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Abstract. Improving organizational performance is one of the most important goals that all kind of organizations try to achieve it in terms of growth, profitability, increasing market share, productivity and other criteria. The purpose of this paper is to examine the interactional relationship among organizational communication, organizational conflict, and performance. To do so, the research institutions (under supervision of ministry of science, research and technology) were selected as statistical population. The descriptive research method was used for conducting this research. For gathering required data, two questionnaires were designed and distributed among sample institutions (using convenient sampling). The information of 22 institutions (188 questionnaires) was gathered and used for analyzing. The results show that there is a significant relationship among organizational communication, organizational conflict, and performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are totally reliant on communication, which is defined as the exchange of ideas, messages, or information by speech, signals, or writing. Without communication, organizations would not function. If communication is diminished or hampered, the entire organization suffers. When communication is thorough, accurate, and timely, the organization tends to be vibrant and effective. No function is more vital to management than communication. Communication is at the heart of every business activity; it is the thread that ties the actions of the individual or organization to its desired objectives. Communication is the way that employees share feelings, thoughts, wants, and needs (Benowitz, 2001; p. 159).

Organizational effectiveness depends upon the quality of communication. Managers have to communicate with subordinates and superiors. They spend more than 75% of their effective time in communicating. It is communication which gives life to organizational structure. It is a thread that holds all the units, sub units, processes, systems, culture together. If communication stops, the organization will cease to exist. Communication is vital for the very existence of the organization. Organizations have to communicate with external organizations, agencies and incorporate various inputs for survival and growth. Communication not only integrates various sub units but shifts information of value acquired from the environment to various departments, groups and individuals. An effective communication is an essence of successful managers. As the organization grows,

the role of communication becomes more critical. Therefore there is a need for adjustment in the communication systems according to shape, size, performance, location and the services that the organization offers (Kondalkar, 2007; p. 193).

Jain (1973) tested the relationship between the communicative effectiveness of hospital supervisory personnel and their performance as perceived by subordinate workers. Significant correlations were found between perceived communication behavior and ratings of supervisory performance, except for those ratings given by technicians in one of the hospitals. Goodnight, Crary, Balthrop and Hazen (1974) found only a .02 correlation between overall communication satisfaction and productivity in a study of management level personnel and the subordinates within a large Midwestern corporation. In a study examining employees in six manufacturing and service organizations, Jenkins found a correlation between supervisory communicative effectiveness and worker performance (cited in Hellweg and Phillips, 1982).

One of the most important phenomena in workplace is conflict. The existence of conflict can hinder organizational effectiveness. However managers and organizational researchers have a little information about managing conflict and its related problems. Some argue that the causes of conflict are organizational structure, resource shortage; incompatible goals and others state that communication is a key factor in creating and solving conflict (e.g. Moore, 2007; Stockwell, 1997).

The study of Mohr and Spekman (1994) indicated that quality of

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communication and proper use of conflict handling style can affect partnership success. Their findings showed that the primary characteristics of partnership success are: partnership attributes of commitment, coordination, and trust; communication quality and participation; and the conflict resolution technique of joint problem solving.

We can't banish conflict from our lives, but we can communicate more effectively through it. Despite the importance of using effective communication in managing and solving conflict in organization, there are little studies in this area and there is no research that examines the interactive relationship between organizational communication and conflict and its relationship with performance. So the basic question of the present research is there any significant relationship between organizational communication and conflict and its relationship with performance?

Objective of the Study

The current study aimed at investigating the relationship between organizational communication and conflict and performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Organizational Communication Typology

Grunig's models (1992) of public relations represent a first classification of insights into communication. He distinguished PR models that stress a one-way model of communication and models that emphasize a two-way model. In his more recent work, Grunig (2001) claims that one-way models are always symmetric, since the sender is only concerned with the transmission of his message and do not take the receiver into account. In more recent publications, Grunig described his two-way models as symmetrical and asymmetrical (Van Ruler, 2004). Van Ruler (2004) introduced four types of organizational communications as a communication grid that shown in figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Types of Organizational Communication
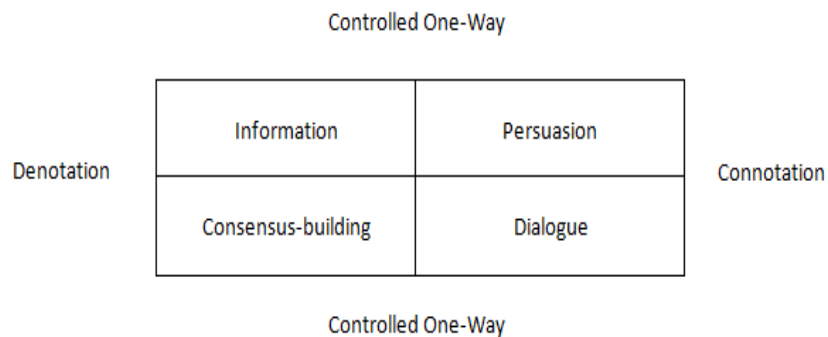
Source: Van Ruler, 2004; 139

The square bounded by monitored one-way traffic and the denotative side of meaning provides the information strategy (Van Ruler, 2004; p. 139). Press releases and public relations materials are often made just to inform. The strategy demands a well-rounded policy (since there has to be a clear message), an informative message, and an aware, information seeking public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The square bounded by monitored one-way traffic and the connotative side of meaning provides the persuasion strategy (Van Ruler, 2004; p. 140). This is the basis of advertising and propaganda. What also fits this square is corporate communication, in the sense of presenting the organization so as to generate a favorable basis for further relationships with relevant stakeholders (cf. van Riel, 1995). The strategy demands a well-rounded policy, a persuasive message, and a latent public (Perlof, 1993).

The square bounded by two-way traffic and the connotative side of meaning provides the dialogue strategy (Van Ruler, 2004;

140). It is a facilitating strategy that is specified in so-called interactive policy-making and socially responsible enterprising. This strategy can also be used for the effective handling of job discussions, for small-scale brainstorming to identify particular problems and for the collection of possible solutions to problems (Senge, 1990). The strategy is in keeping with the first phase of interactive policy development and decision-making (exploration and identification of the problem). It requires informational messages from both sides, and an aware public. It requires informational messages from both sides, and an aware public.

The square bounded by two-way traffic and the denotative side of meaning provides the consensus-building strategy (Van Ruler, 2004; p. 140). This strategy deals with building bridges between the organization and the environment or between employees (Dozier, 1992). The strategy is in keeping with the second phase of interactive policy development and decision-making. It advocates an active public, clear negotiations, and room in the policy development process of the organization (Grunig, 1992).

Organizational Conflict Typology

Conflict is inevitable among humans. When two or more social entities (i.e., individuals, groups, organizations, and nations) come in contact with one another in attaining their objectives, their relationships may become incompatible or inconsistent. Relationships among such entities may become inconsistent when two or more of them desire a similar resource that is in short supply; when they have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint action; or when they have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills. "Conflict is the perception of differences of interests among people" (Thompson, 1998; p. 4).

There are many conflict handling models. Deutsch (1949) first suggested the simple cooperative–competitive model in the research on social conflict. Putnam and Wilson (1982) provided empirical evidence on the basis of a factor analysis of the items of their Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument that there are three styles of handling interpersonal conflict: non-confrontation (obliging), solution-orientation (integrating), and control (dominating). Pruitt (1983) suggested and provided some

empirical evidence from laboratory studies that there are four styles of handling conflict: yielding, problem solving, inaction, and contending. The five styles of handling interpersonal conflict in organizations were first conceptualized in 1926 by (Follett, 1940). She conceptualized three main ways of handling organizational conflict -domination, compromise, and integration - as well as other, secondary ways of handling conflict, such as avoidance and suppression. Rahim (1983) and Rahim and Bonoma (1979) differentiated the styles of handling interpersonal conflict on two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. These styles are integrating style, obliging style, dominating style, avoiding style and compromising style (Rahim, 2001, p. 24-30).

Hammer (2005) in his research developed the Intercultural Conflict Style (ICS) inventory, based on two core dimensions: Direct vs. indirect approaches to dealing with disagreements and emotionally expressive vs. emotionally restrained patterns for dealing with the affective dimension of conflict interaction (figure 2).

FIGURE 2
Hammer's Conflict Styles
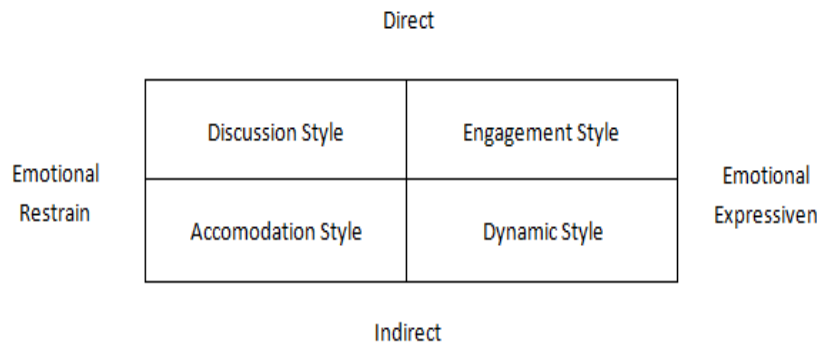
Soource: Hammer, 2005, 691

The Engagement style emphasizes a more verbally direct and confrontational approach toward resolving conflict that is infused with an emotionally expressive demeanor. This style tends to view sincerity of each party toward a positive resolution of a conflictual dynamic as embedded in the degree of concern that is demonstrated through more intense, verbal and non-verbal expression of emotion. This style tends to be more comfortable than the Discussion style with personal engagement of the parties where disagreements are verbally confronted and emotion is ''put on the table'' (Hammer, 2005; p. 691). The Accommodation style describes an approach to conflict resolution that emphasizes a more indirect approach for dealing with areas of disagreement and a more emotionally restrained or controlled manner for dealing with each party's emotional response to conflict. This style emphasizes ambiguity and circumlocution in language use

in order to help ensure that a conflict does not ''get out of control''. Maintaining emotional calm and reserve is essential to this style for enabling interpersonal harmony to counter relationally damaging disagreements among the parties. Indirect speech, use of intermediaries, and minimizing the level of conflict present among the parties are all specific strategies an accommodation style may likely employ (Hammer, 2005; p. 691). The Dynamic style involves the use of more indirect strategies for dealing with substantive disagreements coupled with more emotionally intense expression. This style may typically involve such linguistic devices as hyperbole, repetition of one's message, a more ''associative'' argument structure, ambiguity and use of third party intermediaries coupled with more emotionally confrontational discourse and expression (Hammer, 2005; p. 691).
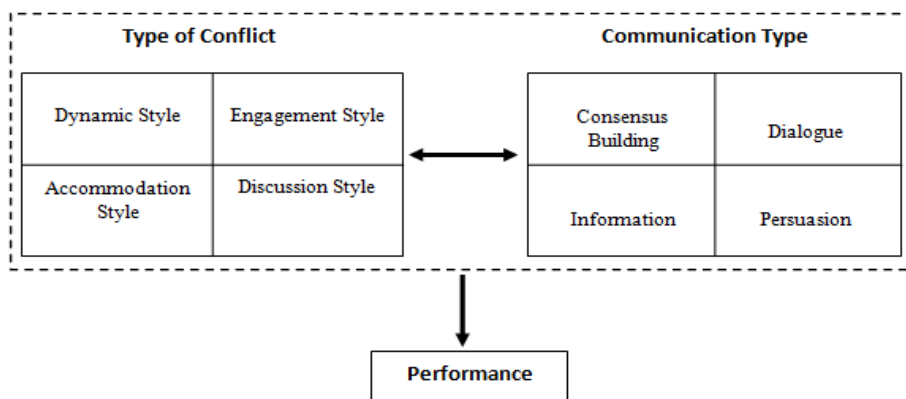
RESEARCH MODEL

The current study examined how communication and conflict can interact in organization and affect organizational performance. The conceptual model of the research was showed in figure 3.

FIGURE 3
RESEARCH MODEL

METHODOLOGY

The required primary data was collected through a self-completion questionnaire which was originally developed and employed for the purpose of the study. The first section contained questions that captured demographic variables, while the other sections consisted of questions measuring the concepts of organizational communication and conflict. For measuring performance variable the data published by ministry of science, research and technology was used. Items for all constructs, except demographic variables were assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

A pilot study was first conducted to improve questionnaire structure and content. To achieve this purpose, thirty questionnaires were sent to academicians who work in business administration and public management departments in different Iranian universities. Several statements were revised based on the input from the academicians and the comments were considered in the final version. A convenient sample of the 22 research institutions was included in the study's survey. Out of the 345 distributed questionnaires a total of 237 or a response rate of 68.7 percent was returned. However, after removing the invalid questionnaires, 118 questionnaires were used in data analysis. Several statistical techniques including reliability test, correlation analysis, and regression were used in this study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the survey were analyzed for frequency analysis. Among respondents, male was 67 percent and female was 33 percent. The most of respondents (46.3 percent) were between the ages of 30 and 40. Respondents at the age of 50 and above constituted 9 percent of total respondents. In case of working experience, 34.6 percent of respondents had 15 years experience and more than 60 percent had 11 years experience.

The frequency of organizational communication and conflict types are shown in table 1.

TABLE 1
The Frequency of Organizational Communication and Conflict Types

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Organizational communication	Information	7	30.43%
	Persuasion	2	8.7%
	Dialogue	11	47.83%
	Consensus-building	3	13.04%
Organizational conflict	Engagement	2	100

As shown in table 1, the most communication type in sample institution was dialogue and the least communication types were Consensus-building and Consensus-building respectively. The conflict type in all institution was Engagement.

Reliability Test

The final step in the measurement validation involved computing coefficient alpha for each set of measures to test reliability. Cronbach's alpha is most often used to test the reliability of a multi-item scale. The cut-off point is generally 0.6 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1992). Since all alpha values were in between 0.79 and 0.88 and all above 0.78 the construct in our model resulted in being very reliable (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	No of cases	No of items	Alpha
Organizational communication	30	24	0.935
Organizational conflict	30	20	0.860

High levels of internal consistency (alpha > 0.8) were obtained for the measures of Organizational communication. Adequate levels of internal consistency (alpha > 0.7) were obtained for Organizational conflict.

Correlation and Regression Test

Table 3 represents the output of correlation test among variables.

TABLE 3
Correlation Matrix

		Communication	Conflict	Performance
Communication	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	22		
Conflict	Pearson Correlation	.531(*)	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011		
	N	22	22	
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.550(**)	.419	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.052	
	N	22	22	22

According to table 3, at the 95% significant level, there is a direct relationship between communication and conflict; communication and performance. But there is no linear relationship between conflict and performance. The summary of regression model (between communication and performance) is depicted in table 4.

TABLE 4
Model Summary (b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.550[a]	0.302	0.267	0.65906

a) Predictor: organizational communication

b) dependent variable: performance

According to table 4, $R^2 = 0.302$ that means 30 percent of performance variable can be explained by the organizational communication variable.

As shown in table 33, there is no linear relationship between conflict and performance. May be there is a nonlinear relationship

between these variables? In order to examine the nonlinear relationship between conflict and performance, the independent variable (conflict) in the form of second degree was entered in the model. For this, the summary of regression model (between conflict^2 and performance) is depicted in table 5.

TABLE 5
Model Summary (b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.633[a]	0.401	0.326	0.59734

a) Predictor: organizational conflict^2
b) dependent variable: performance

According to table 55, the correlation coefficient between conflict and performance is 0.633 and $R^2 = 0.401$ that means 40 percent of performance can be explained by the organizational conflict.

CONCLUSION
This study adds to the growing literature on organizational behavior (especially at the group level behavior) by examining the relationship between organizational communication, conflict and performance. The finding revealed that there is a significant direct relationship between organizational communication and organizational conflict. Also there is direct relationship between organizational communication and performance.

The findings of the current study show that there is linear relationship between organizational conflict and performance. But there is the significant nonlinear relationship between conflict and performance as some researches had suggested (e.g. Robbins, 1987; Rahim, 2001).

The current research was conducted among research institutions in Iran and whether the findings from this work would be consistent with other countries' research institutions would need to be verified through further research. Furthermore, since the sample size is limited, the results can be taken only as indicative results and the findings need t o be compared and confirmed with other research work with much bigger and more diversified sample size to obtain better accuracy. The employment of a non-probability convenient sample may also limit the generalizability of the findings.

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