



RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The role of quantum skills in conflict resolution in educational organizations: A review article

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Conflict is a phenomenon that can have positive consequences or bring about inefficient and destructive events for the organization. Conflict in many educational organizations, including universities is a serious problem. Conflict management is a process of identifying an appropriate role in the conflict between groups and includes appropriate techniques for the removal of inefficiencies or stimulation of organizational effectiveness. The quantum skills of conflict resolution is a theory that is based on chaos theory and quantum theory, which introduces the seven basic skills for conflict management. This study introduced quantum skills related to conflict management in educational organization as well as their application techniques.

**Materials and Methods:** This review article was carried out by searching databases such as PubMed, Elsevier and IranMedex, with conflict and quantum skills as keywords as well as their English equivalents. From 47 articles obtained, 25 articles were assessed.

**Results:** Research shows that quantum skills are great analytical capabilities for conflict resolution and management and can be effective in the perception and improvement of the organization and useful for management and leadership in complex situations. According to this model, educational organizations are flexible and creative and constantly changing, without any limits.

**Conclusion:** Experts need quantum skills for conflict resolution. These skills help the managers of 21st century to confront the mental skills required to manage the persons and resolve conflicts. Quantum managers can solve the problems of educational organizations through communication and discussion.

**Keywords:** Conflict, quantum skills, management, educational organizations.

### Introduction

Current organizations are becoming increasingly complex and need to overcome their problems if they want to remain the realm of competition with others. Since problems and obstacles influence various aspects of organization, managers have to assist the organization in furthering their objectives and dealing with problems. Different conflicts and ways to cope with them in organizations are the issues that have intrigued the mind of many managers [1]. Conflict is an indispensable part of organizations, especially educational organizations. The studies carried out on top ranking managers show that a manager, on average, spends 20% of the time on conflict management [2].

Conflict management is one of the most important skills for managers [2]. The presence of differences, memories and differentiated motives among the personnel of organizations

on the one hand, and sustainability of organization based on cooperation and coordination of the people and components of organization on the other hand, create a conflict in the structure of educational organizations [3]. Further, the hierarchical structure and vertical and horizontal differences, rigid and inflexible administrative systems, presence of various subsystems and groups with diverse objectives and benefits, inefficient communication system, lack of resources and facilities, and mismanagements, in particular, drive the organizations toward flustered and vulnerable systems that are susceptible to different tensions, conflicts and inconsistency [2, 3]. Interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts among people are more prevalent in educational organizations with which they are involved [1]. Conflict is a phenomenon that can bring about positive consequences or inefficiency and destruction. Certainly, the ability and skills

of dealing with conflict play a significant role in the success of organization [1].

Quantum skills of conflict resolution is one of the theories presented in this regard [1]. This theory is based on chaos theory and quantum theory [4]. Newton's quantum physics is one of the tools used for planning, organization, guidance and control in management. The concept of quantum has been taken from Shelton theory (1999) and is used as one of the basic principles of management. Quantum skills are principles that are utilized as a model for introduction of communication skills model. Quantum skills introduce the quantum energy field, which is one of the reasons for the presence of all phenomena in the world. Quantum concept introduces seven fundamental skills for conflict management [4].

This study was conducted to explain the role of quantum skills associated with conflict management and their application in educational organizations.

### Methods

This review analyzed the quantum skills and their application in organizations for conflict resolution. It can be helpful in finding studies and resources related to the management of educational organizational behaviors. To collect the data, the databases available in the Digital National Library of Medicine and Management, PubMed, Elsevier, IranMedex, Medline, Magiran and Proquest were used. The articles were searched from 1970 to 2015 using keywords like management, quantum skills, conflict and educational organization in both English and Persian. A total of 47 articles were obtained, from which 25 articles were selected and those written in other languages than English and Persian and not available in full version were excluded from the study.

### Results

This study was designed to explain the role of quantum skills related to conflict management and their application in educational organizations. Based on the studies, quantum theory is widely applicable in domains of nuclear energy, computer and Internet as well as human arts like management and leadership [5]. The scientific influence of quantum physics and its capability in explaining and describing many complicated events made the theoretical concepts of quantum physics applicable to the management science, emerging as a novel approach called quantum management and leadership. This approach is concentrated on totalism and relationships. Based on quantum approach, the world is a field of energy [6]. Also, this theory is the newest theory that, by considering all details, encourages the managers to use the most sophisticated facilities [7]. According to

this principle, every part is in mutual interaction with other parts, and will regularly change as long as the parts have relationships with each other. This feature gives maximum flexibility to quantum system to define itself according to the environmental conditions [6, 8]. In this theory, nature is considered to be complex, constantly changing, turbulent, indefinite and uncertain, so that it is not possible to control it through direct human intervention [9]. According to this view, an educational organization is constantly changing, flexible and unbounded, where creativity and information are freely flowing. In these organizations, various communication processes are used to create a common perspective, make the objectives transparent, and obtain knowledge through presentation of various interpretations of reality and creation of an agreed model [10, 11]. Further, there is a high degree of flexibility in these organizations and organizational atmosphere is open and supportive, where nurturing and improving human resources are seriously taken into account, so that the members of organization feel they are valuable and make more attempt for organizational success [12]. Moreover, managers in these organizations are totalist; i.e. they consider both professional and personal dimensions. They allow individuals to grow as both an individual and a member of a larger creative group, whose major task is leadership functioning [9].

Quantum leaders nurture the leadership talent of their followers and share leadership [6, 13]. The main responsibility of the leader is to help actualize the potential capabilities of individuals and to contribute to their growth through relationship with others [9]. They try to consider a time and place for conversation and help create self-regulation and self-organization processes with more reliability and flexibility [14, 15]. They also make an attempt to maintain a balance between tension and order [16]. The major role of leader in this process is assisting the personnel to adapt to new roles and strategies. Therefore, leaders should always be sensitive to the signs of change, collect and analyze the required data, respond to the needs on time and lead the organization into the future [17,18]. Leaders should create an atmosphere in which trust, safety, dynamic relationships and learning occur, and vertical relationships are reduced and horizontal relationships are respected [6].

Baber et al (1999) believe that in quantum organizations, optimization of human resources is highly important, and in such a condition, the members of organization find themselves more valuable and demand team work, participation in decision-making and building interpersonal relationships and trust [12]. Also, Burnham considers building an atmosphere of trust, structural changes and a learning atmosphere as the required parameters of universities [19]. What university leadership needs is creating a learning

atmosphere in which there exists such factors as participation of personnel, cooperation and trust among them and a sense of collective identity. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid vertical relationships and hierarchical structure [20] and acquire the seven skills needed to create such an atmosphere. These seven skills, whose extracted concepts are presented in [Table 1], include:

**Table 1.** Data for quantum skills according to the review.

Extracted concepts	Reviewed articles	Quantum skills
Seeing intentionally	14 ,22 ,21	(Quantum Seeing)
Thinking paradoxically	23 ,6	(Quantum Thinking)
Feeling vitally alive	22 ,14 ,6	(Quantum Feeling)
Knowing intuitively	22,5 ,15	(Quantum Knowing)
Acting responsibly	5 ,22 ,8	(Quantum Acting)
Trusting life's process	8 ,14	(Quantum Trusting)
Being in continuous relationships	25,23 ,14	(Quantum Being)

1. Quantum seeing: seeing intentionally

Quantum seeing is the ability to see the goal. From the quantum perspective, human and his behaviors and ideas are under the influence of quantum characteristics. What we observe in the external world and perceive is based on our presuppositions and internal beliefs. That is, they are mental realities and are formed according to our expectations and beliefs, as an observer. These presuppositions and internal beliefs make managers pay attention to specific stimuli and disregard many other stimuli [21]. This skill states that managers should polish their intentions by special techniques in order to better understand their environment and release themselves from intellectual cocoons [22]. This way, they can choose their intensions and purposes consciously. A manager who is capable of quantum seeing models his/her ability for defining and testing assumptions and beliefs [14].

Thus, when a conflict occurs in an organization, the manager should make use of this skill to discover the presuppositions and beliefs of those involved in conflict and analyze the intentions causing conflict. Each side should not only recognize the relationship between internal cognitive process and external perceptions completely, but also consider conspicuous ends for the given situation.

2. Quantum thinking: to think paradoxically

Based on the concepts of quantum physics, all phenomena are regularly changing. Change in this area inevitably leads to changes in other fields [6]. This skill states that the world acts illogically and paradoxically and creativities emerge out of seeing paradoxically. Quantum thinking is the ability of brain in acting on a level higher than creativity and innovation [23]. In this skill, managers should gather the

seemingly contradictory ideas and combine them as very creative solutions. Conflict resolution is also a paradoxical process. In conflict often one side considers a solution favorable, whereas the other side thinks quite the contrary. Thus, win-win resolutions are rarely accessible. The win-win resolutions require paradoxical thinking skills and ability to find a fully acceptable solution for different views. Staying with paradox and its continuation make it possible to detect the relationship between contradictory forces and create a framework that makes obvious contradictions meaningful.

3. Quantum feeling: feeling vitally alive

According to quantum paradigm, the whole world is an unlimited field of energy [6]. Quantum feeling means having a positive and vital feeling. Hence, managers can maintain high levels of energy by concentration on the positive aspects of each event [14]. This skill enables the managers to have a good feeling inside, irrespective of what is happening outside, and change the weaknesses to strengths and threats to opportunities in their organizations [22]. Therefore, managers will have a good inner feeling by making use of this skill and ignoring what happens outside, and will consider conflict as an opportunity that brings about change in organization.

4. Quantum knowing: knowing intuitively

Quantum knowing includes ability of knowing creatively and intuitively, which is derived from quantum theory domain. In quantum theory, universe is the field of information. The world is more like a great thinking, and gaining knowledge is not a linear process; it is intuitive with endless capacity [15,22]. The managers that consider quantum knowing skill favorable not only behave the people in a respectful manner and deep intuitive insight, but also build a creative atmosphere of awareness and thinking. The managers skilled in this domain guide the people involved in conflict to higher levels of intuitive knowing and come up with very creative solution for their very difficult challenges [24].

5. Quantum acting: acting responsibly

According to this principle, everything in the world is part of an interrelated and complex whole in which each part is in interaction with all other parts [8]. Therefore, having relationship, a sense of belonging and interaction are integral properties of quantum phenomena. The manager, using this skill, acts responsibly, which influences all the people and the future. Human deeds, due to the interdependence of the world and return of the results to oneself, become more accountable [5,22]. Every thinking and management act affects the whole system. So, if a manager wants the cooperation of personnel to create a new method of seeing and responding to conflict, s/he should adopt a new perspective. Every new perceptual selection not only affects the future reactions of managers

but also, owing to quantum relationship, influences any other person.

#### 6. Quantum trusting: trusting life's process

In quantum perspective, universe develops as a self-organizing system to achieve higher levels of complexity and order, and chaos and disorder finally leads to order [8]. Quantum trusting means the managers support the people in the conflict process and encourage them to use inner wisdom to discover innovative win-win solutions. Managers act as a source of feedback, i.e. they observe the behavior of individuals in the conflict process and provide them with feedback, and this conflict brings about a change if the feedback is non-judgmental and real [14].

#### 7. Quantum being: being in continuous relationship

Quantum being involves the ability to conceptually get connected to others; seeing the world from the eyes of others is a prerequisite to a win-win resolution of a conflict. These quantum confrontations give each side an opportunity for learning and improvement. Quantum relationships are psychological mirrors through which the individuals can see their reflection. When they see an error in others, their observations easily draw their attention to themselves and provide them with a feedback [14, 23, 25]. Figure 1 shows the quantum skills model.

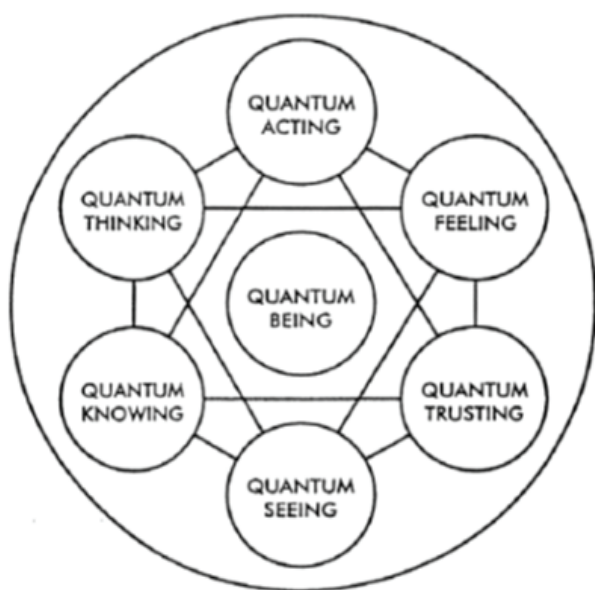


Figure 1. Quantum skills model

### Discussion and conclusion

In the present study, an attempt was made to review the related studies in order to evaluate the effect of quantum skills on conflict resolution in educational organizations. The results of studies showed that quantum skills in management enjoy a dramatic analytical capability in conflict resolution and can be helpful in understanding and improving organization, leadership and management in very

complicated situations.

The experts of conflict resolution in educational organizations need quantum skills. These skills confront the managers of 21st century with a set of brain skills for the management of individuals and conflict resolution. Conflict resolution specialists in educational organizations, especially specialists of educational organization development need to be changed into quantum thinking leaders; they need to discover their mental models and testing by quantum skills. These skills are rooted in the new scientific perspective that has introduced the world as a complex and live system with great relationships. The pioneers of quantum change cannot change educational organizations unless they change themselves. As the development executives and operational managers learn these skills, they convert their static working environment into dynamic and flexible quantum organizations. The organizations that are in the chaos age get prepared creatively to use the innovative power of conflict.

Quantum leaders identify the needs of people through relationship and discourse regarding the questions and problems of the personnel and organization. To this end, it is necessary to win the trust of the personnel and get them to move, and help them overcome their problems via new solutions. Managers can promote responsibility and trust among the personnel of organization by employing a systemic view and creating an open learning environment. They can also direct their organization toward a quantum organization by valuing the personal capabilities of individuals, reinforcing the capabilities and potentials of the personnel in line with strengthening creative thinking, having a common aim in organization, encouraging the employees, making relationships between units and sharing the knowledge, and increasing the power of responsibility and commitment. In quantum leadership, the employees are given authority and encouraged to cooperate in tasks. It is essential that managers move from fatherhood approach to a quantum approach. In such an environment, the tension between the employees and managers will be wiped out.

Finally, the current study showed that quantum theory is a quantum metaphor and a service for the efficacy of managers and leaders. It is a new spirit blown into the body of the manager, guides the managers from machine thinking and behaviors to dynamic and creative behaviors and helps resolve organizational conflict through relationship.

However, it is noteworthy that as we go forward, we will see the latest human knowledge as a veil by itself, engrossing other knowledge. Hence, it is necessary to discover the latest knowledge about conflict resolution in educational organizations and use it in other studies.

It should be pointed out that lack of access to some databases and full version of articles during the study period



and lack of access to the latest articles were the limitations of this study.

### Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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