self and others
- ii. Power (=dominating) is consistent with the idea of deep concern for self and low concern for others
- iii. Doubt (=avoiding) is consistent with the idea of low concern for self and a low concern for others
- iv. Atmosphere (which is consistent with creating a therapeutic atmosphere).

#### **Methods of Resolving Conflict:**

According to **Thomas (1976)**, there are following five basic methods of resolving conflict. However, these methods do not signify the right and wrong way of dealing or facing the conflict to resolve it. As a matter of fact, it shows how people act in a particular situation.

- i. **Competing.** This style is used when people give priority to their own needs. It is motivated by self-seeking in the interest of the dominant party's needs. In this, one's need is being fulfilled at the

- expense of other's.
- ii. **Collaborating:** This style involves the inclusion of demands of all the parties being involved in a conflict. All the involved parties come to a common solution in order to settle a conflict (Karip,1999).
  - iii. **Compromising:** This strategy aims to discover a suitable, consenting way while maintaining some perseverance and cooperativeness that satisfies the need of both parties in the conflict. It is useful when one doesn't want to invest much of their time resolving the conflicts as the outcome is not that crucial.
  - iv. **Avoiding:** This style is also used by the parties that respect each other's interests and choose to ignore the conflict Karip (1999). The parties believed that the conflict would dissipate when it is avoided (Stevahn, 2004).
  - v. **Accommodating:** This style is contrary to Competing. In this, one party care more about the relations between parties than to win a conflict. It is a generous way to resolve a conflict as it involves an element of self-sacrifice in order to accommodate others' interests (Karip. 1999).

### Review of Related Literature

A substantial number of researches have been conducted on various types of conflict that have taken place at home or at working place Frankovský M. et al. (2018) or the institutions (Ogunbodede O.S. et al., 2020; Ariyaratne D., 2018 and Țepordei A.T. et al., 2014; Karakus M. & Savas A.C, 2012), family and friends (Greeff A.P. & De Bruyne T, 2011; Kiralp Y. et al., 2009 and Xiaomin Li, 2017). These researches highlighted the root causes of the occurrence of conflicts and their possible solutions. Some of the reasons described by the researchers are lack of communication (Bognar C., 2019 and Yusriadi Y, 2019), diverse interests (Ogunbodede O.S. et al., 2020), religious views (Ariyaratne D. (2018), social and cultural differences (Ariyaratne D.,2018 and Putra D.F. & Smolak S 2020), views points (Noor, 2020), backbiting and false accusations (Frankovský M et al., 2018), different perceptions (Udezo B.O.S. 2009) etc. While in order to prevent conflict, the different viewpoints of the researchers were promoting a healthy environment by increasing communication (Putra D.F. & Smolak S, 2020; Bognar C., 2019), by respecting others' viewpoint, empathy (Minet de Wied (2006), forgiveness and apology (Moolakkattu J.S., 2010) etc. Studies have also suggested different conflict resolution styles to be used at a different point in time, like *Compromising* and *Avoiding* are used when conflict occurs in close relationships (Kiralp Y. et al. 2009). Similarly, other Conflict Resolution Styles are also suggested by different researchers like, *Accommodating* or *Integrating* (Norrie P. et al. (2012), *Collaborating* or *Cooperative* (Xiaomin Li, 2017; Greeff A. P. & De Bruyne T. 2011), *Controlling* (Ardalan, 2017). While *Competing* is found to be the least used style to resolve conflict (Greeff A. P. & De Bruyne T. 2011) etc.

The investigators found that most of the researches have been taken place abroad. Out of which majority of the studies are found to be conducted from Turkey (Seren S.& Ustun B.,2007; Kiralp Y. et al. 2009 etc.). Fewer are from Nigeria, Indonesia and some other countries also (Udezo B.O.S., 2009; Yusriadi Y, 2019; Ariyaratne D.,2018 etc.) Very few studies have been conducted in the Indian context (Moolakkattu J.S., 2010; Shariq Abbas S.M. & Gavendra Singh, 2012). That is why the investigators were motivated to select this topic for the research.

### Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

#### Conflict Resolution Style

Conflict resolution is “a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation of conflict.” (Miller, 2003).

In the present study, the investigator uses four factors (or approaches) of conflict resolution style which have been identified by Rahim (1983) which are: *Consideration* (= integrating) involving deep concern for both, i.e., own self and others; *Power* (=dominating) involving high concern for own self and low concern for the others; *Doubt* (=avoiding) is consistent with the idea of low concern for both, i.e., own self and others; *Atmosphere* which is consistent with creating a therapeutic atmosphere.

### University Students

The students of age group 18-25 years, who are studying in university are referred to as University students.

#### Research Questions

The following questions crossed the mind of the investigators related to the variable under study:

- What are the causes of conflict in university students?
- How do university students resolve their conflicts?

- Do students studying in different universities differ in their styles of resolving conflict?
- Does one's gender determine one's style of resolving conflict?

### Objectives

Focusing on the research question, the objectives formulated for the study were as follows:

1. To identify the different causes of conflict in university students.
2. To identify the significant difference in the conflict resolution styles among Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia students.
3. To identify the significant difference in the conflict resolution styles among male university students of Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia.
4. To identify the significant difference in the conflict resolution styles among female university students of Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia.
5. To identify the significant difference in the conflict resolution styles among Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia students belonging to different streams.

## 2. Methodology

The research is a descriptive type of research. It is based on the survey of the sample's opinion.

### Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 138 university students of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) & Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) in total. The sample consists of 66 students of AMU and 72 students of JMI that was selected using stratified random sampling technique giving due representation to the subsamples based on different institution, gender and stream of study.

### Tool used in the study

The tool was used from the extensive work of Marcus Hennings (2008). The original Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (CRQ) was established as a measure of strategies used for conflict resolution that is presented by Weeks (1949), Fisher and Ury (1991). McClellan (1997) described CRQ as an instrument used to measure how effectively people can resolve and manage their conflicts and maintain relationships. The CRQ factors proposed by McClellan (1997) had 40 statements divided into ten dimensions, which were: view of conflict, atmosphere, clarification of perceptions, needs, power, future, options, 'doables', mutual-benefit agreements and extra considerations. After running the factor analysis, the CRQ ten-factor model of McClellan (1997) could be refined and reduced to a four-factor model, CRQ-II. The four factors emerged, which brought forth 27 statements for the CRQ. The CRQ-II is a tool used to measure four ways in which individuals react to a conflict. This configuration of 27 items with four factors makes it manageable both for a professional and a layperson. Among these four factors, three of them identified stem from work by Rahim (1983), which are: integrating, dominating and avoiding. The fourth conflict style retained its name '*atmosphere*' as seen in the original CRQ because there was no readily available alternative. The four new factors were: '*consideration*', '*power*', '*atmosphere*' and '*doubt*'

The most common and simple method for reliability tests is **Cronbach's alpha** internal consistency reliability test. The magnitudes of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability was re-established as **0.616**. and the tool for causes of conflict was established as **0.68**.

Face and content validity were established using a panel of experts in survey development to review the questionnaire for appropriate items. Content validity was also evaluated by reviewing the literature on conflict resolution. This review of relevant literature guided the development and reframing of the items that were included in the tool.

The Likert five-point scale is used for indicating the degree of applicability. The choices indicated in the scale are as follows: **SA** - Strongly Agree, **A** - Agree, **UD** - Undecided, **D** - Disagree and **SD** - Strongly Disagree. The investigators sent the web link of the questionnaire to AMU and JMI university students of the three faculties for collecting data for the sake of study through online mode via e-mail or WhatsApp. It was ensured that the respondents' identities would be kept confidential. The investigators faced difficulty in collecting a large number of responses for the study as, at that time, the respondents were reluctant to participate in an online survey.

### 3. Result and Discussion:

**Objective 1:** To identify the different causes of conflict in university students.

**Table 4.1:** Descriptive statistics of the Total Sample and Sub-samples based on Universities

Variable	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social causes	Total (138)	15.20	2.14
	AMU(66)	15.41	2.23
	JMI (72)	15.01	2.05
Personal causes	Total (138)	23.21	3.46
	AMU(66)	23.48	3.15
	JMI (72)	22.95	3.72
Institutional causes	Total (138)	33.78	4.52
	AMU(66)	33.98	4.60
	JMI (72)	33.60	4.47
Technological causes	Total (138)	20.04	3.11
	AMU(66)	20.83	2.68
	JMI (72)	19.31	3.30
Peer-related causes	Total (138)	19.15	2.53
	AMU(66)	19.48	2.30
	JMI (72)	18.85	2.70

The result of the descriptive analysis is presented in above Table 4.1. It can be observed that in a total sample of university students (N=138), the institutional cause was the most sought out cause for the conflict ( $M= 33.78 \pm 4.51$ ) among the students studying in the universities. The social causes were the least preferred cause of the conflict ( $M= 15.20 \pm 2.14$ ) among the universities students. On the other hand, it was also observed that personal, technological and peer-related causes differed slightly in their mean scores ( $M= 23.21 \pm 3.46$ ,  $M= 20.04 \pm 3.11$ ,  $M= 19.15 \pm 2.53$  respectively).

**Objective 2:** To identify the significant difference in the mean scores of conflict resolution styles among AMU and JMI students.

**Table 4.2:** Mean score and t-test score of conflict resolution styles (with its respective sub-dimensions) among AMU and JMI students.

Conflict Resolution Styles	AMU (N= 66)		JMI (N= 72)		t-test	p-value	H <sub>0</sub> A/R
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Consideration	3.73	3.92	3.59	4.74	1.923	.057	A
Power	3.46	5.50	3.07	5.41	3.348*	.001	R
Doubt	3.80	2.36	3.62	3.00	1.985*	.049	R
Atmosphere	3.44	1.88	3.52	1.72	-.768	.444	A

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

H<sub>0</sub> = Null Hypothesis

A/R = Accepted/ Rejected

Table 4.2 indicates the descriptive statistics and t-value computed for AMU and JMI students. The findings revealed that AMU students scored higher than JMI students in all the conflict resolution styles except in 'Atmosphere' where the average score of JMI was higher than the AMU students' score ( $M=3.52$  and  $M=3.44$ , respectively). When other conflicting resolution styles were observed 'Doubt' style was scored highest by AMU students ( $M=3.80 \pm 2.36$ ) with the least score in 'Atmosphere' style ( $M=3.44 \pm$

1.88) whereas, in JMI students, the highest average was also in 'Doubt' ( $M=3.62 \pm 3.00$ ) and the least in 'Power' style ( $M=3.07 \pm 5.41$ ).

The calculated t-value for 'Power' style was  $t(136) = 3.348$ ,  $p = .001$ . and for 'Doubt' style was  $t(136) = 1.985$ ,  $p = .049$ . Thus the null hypothesis for 'Power' and 'Doubt' conflict resolution styles are rejected.

**Objective 3:** To identify the significant difference in the mean scores of conflict resolution styles among male university students of AMU and JMI.

**Table 4.3: Mean score and t-test score of conflict resolution styles (with its respective sub-dimensions) among male students of AMU and JMI.**

Conflict Resolution Styles	AMU (N= 18)		JMI (N= 33)		t-test	p-value	H <sub>0</sub> A/R
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Consideration	3.82	4.64	3.67	5.18	1.058	.295	A
Power	3.27	4.25	3.00	5.15	1.541	.130	A
Doubt	3.7	2.77	3.52	3.41	.953	.345	A
Atmosphere	3.35	1.80	3.54	1.87	-1.075	.288	A

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

H<sub>0</sub> = Null Hypothesis

A/ R = Accepted/ Rejected

Data tabulated in Table 4.3 highlights the descriptive statistics and t-test analysis of AMU and JMI male students. An independent t-test analysis tabulated shows that the students' CRS (conflict resolution style) was not statistically significant on any dimension of the AMU and JMI male students.

The descriptive statistics, however revealed that both AMU and JMI male students scored highest on dimension "Consideration" ( $M= 3.82$  versus  $M= 3.67$ ) and lowest on dimension "Power" ( $M= 3.27$  versus  $M= 3.00$ ). The interesting result found is that AMU male students scored higher in all the dimensions, irrespective of the stream they were enrolled in, except in dimension "Atmosphere" where JMI male students scored higher than AMU male students on this dimension ( $M= 3.54$  Vs  $M= 3.35$ ).

**Objective 4:** To identify the significant difference in the mean scores of conflict resolution styles among female university students of AMU and JMI.

**Table 4.4: Mean score and t-test score of conflict resolution styles (with its respective sub-dimensions) among female students of AMU and JMI**

Conflict Resolution Styles	AMU (N= 48 )		JMI (N= 39)		t-test	p-value	H <sub>0</sub> A/R
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Consideration	3.69	3.61	3.52	4.26	2.102*	.039	R
Power	3.52	5.85	3.12	5.65	2.578*	.012	R
Doubt	3.84	2.18	3.70	2.58	1.361	.177	A
Atmosphere	3.48	1.91	3.51	1.60	-.209	.835	A

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

H<sub>0</sub> = Null Hypothesis

A/ R = Accepted/ Rejected

Table 4.4 indicates the descriptive statistics and t-value computed for AMU and JMI female students. The findings revealed that female students of AMU scored higher than female students of JMI in all the conflict resolution styles except in 'Atmosphere' where the average score of JMI was higher than the AMU students' score ( $M=3.51$  and  $M=3.48$  respectively). When other conflicting resolution styles were observed, 'Doubt' style was scored highest by AMU students ( $M=3.84 \pm 2.18$ ) with the least score in 'Atmosphere' style ( $M=3.48 \pm 1.91$ ), whereas in JMI students, the highest average was also in 'Doubt' ( $M=3.70 \pm 2.58$ ) but the least was in 'Power' style ( $M=3.12 \pm 5.65$ ).

An independent t-test analysis was assessed, and it extrapolated that there is a significant difference found in the conflict resolution styles *Consideration* and *Power* among AMU and JMI female students. wherein *Consideration* style (M= 3.69 versus M=3.52), the calculated t-value was  $t(85) = 2.102$ ,  $p = .039$ . And in *Power* style (M= 3.52 versus M=3.12), the calculated t-value was  $t(85) = 2.578$ ,  $p = .012$ . Thus the null hypotheses for *Consideration* and *Power* conflict resolution styles are rejected.

**Objective 5:** To identify the significant difference in the mean scores of conflict resolution styles among AMU and JMI students belonging to different streams.

**Table 4.5: Mean score and t-test score of conflict resolution styles (with its respective sub-dimensions) among social sciences students of AMU and JMI**

Conflict Resolution Styles	AMU (N= 31 )		JMI (N= 29 )		t-test	p-value	H <sub>0</sub> A/R
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Consideration	3.71	4.20	3.66	4.68	.443	.659	A
Power	3.55	5.71	3.12	6.53	2.205*	.031	R
Doubt	3.85	2.40	3.71	2.73	1.063	.292	A
Atmosphere	3.48	1.98	3.45	1.92	.144	.886	A

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

H<sub>0</sub> = Null Hypothesis

A/R = Accepted/ Rejected

Table 4.5 indicates the descriptive statistics and t-value computed for AMU and JMI social science students. The findings revealed that social science students of AMU scored higher than JMI in all the conflict resolution styles. When other conflict resolution styles were observed 'Doubt' style was scored highest by AMU students (M=3.85 ±2.40) with the least score in 'Atmosphere' style (M=3.48 ±1.98). In contrast, in JMI social science students, the highest average was also in 'Doubt' (M=3.71 ± 2.73) but the least in 'Power' style (M=3.12± 6.53).

An independent t-test analysis was assessed, and it extrapolated the result that the conflict resolution style of social science students was statistically significant in one dimension. AMU social science students scored higher than JMI social science students in *Power* style (M=3.55 Vs M=3.12). The calculated t-value was  $t(58) = 2.205$ ,  $p = .031$ . Thus the AMU social science students were statistically different in the conflict resolution style *Power* than the JMI students. Thus the null hypothesis for the 'Power' conflict resolution style is rejected.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>05B</sub>):** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of conflict resolution styles among AMU and JMI students belonging to the science stream.

**Table 4.6: Mean score and t-test score of conflict resolution styles (with its respective sub-dimensions) among science students of AMU and JMI**

Conflict Resolution Styles	AMU (N= 24 )		JMI (N= 22 )		t-test	p-value	H <sub>0</sub> A/R
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Consideration	3.87	2.99	3.59	3.35	2.996*	.004	R
Power	3.36	5.77	3.12	3.31	1.365	.179	A
Doubt	3.82	2.31	3.45	3.24	2.248*	.030	R
Atmosphere	3.51	1.89	3.51	1.87	-.007	.995	A

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

H<sub>0</sub> = Null Hypothesis

A/R = Accepted/ Rejected

Table 4.6 indicates the descriptive statistics and t-value computed for AMU and JMI science students. The findings revealed that science students of AMU scored higher than science students of JMI in all the conflict resolution styles except in 'Atmosphere' where the average score of JMI science students

was similar to the AMU Science students' score ( $M=3.51 \pm 1.89$ ). When other conflicting resolution styles were observed for AMU science students, 'Consideration' style ( $M=3.87 \pm 2.99$ ) was scored highest with the least score in 'Power' style ( $M=3.36 \pm 5.77$ ), whereas in JMI science students, the highest average was also in 'Consideration' ( $M=3.59 \pm 3.35$ ) and the least in 'Power' style ( $M=3.12 \pm 3.31$ ).

An independent t-test analysis was assessed, and it extrapolated that there is a significant difference found in the conflict resolution styles *Consideration* and *Doubt* among AMU and JMI science students style. Wherein *Consideration* ( $M= 3.87$  Vs  $M=3.59$ ), the calculated t-value was  $t(44) = 2.996$ ,  $p = .004$ . And in *Doubt* style ( $M= 3.82$  Vs  $M=3.45$ ), the calculated t-value was  $t(44) = 2.248$ ,  $p = .030$ . Thus the null hypotheses for *Consideration* and *Doubt* conflict resolution styles are rejected.

**Hypothesis ( $H_{05C}$ ):** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of conflict resolution styles among AMU and JMI students belonging to the arts stream.

**Table 4.7: Mean score and t-test score of conflict resolution styles (with its respective sub-dimensions) among arts students of AMU and JMI**

Conflict Resolution Styles	AMU (N= 24 )		JMI (N= 22 )		t-test	p-value	$H_0$ A/R
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Consideration	3.49	3.94	3.49	5.95	.002	.998	A
Power	3.39	4.35	2.94	5.59	1.861	.073	A
Doubt	3.60	2.28	3.65	3.07	-.271	.788	A
Atmosphere	3.21	1.50	3.63	1.22	-2.580*	.015	R

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

$H_0$  = Null Hypothesis

A/R = Accepted/ Rejected

Table 4.7 indicates the descriptive statistics and t-value computed for AMU and JMI Arts students. The findings revealed that Arts students of AMU scored equals to Arts students of JMI in "Consideration" conflict resolution style ( $M= 3.49$ ). While in 'Power' style, AMU students scored higher than JMI Arts students ( $M= 3.39$  vs  $M= 2.94$ ). However, in "Doubt" and "Atmosphere" styles, JMI Arts students scored higher than AMU Arts students ( $M= 3.65$  vs  $3.60$  and  $M= 3.63$  vs  $3.21$  respectively).

An independent t-test analysis was assessed, and it was found that AMU Arts students scored less than JMI Arts students in "Atmosphere" style ( $M=3.21$  versus  $M= 3.63$ ), for which the calculated t-value was  $t(30) = -2.580$ ,  $p = .015$ . This implies that the AMU Arts students were statistically different in the conflict resolution style "Atmosphere" than the JMI Arts students in having a smaller mean. Thus the null hypothesis for the "Atmosphere" conflict resolution style is rejected.

#### 4. Major Findings of the study

##### *Findings based on causes of conflict*

The result of descriptive analysis observed that in a total sample of university students, the **institutional cause** was the most sought out cause for the conflict among the students studying in the universities. The **social causes** were the least preferred cause of the conflict among the universities' students. On the other hand, it was also observed that *personal, technological* and *peer-related causes* differed slightly in their preferences.

There are several causes of *institutional conflict*, such as institutions consist of people with divergent personalities, perceptions, values, communications breakdowns, ambiguous jurisdictions and poorly defined responsibilities. It also involves student-teacher relationships. Thus, this can be supported by the study of Ghada M. H et al. (2012), who described that conflicts at an institution might be because of communication problems, lack of openness that result in developing certain misunderstandings between them.

In this study, the social cause of the conflict was found to be the least preferred cause by university students. This can be supported by Ülken (1967) who reported that educational institute aims at creating a balance in the society and developing a better understanding. And Thornburg (1984) stated that education leads to the development of an individual socially, morally and emotionally. That is why they are less prone to be affected by the social cause of conflicts.

### ***Findings based on Conflict Resolution Style of University students***

The findings revealed that there is a significant difference among University students of AMU and JMI in their perception of Conflict Resolution Styles. The students of AMU had a higher mean percent score regarding conflict resolution styles of *Power* and *Doubt*. The predominance of *Doubt* style is in case when they have certain discordant issues with their teachers. This could be supported by Harrison (2007), who found that students tend to avoid conflict because they speculated that pursuing a resolution of conflict may lead to lessen their evaluations of academic activities. When University students use the *Power* style, which is consistent with the dominant behavior, i.e., individuals prioritize their needs and giving low concern for other's needs. This shows divergence with the finding of Lung's (1999), who found that students mostly use the accommodating (*Consideration*) style in order to be labelled as a 'good student'.

### ***Findings based on Conflict Resolution Style of university students based on gender***

The findings revealed that students' CRS (Conflict Resolution Style) was not statistically significant on any dimension of the AMU and JMI male students. However, on closer analysis *Consideration* style had the highest mean score in both AMU and JMI male students. While, *Power* style had the lowest mean scores in both AMU and JMI male students. This shows that males are more inclined to consider the other party's needs and opinions, and they prefer to dominate only in the rarest situations in order to resolve a conflict. This study is refuted by the findings of Brewer et al. (2002), who found that males use dominating (*Power*) style of conflict management. Yet, there are also researches that have reported that men and women are in no way differ in resolving conflict when in the same position in an organization (Brewer et al. op. cit.; Korabik et al., 1993 and Renwick, 1977).

The findings revealed that there is a significant difference among *female students* of AMU and JMI in their perception of conflict resolution styles. The female students of AMU had a higher mean percent score regarding conflict resolution styles of *Consideration* and *Power*. This shows that the female students express the two contrasting ways to deal with conflict, i.e. either they have more tendency to compromise and consider the other's issues too (= *Consideration*) or they dominate (= *Power*) in order to resolve a conflict.. This result is aligned with the findings of Seren and Baykal (2007), who reported that female students are more likely to consider *collaborative* conflict resolution skills than male students. Or they pertain *Power* style, i.e. they dominate in order to resolve a conflict. This result is found to be contrary to the findings of Brewer et al. (2002), who found that females use the *avoiding* conflict resolution style.

### ***Findings based on Conflict Resolution Style of university students based on streams***

It is found that there was a statistically significant relationship of Conflict Resolution Style *Power* between AMU and JMI students belonging to *Social Science streams*. *Power* is a way of imposing one's point of view on others.

This study demonstrates that students of the Social Science stream may have dominant traits in order to resolve the conflict. This could be because they belong to the subject stream, which is highly inclined to the society and community needs. They go through the subjects like Political Sciences, Humanities, Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology, which perhaps develop their attitude more towards being a future activist or reformer. As they study certain topics like autobiographies, biographies, battles of legendary reformers, case studies of social activists. This may somewhat give them an outlook regarding resolving the conflict. This result is supported by Rahim (2000), who revealed that dominating style is used by those having more experience in conflicts.

In the *Science stream*, the findings revealed that there is a significant difference among students of AMU and JMI in their perception of conflict resolution styles. The Science students of AMU had a higher mean percent score regarding conflict resolution styles of *Consideration* and *Doubt*. The *Consideration* is a win-win situation, as stated by Karip (1999) that integration (= *Consideration*) is used when the interest of both parties are given equal importance. At the same time, the avoiding or ignoring (*Doubt*) style of resolving conflict is used where the interests and needs of both parties are valued. Therefore, it can be said that the Conflict Resolution Style adopted by the Science students are somewhat involved in valuing each other's viewpoint.

In this study, the conflict resolution style of Science students (i.e. *Consideration* and *Doubt*) depicts that perhaps due to their busy schedule, their classes, fieldwork, laboratory experiments, maintenance of practical files etc. which keeps them preoccupied, they may hardly get time to get involved in any conflict. And if they do, they might avoid it and give space to other's viewpoint and needs. This is coexistent with the study of

Pistole & Arricale (2003), in which they opined that *Avoidance* persons (=Doubt) usually try to terminate the conflict either by avoiding or by keeping themselves away from being a part of the conflict or engaged in it in any way.

The findings related to the students of *Arts stream*, revealed that there is a significant difference among students of AMU and JMI in their perception of conflict resolution style *Atmosphere*, where the Arts students of JMI had a higher mean percent score. The high scores are associated with the significant effect of creating a therapeutic atmosphere. This study illustrates that Arts students prefer to behave in a peaceful manner when they come across a conflict. This might be because the stream includes literature, play, religious education, music, language, paintings etc. These areas may develop a calm and therapeutic attitude in them. This could be related to the findings of Sofia Rosenblum (2011), who revealed that it is the language that develops association and help in understanding the spiritual world of the individual. Therefore, it might enable them to resolve conflicts peacefully. Since this was found to be higher in JMI students, depicting that Arts students of JMI adopt curative ways of resolving their disputes. Also, certain co-curricular activities like Street play holds a strong message for the community that is intended to make people open mind and help them to grow socially and morally as well. This is evident from the study of Dipankar Sarkar (2020), who defined that participation in certain co-curricular activities helps students in holistic personality development, emotional development and social skill development. This shows that JMI students are probably more involved in such co-curricular activities, which enables them to be more inclined in using the *Atmosphere* style of conflict resolution.

### 5. Educational Implications

The findings of the present study may have the following educational implications: -

- The training in conflict handling skills should be directed at improving individual skills by a combination of educational activities in communication skills and conflict negotiation tactics that will assist the person in handling conflict for the benefit of the parties involved.
- The *collaborating* or *integrating* styles are the most acceptable method in order to resolve a conflict. That is why individuals should be provided with the training to strive for collaboration when confronted by a conflicting situation.
- Workshops should be organized in educational institutes for students to bring a positive transformation in themselves and the world associated with them.
- The objective of conflict resolution skills is to develop flexibility in the individual and to enable them to control negative moods.
- The conflict resolution skill allows the involving parties to know and have a better understanding of their own interest, issues, aims, intentions, and express their views and develop the potential to come to a mutually acceptable solution.
- The skill of resolving conflict develops patience, tolerance and courage to understand others' viewpoint. It develops the proficiency to come to a common solution and considering the issue of conflict as a mutual concern.
- To have a functioning education system, it is critical to create a safe learning environment for all students. If students are not safe in university, then they are unable to focus on their learning. These skills help to maintain a safe learning environment for everyone. When students feel safe, they are able to thrive in their learning environment.
- Some of the issues educational institutes face are fighting, bullying, harassment, and other forms of violence among students. Effective conflict management aims to decrease these incidents of violent bullying.
- Conflict resolution helps to create a more constructive learning environment, as students and faculties are able to think philosophically about how to interact with each other more peacefully. This can help in engaging higher-order thinking skills and enhance the capacity for moral reasoning. Students can help construct a more peaceful learning environment that allows for more profound thought.

#### Suggestions for teachers and students

- Conflicts in different situations need different conflict resolution styles. One cannot follow the exact same procedure to resolve a conflict for all situations. One should select the conflict resolution style wisely by taking into consideration, the nature, needs and demands of other parties. Every conflict situation has its

own peculiarities and should be treated accordingly.

- Emphasis should be given on Issues and Solutions. With the discussion, the root cause of the differences and conflicts should be sought out. It should be narrowed down to a mutually acceptable solution. No irrelevant points of reference should be brought.
- One should have control over the emotions and should be able to think rationally and act sensibly when confronting a conflict. An individual should have the capability to regulate the sentiments and their emotions.
- The matter of conflict should not be escalated. One should narrate things correctly. The narration includes not only the words but also the non-verbal aspects of communication that should also be appropriate. One should also avoid bringing the past conflicts while resolving the present one as the past conflicts may result in escalating the conflict. It is essential to have a sense of closure with past conflicts.

## 6 Conclusion

In the present study, the causes of conflict and conflict resolution styles are investigated and compared in students of the two Universities, i.e. AMU and JMI. Results revealed that among the various causes of conflicts, the institutional cause was the most sought out cause, while social causes were the least preferred cause of the conflict among the universities students.

After establishing the reliability of the study through Cronbach's alpha, the hypotheses of the study were tested for conflict resolution styles. Application of independent sample t-test showed that AMU students respond in a divergent way while confronting a conflict. Either they dominate, or they avoid the conflicts for its resolution, using *Power* and *Doubt* styles.

Furthermore, the Conflict Resolution Style, in relation to gender, was also studied. Male students of both the Universities tend to prefer *Consideration* style when individual data were analysed. However, comparative data revealed non-significant outcomes on any dimension of the AMU and JMI. On the contrary, the female students of AMU outshine their female counterparts of JMI in using *Consideration* and *Power* styles while resolving conflicts.

Moreover, when the hypotheses for the students belonging to different streams were studied, it was found that their subjects have a significant impact on their personalities, which in turn is reflected in their manner of dealing with the conflicts. Significant results were obtained in the Social Sciences and Sciences stream students of AMU, whereas in JMI, only Arts stream students showed significant differences. The students of the **Social Sciences** stream use the *Power* style; **Science** stream students prefer *Consideration* and *Doubt* styles while the atmospheric style was adopted by **Arts** stream students.

As this study is conducted on the students from only two universities and further only three faculties were taken into consideration, making the sample size small, and restricted. This creates a constraint to the present research and its implication for future researches in this field. Nonetheless, the development of valid and reliable measures of conflict resolution styles in university students' context, can be facilitated through this study in institutions and other associated organisations. This study may help in understanding how university students justify the cause of conflict and what kind of conflict resolution styles they adopt in order to resolve their major and minor issues. A better understanding of individual differences, discrepancies in viewpoint and sentiments can be expedited through the use of the present paper for further studies.

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