

# Conflict Management between Academic Staff in the Universities

Wisit Rittiboonchai<sup>1</sup>

Faculty of Management Science,  
Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University  
mbakru1@gmail.com

Krittiya Sriprasert

Kitti Dangploy

Kunlaphat Jaithon

Chuthamart Kulrat

Prasarn Chaiwirattana

Primluck Ruamsuk

Sathit Wonganannon

Sitthikit Ratchatasap

Amnaj Palapleewan

## Abstract

The objectives of this research were (1) to study the causes of conflicts arising from academic staff in the universities and (2) to find an approach to handle conflicts arising from academic staff in the universities. The methodology used in this research was a mixed-method where both quantitative and qualitative analyses have been employed.

The research found the main causes of disputes which were: 1) Communication problem – the most common cause of conflicts happened due to misunderstanding the meaning of information as well as incorrectly sending and receiving information and inaccurately receiving the same set of information; 2) Organizational structure problem – this problem arose because of unclear division of authority, unjust distribution of workload, and repetition of work; and 3) Interpersonal relationship problem – the conflicts occurred because of different ideology, work ethics, and expertise.

The results from the structural equation model showed that the structure of organization ( $\lambda_x = 0.71$ ) played a key role in causing conflicts among academic staff. The model also revealed that working together ( $\lambda_x = 0.72$ ) was the most effective way to prevent conflicts, and compromising ( $\lambda_x = 0.61$ ) was the best mean to resolve disputes. Furthermore, the results from the qualitative analysis revealed similar findings both in public and private universities that the instructors usually

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author

abide by their superiors' order. If conflicts arise, both instructors and superiors tend to negotiate in order to find a common ground and fine tune their opinions. In addition, if conflicts arise among instructors, they try to resolve such disputes by talking with each other in a friendly manner to clarify any misunderstanding.

**Keywords:** Conflict Management, Academic Staff, Courses of Disputes

## 1. Introduction

The prosperity of people in the country occurs from the development of people to obtain knowledge and understanding towards development and globalization. Thus, it can be seen that the level of education has had a significant effect on the development of the country. It is evident that developed countries emphasize the importance of people in the country to have quality education. It is undeniable that educational institution is an important starting point to make a mission of the development of people in country become successful.

The expansion of education into the higher education of people in Thailand is a good sign which could guarantee that people is interested in education since it would give an opportunity for them to pursue a career. So, academic staff in the university are important as drivers to make the mission of people's development in the country having knowledge succeed. In graduate studies, both master and Ph.D. programs, which have the high return of teaching hours may cause conflicts between academic staff who are instructors in their teaching loads. The main reason for the conflicts of power and benefits between instructors is that every instructor has equal rights and status. Differences in administrative positions are temporary phenomena. Nonetheless, the key difference is academic positions which will accompany instructors for their lives. Besides, the status difference between government officers and academic staff still has a gap causing more conflicts between instructors and instructors as well as instructors and university executives. Lately, there are claims of academic staff network from over 40 higher education institutions nationwide to claim for the benefits and a revision of regulations for academic staff in order to receive benefits and care not less than or equal to government officers such as welfare, benefits, and insignia. This causes a conflict between instructors and university executives usually appears in the judicial process of the Administrative Court. This even happens in a conflict among instructors. According to a survey from the lawsuits in the Administrative Court, it showed that a number of instructors file lawsuits in both Central Administrative Court and Supreme Court (Manager Online, 2012).

One of the conflicts among instructors which became a hot news recently was a conflict among instructors in Ph.D. program of one university. Finally, a tragedy occurred as a party was shot, and he shot himself after that (Kom Chad Luek, 2016). In fact, this event is unlikely to happen with instructors who have such higher education and are models that bestow knowledge to people in the society. However, this happened due to a conflict and stress from coexistence.

Conflict is nature, and difference is normal in society, but violence is unwanted. Besides, conflicts may be common in everyday life, but conflicts which are not normal are protracted conflicts usually associated with basic human needs. These consist of sense of security, identity, participation, and equality (Azar, 1990). When people come together to perform any task, conflict could always happen. Protracted conflicts often cause stress and unwanted outcome.

Management of university which is not achieving or ineffective arises from management of personnel causing from conflicts between supervisors and subordinates, problems among instructors as well as problems between instructors and students. It usually appears that instructors from the same faculty quarrel, discriminate, jealous, and defame as well as have difference opinions, lack of unity, unharmonized work, and conflicts due to conflicts of interest, especially remuneration from the university. These conflicts tend to increase in terms of frequency and violence. To study conflict management between academic staff in higher education aimed to be beneficial for interested people in relieving protracted conflicts leading to destroying the development of people in the country as a result as well as to be useful for those who are interested in applying the research results in the development of the organization, which would benefit the university executives and the quality of education.

## **2. Research Objectives**

1. To study the causes of conflicts arising from academic staff in the universities
2. To find an approach to handle conflicts arising from academic staff in the universities

## **3. Literature Review**

The researchers conducted the conceptual framework of the research from integrating the concepts of Thai and foreign scholars which is a theoretical framework. The relevant theories and concept related to conceptual framework were in the following:

Saengnimnuan (2001: 100-105) classified types of conflicts into 3 characteristics comprising interpersonal conflict, intragroup conflict, and intergroup conflict.

Nopparak (2010) proposed that types of conflict are categorized into 2 groups as follows:

1. Intrapersonal Conflict – Causes might be from the conflicts of different opinions, perceptions, value or attitude, prejudice, and benefits. The causes of conflict must be found and resolved on the right spot, right couple for the right persons.

2. Group Conflict – This could be classified into 2 types:

- 2.1 Within Group Conflict – This conflict could occur from role conflict, authority conflict, and issue conflict, which are differences of opinions.

- 2.2 Between Group Conflict – This conflict may occur from functional conflict, hierarchy conflict, and line-staff conflict.

Duke (1976) proposed that a person who faces with a conflict would show conflict resolutions based on 5 types of behavior:

1. Competition - This is a self-serving behavior, regardless of the loss of others, by virtue of position or economic situation to benefit themselves.

2. Collaboration – This behavior has a characteristic of overcoming but fully cooperating to solve problem in order to achieve a win-win situation.

3. Compromising – This is to compromise to meet halfway and negotiate to satisfy both parties.

4. Avoiding - People who have this behavior are unassertive and uncooperative in solving problems and show a sign of sloth.

5. Accommodation – This is to please others and to sacrifice which is similar to a proverb that “Loser is an angel while winner is a devil.”

Rahim (1985; 1986; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) proposed that five conflict styles used in organizations included avoiding, compromising, dominating, integrating and obliging, and these styles mostly associated with organizational factors, such as position, organizational climate, job burnout, job satisfaction, etc. (Gross & Guerrero, 2000; Rahim, 1985; Rahim, 1986; Rahim & Bonoma, 1979)

Pneuman and Bruehl (1982: 35) stated that the causes of conflict can be classified into 3 main sources which are:

1. Individual Factors – Differences of personal or individual background in terms of culture, education, experience, value, belief, emotion, feeling, attitude, and personal habits. These also include leadership of each individual and a difference of perceptions causing different understanding and opinion which builds relationship in different expressions.

2. Interactional Factors - Interaction and poor communication quality, lack of clarity, distort information, and communication delay. The interaction which is a source of conflict is poor communication or lack of quality. Generally, poor communication will lead to misunderstandings in terms of essence and intent of messages, which increase conflict level.

3. Organizational Factors – These factors consist of limited resources, unclear roles, responsibilities, and chain of command, strict rules, competition to gain benefits and power, and there are exceptions for certain groups of people who do not have to follow the set standards.

Daniel (2001: 67-85) explained conflict resolutions in 3 general approaches:

1. Fighting with power - The parties will use the resources available (the strong body, threatening, noise) to force the opponent to surrender. The result will have a winner and a loser.

2. Fighting with the right – The parties will raise the authorities (leader, boss, manuals, procedures, and law) for consideration to find out who has the right. The result will have a winner and a loser.

3. Interest Reconciliation – This is an approach to share the benefits or have some wins and losses. The advantage is that there is no antagonism. Traditional conflict resolution uses the first two approaches, but the current best practice is the third one.

The result of literature reviews could be concluded into the conceptual framework in the following figure.

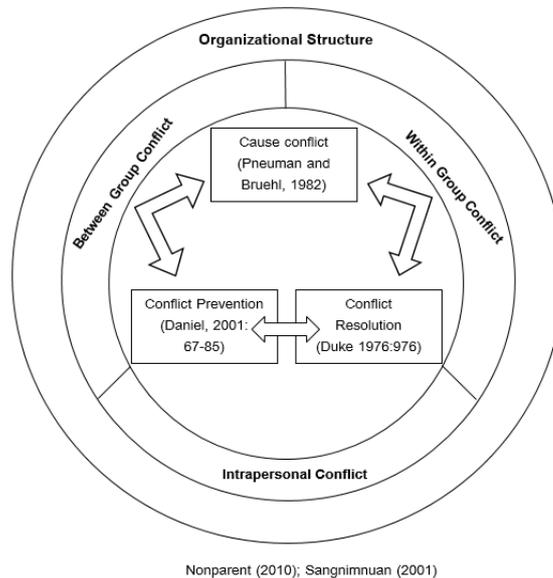


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research

#### 4. Research Methodology

The methodology used in this research entitled “Conflict Management between Academic Staff in the Universities” was a mixed-method where both quantitative and qualitative analyses have been employed. Data collection of this research was done based on two steps as shown in the following research methodology.

##### 4.1 Target Samples in Qualitative Research

Target samples in this qualitative research were 30 academic staff in the universities using purposive selection method. Data collection was divided into two groups: public universities and private universities where 2 universities were selected for each group. The target public universities were Mahidol University and Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Meanwhile, the target private universities were Huachiew Chalermprakiet University and Assumption University. These target samples were selected based on the principle of cooperation in responding to the questionnaire. Moreover, the researchers directly contacted academic staff in the universities using the in-depth interview, and 5 academic staff from each university were interviewed.

##### 4.2 The Population and Sample size of Quantitative Research

The population of this quantitative part was 18,519 academic staff in the universities (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2016), and the sample size was calculated according to Taro

Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967). This resulted in a sample size of 400 samples, and the researchers increased the sample size for another 10 samples. Using convenience sampling, a total of 410 samples were therefore collected from public and private universities as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Samples Collected

Samples	Name of University
8 private universities (26 samples from each university) Total = 208 samples - actual collected samples = 203 samples	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bangkok University</li> <li>2. Thonburi University</li> <li>3. Sripatum University</li> <li>4. Rangsit University</li> <li>5. Siam Durakit University</li> <li>6. Huachiew Chalermprakiet University</li> <li>7. Assumption University</li> <li>8. Dhurakij Pundit University</li> </ol>
16 public universities (13 samples from each university) Total = 208 samples - actual collected samples = 207 samples	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin</li> <li>2. Kasetsart University</li> <li>3. Chulalongkorn University</li> <li>4. Burapha University</li> <li>5. Khon Kaen University.</li> <li>6. National Institute of Development Administration</li> <li>7. Mae Fah Luang University</li> <li>8. Mahidol University</li> <li>9. Kanchanaburi Rajabhat University</li> <li>10. Phranakhon Rajabhat University</li> <li>11. Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University under the Royal Patronage</li> <li>12. Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University</li> <li>13. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University</li> <li>14. Silpakorn University</li> <li>15. Lampang Rajabhat University</li> <li>16. Thaksin University</li> </ol>

#### **4.3 Research Instrument for Qualitative Research**

The researchers used conceptual framework, research objectives, and the previous research results as guidelines for content analysis of this research which was conducted under the theory of conflict management. This was done through the analyses and concepts of many previous researchers and academicians in order to develop the conceptual framework and create an unstructured-interview questionnaire which was used for the in-depth interview of 20 academic staff in the universities.

The qualitative research used the research concept of Chantavanich (2010: 128-130) for data triangulation, which is a technique used to facilitate validation of data collected by comparing the differences in three aspects: time, space, and person. In addition, investigator triangulation was also used to examine that each field data collection involved with two investigators. Finally, methodological triangulation was applied to use various data collection methods to gather the same information (i.e. using observation along with interrogation), and other sources of information were also studied.

After obtaining the in-depth interview data, the researchers exported and then analyzed the data by grouping, collating, and sorting data by the content studied. Next, content analysis was conducted together with literature review in order to search for indicators consistent with the real context. The last step was data synthesis. The data gained from the analysis were synthesized again in order to obtain data which is ultimately close to reality.

#### **4.4 Research Instrument for Quantitative Research**

Instrument was the questionnaire which was reviewed through literature reviews and based on the theory of conflict management. The questionnaire was divided into 5 sections as follows:

Section 1: Personal information of respondents – This section contained 7 multiple-choice questions comprising gender, age, education, marital status, academic position, field of teaching, and experience in academic work.

Section 2: Cause of conflict – The questions in this section were 5-point rating scales. The questions covered the issues related to causes of conflict which were composed of 7 questions about communication, 7 questions about organizational structure, and 7 questions about interpersonal relationship. Thus, there were 21 questions as a total.

Section 3: Conflict prevention - The questions in this section were 5-point rating scales. The questions covered the issues related to clear goals for 5 questions and work conformity for 5 questions. Thus, there were 10 questions in this section.

Section 4: Conflict resolution - The questions in this section were 5-point rating scales. The questions covered the 5 related issues including avoiding, competition, accommodation,

collaboration, and compromising of which 4 questions were asked for each issue. Thus, there were 20 questions in this section.

Section 5: Open-ended questions on conflict management approach – This section consisted of 3 questions which were:

How do you deal with conflicts between people?

How do you deal with conflicts within group?

How do you deal with conflicts between groups?

#### **4.5 Assessment of Research Instrument**

Content validity was conducted by using the discretion of 3 experts. The experts reviewed for generality of the components set and assessed the consistency of each question with the terminology. This research used the questionnaire as the instrument, the researchers therefore tested the reliability of the questionnaire by try-out testing with the non-target samples which were instructors in Ramkhamhaeng University for totaling 40 samples. The results from this step were then calculated for alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) using Cronbach's alpha. The  $\alpha$  must higher than or equal to 0.70 so that the instrument could be used for data collection (Taweerat, 2000: 132). The coefficients of Cronbach's alpha were as follows: 0.84-0.96 for causes of conflict, 0.92-0.93 for conflict prevention, and 0.84-0.94 for conflict resolution. In conclusion, the questionnaire was approved for its reliability.

### **5. Statistics for Data Analysis**

#### **5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used for data analysis, and descriptive statistics used were percentage (measuring personal characteristics), mean, and standard deviation. The structural equation model (SEM) was then applied to examine consistency between the hypothetical model and the empirical data by using LISREL Version 8.52 program to analyze goodness of fit, chi-square/df, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). However, this research did not use chi-square to analyze the consistency between the hypothetical model and the empirical data since chi-square has a limitation in terms of sample size. As sample size increases, the expected value of chi-square could be very high until the conclusion might be incorrect. Due to inferential statistics, correlation analysis was conducted by using Linear Structural Relationship Model (LISREL).

**5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The researchers used the results obtained from open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the in-depth interview to conclude and separate issues in order to find conflict management approach between academic staff in the universities by describing data based on content analysis.

**6. Research Results**

**Part 1: Personal characteristics of the respondents**

The result showed that the majority of respondents were instructors in the public universities (50.49%) which were close to the private universities (49.51%). Besides, most of these respondents were female (67.6%), aged between 36-45 years old (46.59%) with single status (55.12%), and the education was mostly master’s degree (58.05%). Furthermore, they were mostly instructors (77.07%) teaching in the faculty of humanities (41.5%) and having less than 10 years of experience (60.73%).

**Part 2: Conflict management approach for academic staff in the universities**

Due to the overall results of the analysis, the researchers analyzed data by applying the maximum likelihood method using LISREL 8.52 program to compare consistency between the hypothetical model and the empirical data. Model modification was later done by adjusting parameters using relax assumptions to have related tolerance until the goodness-of-fit index was consistent with the empirical data as shown in figure 2.

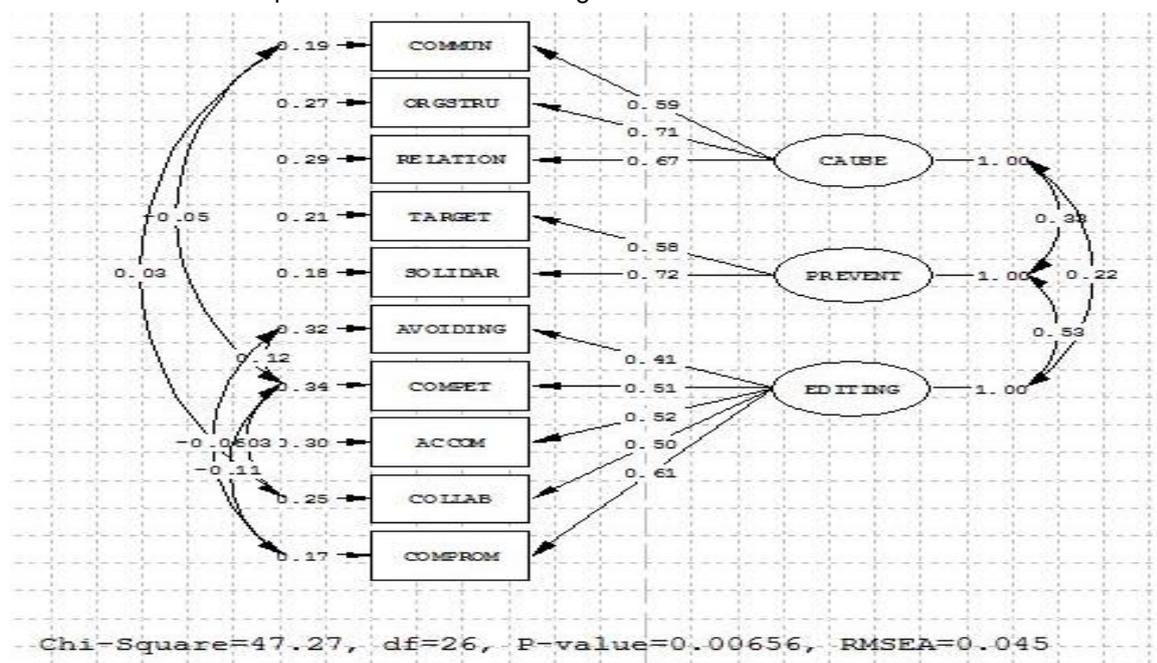


Figure 2 Conflict Management between Academic Staff in the Universities (Adjusted Model)

The results of the research showed the cause of conflicts between academic staff in the universities arising from the structure of organization ( $\lambda_x = 0.71$ ), prevention of conflicts by working together ( $\lambda_x = 0.72$ ), and conflict resolution by a mean of compromising ( $\lambda_x = 0.61$ ). In addition, the cause of conflicts was related to conflict prevention ( $\Phi = 0.33$ ) and conflict resolution ( $\Phi = 0.22$ ) while conflict prevention was also related to conflict resolution ( $\Phi = 0.53$ ).

### Part 3: Conclusion from the content analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data analyses

1. The causes of conflict between academic staff in the universities were as follows:

1.1 Communication problem – The most common causes of conflicts arising from communication problem included misunderstanding the meaning of information, incorrectly sending and receiving information, and inaccurately receiving the same set of information, respectively. Comparing the results of conflicts arising from communication problem between academic staff from public universities and private universities, the results revealed that public universities had a problem of inaccurately receiving the same set of information more than private universities at a statistical significance.

1.2 Organizational structure problem – The key causes of this problem were from unclear division of authority, unjust distribution of workload, and repetition of work. Comparing the conflict arising from organizational structure problem between public and private universities, the results were not different.

1.3 Interpersonal relationship problem - The conflicts from this problem occurred because of different ideology, work ethics, and expertise. Comparing the results of conflicts arising from interpersonal relationship problem between academic staff from public universities and private universities, the results showed that public universities had all three interpersonal relationship problems more than private universities at a statistical significance.

2. Conflict management approaches for academic staff in the universities was as follows:

2.1 Conflicts are common in society. Having the appropriate level of conflict is necessary organizational development. However, if conflicts increase, there are many approaches of conflict management between academic staff in the universities which help keep conflicts become better or decrease. These could be done through directly talking in front of each other, which will properly avoid any misunderstanding. Moreover, what should also be avoided included sending messages through electronics media, phone, or mail as well as talking to the third person, which may cause misunderstanding even more. Talking without seeing each other's face expressions could result in worse situation, and negotiation in private place without unrelated people shall be considered in order to avoid comments from those people. Besides, this would allow the party to

fully express his or her emotion and feeling by freeing each other's grudge and trying to understand each other's true feeling.

2.2 In a case that conflict arises, and there is a mediator, this mediator must not adhere to his or her thoughts. Instead, the mediator shall have flexibility to listen so that conflict resolution is peacefully reached. Furthermore, having the parties work together to achieve the same goal is also another approach reducing conflicts. Specifically, in the universities instructors often have high ego resulting in silo work due to their own thoughts and goal. As a result, conflicts arise, and the common goal is not together achieved. The appropriate conflict management in this case is brainstorming, choosing the most agreeable way, and then putting it into practice together so that the conflicts could decrease.

2.3 When conflict arises, and the mediator agrees with the dispute of the party, that person shall accept it and do not have to be shy or disgraceful since acceptance of the other's opinions without prejudice would reduce the unfriendly feeling. Nevertheless, the conflict is too much to talk to each other with any reason, both parties should get out of the stressful situation so that everyone has time to reconsider the conflict. Renegotiation could be done after calming down and do not hesitate to ask for help from others such as supervisor or police. If the mediator of such negotiation is in danger. In the case that neither of the parties makes a concession, negotiation for such a neutral settlement shall be done without anyone wins. Besides, the dispute shall be temporarily settled since time can often treat the conflict properly and work well with all parties. Although conflicts in the curriculum management in the universities are caused by many reasons as researched and studied, these conflicts can in general be resolved well by using this approach. Nonetheless, it depends on the situation and the state of the conflicts. Those who will take the conflict management approaches will have to choose the right one or alternatively use a mixed approach by using skills of the mediator of those conflicts.

## **7. Discussion and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Discussion**

7.1.1 The results of the quantitative data analysis revealed that the structure of organization played a key role in causing conflicts among academic staff. When considering together with the results of qualitative data analysis and answers to the open-ended questions, it was found that public universities often have problems in the management structure of the university which is independent and lacks systemic view. This also includes values that it will lose the university's reputation if these issues are out resulting in a chance to hide and ignore problems with no conflict resolution. Discussion of these problems will take place in the form of treatment only, and private universities normally have better formal and informal meetings comparing to public ones. Another

organizational structure problem is that sometimes the chain of command is loosely organized, and it usually brings the conflict in terms of uneven benefits. Furthermore, the problems also include unclear division of authority, unjust distribution of workload, and repetition of work. In addition to instructional model, the work of academic staff in the universities also includes research, community service, maintenance of arts and cultures excluding the administrative work for those instructors who are the university's executives, student supervision, and other work assignments. Different aptitudes cause some instructors to choose to avoid some certain tasks. Some universities have managed to divide instructors' work according to their aptitudes., but it often has no clarification and clear assignments. Overlapping work causes dissatisfaction, and many times when the conflicts in terms of organizational structure arise, there are no mediators until these conflicts occurred and then resolved. For example, due to the answers of open-ended questions from one private university, there would be clarification of conflict cause and find conflict resolution together in a case that a problem at work becomes the conflict only. The result of this research was consistent with the concept that conflict means the relationship between persons related to a purpose or method or both, but it is a negative dependency. Each of the parties is not able to meet the needs whether they are real needs or potential to occur is often caused by the organizational structure problems (Kerdnawee, 2006). Pneuman and Bruehl (1982 cited in Wisalaporn, 1997) proposed that ambiguity of the organization which is a major cause of the conflict is ambiguity in structure and roles. Ambiguous organizational structure makes it difficult to understand what the chain of command is and what responsibilities each person have whereas ambiguity in roles makes it impossible to understand who is responsible, resulting in some certain jobs have multiple people responsible, but some jobs have no one responsible. Moreover, Tiyao (2001: 306) stated that there are 4 causes of conflict in terms of organizational structure, consisting of (1) chain of command conflict, (2) responsibility conflict between organizational units causing from different responsibilities, and (3) power conflict (what often occurs is power of command and counselling), and (4) formal and informal conflicts.

7.1.2 Conflict prevention occurs by working together, which the universities usually focus on supporting for having coordinators of each organizational unit. When the conflict arises, there would always be a compromise so that the dispute parties understand each other. The results of the in-depth interview showed there is a proposal that when a certain person is found to be the source of conflict, the cause of conflict should be investigated by immediately talking with each other to resolve and prevent the conflict to ensure that it will not happen again or let it become a chronic problem. This is because the nature of the real conflict prevention of the university is often unclear, so it is necessary to use the approach of resolving the conflict when it arises, which is not likely to be the right approach. As proposed by Pukapan (1999: 156-157), conflicts are harmful to

both individuals and organizations and cause negative effects in terms of emotion as well as physical and mental health of related people. Besides, the conflict result in wasting of time, expenses, and labors. People lack mutual recognition, trust, cooperation, and initiative as well as do not respect each other. Interpersonal communication is distorted, resulting in reducing people's performance efficiency and destroying reconciliation and unity in the teamwork. These become barriers to decision making, and decisions are made with risk causing people dissatisfied to work, inertia, and loss of manpower. When people are unable to endure, they will escape from the organization. If there is no good resolution, then one conflict could lead to other conflicts since conflicts are not either good or bad things, depending on the types and levels of conflicts.

7.1.3 Due to conflict resolution, instructors will concentrate on compromising. The results from the questionnaires showed that the respondents placed their importance on compromising with the dispute party although they are not satisfied or see that they are not wrong in order to stop the problem. As for the results from open-ended questions, instructors from public universities propose to compromise, explain, and comment positively in order to best avoid problems. Compromising gives a point where to accept each other. Sometimes it may be a compromise talk. It should also avoid confrontation and use psychology in communication. Meanwhile, instructors from private universities propose that when there is a conflict, every party would talk to each other with reasons in order to find conflict resolution together by emphasizing on compromising as the key importance. Finally, if compromising is not successful, it should have a mediator who can talk and compromise with both dispute parties. As proposed by Sangmanee (2001), compromise refers to the use of negotiation which is a process of mutual agreement by meeting halfway and negotiating to satisfy both parties. The important thing is that each party would both win and lose some benefits. Another approach of compromising is to separate the dispute parties until the conflict resolution is reached, avoid confrontation between each other, or give a reward to one party to settle the conflict. Therefore, Wisalaporn (1997) proposed that this is such a behavior that the executives of the universities aim to satisfy both parties in a way that there would be some wins and losses or meet halfway. Tiyao (2001: 303) provided more interesting comments that compromising is a lose-lose strategy in conflict resolution, which is an approach that both parties lose, and there are 4 methods of conflict resolution. The first conflict resolution method is to compromise or meet halfway. The second method is to have one party agree with another party. The third method is to use a third party to mediate or judge the conflict. The last method is to apply the rules or regulations of the government to solve the conflict. Due to these 4 conflict resolution methods, both parties will be losers which could be used in some cases only since they cannot really solve the conflicts, and people who are related to the conflicts dislike these methods. This shows that the methods of conflict resolution used by instructors may not be sustainable solutions.

## 7.2 Recommendations for Implementation of the Research Results

7.2.1 Academic staff of the universities are not different from other organizations in terms of normally having conflicts. However, because the universities are sources of intellectuals to serve the country, the issue of conflict is often a problem caused by the structure and unclear communication among, executives, instructors, and students. Compromising is then a main approach for conflict resolution. Most of conflicts are forgotten rather than resolved in the right direction. There are many times that dissatisfaction of instructors and ignoring the source of conflict will bring violence or end up requesting to leave or resigning without understanding as they should be. Thus, creating a clear organizational structure and allocating people to suit the jobs are the first priorities on which the universities should place their importance.

7.2.2 Every university should place its importance on the missions of the university including instructional model, research, community service, and maintenance of arts and cultures. Separation as a specialized university and focuses on some areas may be a necessary policy to be reviewed the executives of the university must allocate and assign tasks for instructors more clearly. For instance, if it wants to develop to a research university, it is necessary to assign researches to every instructor in the university to do and achieve. Most importantly, the main mission of the university, which is production of quality graduates to society, should not be forgotten. Therefore, in order to develop instructors to be able to transfer knowledge, it is important to continually have the meetings for allocating teaching hours.

7.2.3 Special projects are another thing that many universities are organizing to make money, and these projects provide returns to both the university and instructors. Nevertheless, these projects are also problems if there is no direction, good check and control, and does not have the executives who have good governance. Besides, these projects are often the twilight zone which provides benefits to specific groups of instructors, creates fellow system, and easily causes disharmony among instructors. By looking at the principles of management, it is possible that instructors who are closely may be willing to join the same project. However, due to the aspect of the quality of instructional model, if it adheres to the advantages of the students, the projects and curriculums might be a combination of instructors who are specialized in those courses. The instructors must be properly assigned to teach to match the right courses, and it is not just to please the management of curriculum. Moreover, there must be a transparency in assigning instructors to avoid disharmony among faculties and between instructors who teach and do not teach.

7.2.4 Conflict prevention by working together and conflict resolution by focusing on compromising is another issue which the universities should review. Since the organizational structure of the university is a center of intellects and skilled instructors, it often has problems in terms of academic conflicts and benefits. When the conflicts arise, these instructors often avoid

them by compromising rather than finding solutions or making serious rules and regulations. In theory conflict management requires direct confrontation and disclosure. Some situations have to try not to involve or use power to force others. If the problem is minor, negotiation should be used. The last is to try to find a compromise by being both the provider and the receiver. However, compromising should not be used in all matters because the weight of the problem and the conflict in each context is different. Many times the problem using the wrong method of conflict prevention and resolution turns out to be like a disease which resists to drug and often has severe outcome later.

7.2.5 Conflicts are often encountered by academic staff of the universities as seen from news of various publications. Many academic staff believe that conflict is bad, and it is an inhibitor of growth and destruction of the organization. Nonetheless, conflicts are not actually the cause of organizational chaos, but they are caused by ineffective methods to resolve conflicts. Even though conflict is unavoidable, but having good conflict management approach or conflict resolution would provide the benefits. This is the basis causing personal and social changes in the university. The causes of conflicts are mainly from the management of benefits, the management structure of the university which is independent and lacks systemic view. This also includes values that it is afraid of losing the university's reputation if these problems are out resulting in cumulative problems. Conflict management approach is to use peaceful negotiation instead of avoiding the conflicts, and the key factor in resolving conflicts is the role of the mediator. If the mediator is the top executive of the university, the conflict resolution is often reached quickly. Executives have to really learn their jobs and responsibilities, give policies to subordinates or related people, and assign work to suit people. In addition, there must be regular communication for all parties to know, and communication must be accurate by having all related party to be involved in achieving righteousness as well as to have reliability, transparency, and fairness.

7.2.6 Conflicts are normally happen in human society, which have different opinions. If the dispute parties cannot resolve the conflict by themselves, the mediator or a person who is responsible for resolving the conflict must choose the method which will best suit the context in order for the conflict to be resolved in a good way and not become the problem anymore.

### **7.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

7.3.1 This research was conducted in a cross-sectional research. With time constraints, this research may have incomplete data and information. Those who are interested in this research may take the issues of the problems and the conceptual framework to further study by using time series analysis method in order to obtain the more dimensional and in-depth data.

7.3.2. Due to the quantitative research conducted, the researchers tried to divide the similar proportions of the respondents between public and private universities. However, when collecting data, there was a problem in terms of the cooperation of private universities., resulting in data collected were lower than expected. Thus, the proportion of the public universities was twice that of private universities (16: 8). When considering the proportion of the respondents, there might be no differences. When considering the levels of the organization, however, the differences were found. Therefore, those interested in this research may further develop the new method of data collection so that the proportions between public and private universities are equal more than they were in this research.

7.3.3. Factors of causes, prevention, resolution of the conflicts in the conceptual framework were studied in a form of correlation. If interested people develop these variables to predictive variables and then find other dependent variables such as work stress, loyalty, and being a good member of the organization, it will make the future research completely have more dimension and benefits of the management in other dimensions.

7.3.4. With time constraints in qualitative research by using the in-depth interview, it might not be as appropriate as group discussions. Thus, interested people may adjust the technique of qualitative research for this issue in order to obtain the more depths of the results.

7.3.5. Due to data collection from private universities this research could collected data from the universities located in Bangkok only. Therefore, if interested people want to have a complete research, data collection from private universities in other provinces should be considered to analyze the new conceptual model and gain the different views.

## 8. References

- Azar, E. (1990). The management of protracted social conflicts: Theory and cases. UK: Dartmouth
- Chantavanich, S. (2010). Qualitative research methods (17<sup>th</sup> ed.). Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.
- Daniel, D. (2001). Conflict resolution. Sydney: McGraw-Hill.
- Duke, J. T. (1976). Conflict and power in social life. Provo Utah: Brigham Young University Press.
- Gross, M. A., & Guerrero, L. K. (2000). Managing conflict appropriately and effectively: An application of the competence model to rahim's organizational conflict styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(3), 200-226. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/199036514?accountid=32078>
- Kerdnawee, T. (2006). Conflict management of executives of public educational institution in Educational Service Area Office. Master's thesis, Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

- Kom Chad Luek. (2016). Predicting that the cause of dr. shot two dr. was from qualification examination. (18 May 2016). Retrieved from <http://www.komchadluek.net/news/crime/227904>
- Manager Online. (2012). Conflicts in the university (16 June 2012). Retrieved from <http://www.manager.co.th/AstvWeekend/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9550000073768>
- Nopparak, S. (2010). Conflict management. Retrieved on 8 July 2016, from <https://www.gotoknow.org/posts/26251>.
- Office of the Higher Education Commission. (2016). Number of instructors in universities in academic year 2016, second semester. Retrieved on 8 August 2017, from [http://www.info.mua.go.th/information/show\\_all\\_statdata\\_table.php?data\\_show=4](http://www.info.mua.go.th/information/show_all_statdata_table.php?data_show=4)
- Pneuman, R. W., & Bruehl, M. E. (1982). *Managing conflicts: A complete process-centered handbook*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.Publishing Company.
- Pukapan, P. (1999). *Conflict management*. Bangkok: Med Sai Printing.
- Rahim, M.A. & Bonoma, T.V. (1979). Managing organizational conflict: A model for diagnosis and intervention, *Psychological Reports*, 44, 36-48
- Rahim, M.A. (1985). A strategy for managing conflict in complex organizations. *Human Relations*, 38, 81-89
- Rahim, M.A. (1986). *Managing Conflict in Organizations*. New York: Preager.
- Saengnimnuan. S. (2001). *Leader personalities*. Bangkok: Book Bank Publisher.
- Sangmanee, W. (2001). *Organization and organizing* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Bangkok: Rabeang Thong Printing.
- Taweerat, P. (2000). *Research methods in behavioral science and social sciences* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Bangkok: Srinakharinwirot University.
- Tiyao, S. (2001). *Principles of management* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Bangkok: Thammasat Printing House.
- Wisalaporn, S. (1997). *Conflict: Management for creativity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Bangkok: Love & Lift Press