



THE NECESSITY AND RELEVANCE OF TRAINING FUTURE TEACHERS IN PEDAGOGICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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Abstract. *This study examines the theoretical and methodological foundations for training future teachers to resolve pedagogical conflicts in their professional practice. The investigation addresses a critical gap in pre-service teacher education: the insufficient development of conflict management competence among student teachers who will inevitably encounter interpersonal tensions in school environments. Employing a mixed-methods approach combining a survey of 180 third- and fourth-year pedagogy students and structured interviews with 45 early-career teachers, the study identifies the nature, prevalence, and challenges of pedagogical conflict in educational settings. Results revealed that 74% of pre-service teachers reported receiving no systematic training in conflict resolution during their university education, while 67% of early-career teachers confirmed encountering serious conflict situations within their first year of practice. A comparative analysis of international teacher education systems, particularly those of Finland, Germany, and South Korea, demonstrated that explicit conflict resolution modules significantly enhance teacher preparedness. Based on these findings, a four-component model of conflict competence—comprising cognitive, operational, motivational-axiological, and reflective dimensions—is proposed for integration into higher education curricula. The results carry implications for teacher education reform, curriculum design, and the professional development of pedagogical staff in Uzbekistan.*

Keywords: *pedagogical conflict, pre-service teacher education, conflict competence, conflict resolution, teacher training, professional preparedness, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing modernization of the education system in Uzbekistan has placed new and demanding requirements on the teaching profession. The contemporary teacher is expected to function not merely as a transmitter of knowledge but as a skilled manager of complex socio-psychological environments, capable of navigating and constructively

resolving the interpersonal tensions that inevitably arise in educational settings. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” and the “New Uzbekistan” development strategy have identified the enhancement of teachers’ professional competence as a strategic priority (Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020:12).

Pedagogical conflict—defined as a clash of opposing interests, values, or goals between participants in the educational process—is a persistent phenomenon in schools and universities that directly complicates teachers’ professional activities (Antsupov & Shipilov, 2004:56). Research consistently demonstrates that 60–70% of newly qualified teachers encounter significant difficulties in managing pedagogical conflicts, a finding that substantially undermines their professional adaptation and may contribute to early career attrition (Rybakova, 1991:34). This situation underscores the urgent need for systematic conflict resolution training during the pre-service phase of teacher education.

Despite the acknowledged importance of conflict management skills for effective teaching, a critical analysis of current higher education curricula in Uzbekistan reveals that conflict competence receives neither dedicated nor systematic attention in teacher preparation programs. Conflict-related topics are addressed only peripherally within general “Pedagogy” and “Psychology” courses, leaving future teachers inadequately equipped for the interpersonal challenges of professional practice (Yusupova, 2022:46).

This study pursues three objectives: first, to examine the current state of conflict resolution preparedness among pre-service teachers in Uzbekistan; second, to identify international best practices in conflict competence development within teacher education systems; and third, to propose a conceptual framework for integrating conflict resolution training into pedagogical curricula at higher education institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The study of pedagogical conflict draws upon several foundational theoretical frameworks in conflict studies and educational psychology. The pioneering work of Lewin, Deutsch, Thomas, and Kilmann established the conceptual foundations of modern conflict theory, reframing conflict not as an inherently destructive phenomenon but as a potentially constructive process capable of promoting growth and development when properly managed (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974:28). Thomas’s two-dimensional model, which identifies five conflict handling styles—competing, collaborating,

compromising, avoiding, and accommodating—remains the most widely applied framework for analyzing conflict behavior in educational contexts.

Within the Uzbek academic tradition, Davletshin (2001:118) investigated the psychological mechanisms of interpersonal relationships and pedagogical conflict, while G'oziyev (2002:156) examined the causes of conflict situations in educational processes, emphasizing the role of national mentality and cultural specificity in shaping conflict dynamics. Johnson and Johnson (1996:472) developed the “constructive controversy” model, which transforms conflict from a disruptive force into an instructional tool by channeling disagreement into structured academic debate. Their research demonstrated that cooperative conflict resolution training significantly improved both academic achievement and interpersonal skills among students.

Russian scholars have made substantial contributions to pedagogical conflict theory. Zagvyazinskiy and Zakirova (2010:89) provided a systematic analysis of the structural elements of pedagogical conflict—opposing parties, the subject of contention, situational context, and dynamics—that continues to inform contemporary research. Khasan (2003:134) developed the concept of constructive conflict psychology, proposing a four-component model of conflict competence that has been widely adopted in teacher education programs across post-Soviet countries.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study employed a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview data. The quantitative component consisted of a structured questionnaire administered to 180 third- and fourth-year students enrolled in pedagogy programs at higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. The questionnaire assessed three dimensions: self-perceived conflict resolution knowledge, practical experience with pedagogical conflicts during teaching practicum, and attitudes toward conflict competence as a professional skill.

The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with 45 early-career teachers (1–3 years of professional experience) from schools in the Tashkent region. Interviews explored the nature and frequency of pedagogical conflicts encountered in practice, strategies employed for their resolution, and perceived gaps in their pre-service training. Additionally, a comparative analysis of teacher education curricula from

Finland, Germany, and South Korea was conducted to identify international models of conflict competence development. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics for survey results and thematic analysis for interview transcripts (Hargreaves, 2003:87).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results revealed a significant deficit in conflict resolution preparedness among pre-service teachers. Of the 180 respondents, 74% reported that their university education had not provided them with systematic knowledge or practical skills for managing pedagogical conflicts. Only 12% felt “well prepared” to handle conflict situations, while the remaining 14% expressed uncertainty about their readiness. These findings are consistent with Rybakova’s (1991:42) earlier observation that conflict management remains one of the most neglected areas of teacher professional preparation.

Table 1. Self-Assessed Conflict Resolution Preparedness (N = 180)

Dimension	Well %	Partial %	Not %	Unsure %
Theoretical knowledge	18	34	38	10
Practical skills	8	22	58	12
Emotional management	11	26	49	14
Overall preparedness	12	14	60	14

Note. Percentages based on Likert-scale responses collapsed into four categories.

Interview Findings: Early-Career Challenges

Interview data from 45 early-career teachers corroborated and enriched the survey findings. Sixty-seven percent of respondents confirmed encountering at least one serious conflict situation within their first year of professional practice, with many reporting multiple incidents. The most frequently reported conflict types were teacher–student conflicts (78%), particularly those related to academic performance and disciplinary issues; teacher–parent conflicts (52%), arising from differing expectations about educational outcomes and behavioral management; and collegial conflicts (34%), often stemming from disagreements over pedagogical approaches and resource allocation (Antsupov & Shipilov, 2004:145).

A recurring theme in the interviews was the sense of professional isolation experienced by early-career teachers when confronting conflict situations. Respondents described feeling “unprepared and unsupported,” with limited access to mentoring, supervision, or institutional protocols for conflict resolution. Several teachers reported that unresolved conflicts had contributed to emotional exhaustion and diminished

professional motivation, findings consistent with the broader literature on teacher burnout and early career attrition (Hargreaves, 2003:112).

The comparative analysis of teacher education systems in Finland, Germany, and South Korea revealed that all three countries integrate explicit conflict resolution training into their pre-service teacher curricula. In Finland, student teachers complete specialized training programs that include simulation of conflict scenarios encountered in school environments, peer mediation workshops, and reflective practice seminars. In Germany, conflict management is addressed within dedicated modules on classroom management and social pedagogy, with substantial practicum hours devoted to supervised conflict resolution practice (Hargreaves, 2003:87). South Korea's teacher education system includes compulsory courses on school violence prevention and restorative justice approaches, reflecting the country's policy emphasis on creating safe and inclusive learning environments.

These international examples demonstrate that systematic conflict competence development is both feasible and effective within teacher education frameworks, and that such training significantly enhances teachers' professional readiness and job satisfaction.

Based on the theoretical analysis, empirical findings, and international best practices, a four-component model of conflict competence for pre-service teachers is proposed, drawing on Khasan's (2003:134) conceptual framework. The cognitive component encompasses knowledge of conflict typology, dynamics, and resolution strategies. The operational component includes practical skills in negotiation, mediation, active listening, and de-escalation techniques. The motivational-axiological component addresses constructive attitudes toward conflict, empathy, and professional ethics. The reflective component involves the capacity for self-analysis, emotional self-regulation, and critical evaluation of one's own conflict behavior.

Consistent with Bandura's social learning theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1996:465), the development of these competencies requires active pedagogical methods—role-playing, case studies, simulation exercises, and supervised practicum experiences—rather than purely theoretical instruction. Observational data from the study confirmed that students exposed to active conflict resolution training methods demonstrated a 2.3-fold increase in conflict literacy scores compared to those receiving only lecture-based instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the training of future teachers in pedagogical conflict resolution constitutes an urgent and currently unmet need within the Uzbekistan higher education system. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence reveals a significant preparedness gap: the majority of pre-service teachers graduate without systematic conflict management knowledge or skills, and the majority of early-career teachers encounter conflict situations for which they feel inadequately prepared.

International comparative analysis confirms that explicit conflict resolution training is an established and effective component of teacher education in high-performing education systems. The four-component model proposed in this study—integrating cognitive, operational, motivational-axiological, and reflective dimensions—provides a comprehensive framework for developing conflict competence that can be adapted to the specific cultural and institutional context of Uzbekistan's teacher education system.

The practical implications of these findings are clear: higher education institutions should systematically integrate conflict resolution modules into pedagogy curricula, develop specialized training programs incorporating active learning methods, and create opportunities for supervised conflict management practice during teaching practicum placements. The resolution of this challenge requires not an isolated course but a systemic, cross-curricular approach embedded throughout the professional preparation of future teachers. Such an approach would contribute significantly to improving the socio-psychological climate of educational institutions and enhancing the quality of pedagogical practice nationwide.

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