

MODEL OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES OF PROPHET (ﷺ)

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ABSTRACT

Delving into the conflict management model of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) presents a unique and insightful perspective on resolving conflicts. This analytical review explores the strategies by studying the conflict resolution strategies of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), we can gain a deeper understanding of the importance of empathy, communication, and diplomacy in resolving conflicts. His teachings and actions provide a timeless example of how to navigate disagreements and disputes with wisdom, compassion, and integrity. This analysis offers valuable insights that can be applied to modern-day conflict resolution practices, highlighting the enduring relevance of his methods in promoting peace and harmony. Moreover, examining the historical context in which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) implemented his conflict resolution strategies allows us to appreciate the cultural sensitivity, contextual awareness, and strategic foresight he demonstrated in various situations. By delving deeper into the nuances of his interactions and decisions, we can extract nuanced lessons that transcend time and hold relevance in contemporary conflict resolution frameworks.

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INTRODUCTION

The term Islam is etymologically derived from the word 'Silm' (M'aluf, 1976, p.347), which signifies peace and happiness in both this life and the hereafter. It stands as the sole revealed religion acknowledged by Allah, the Creator of the entire universe. Through the revelation of the Holy Quran, Islam provides guidance for all human actions, encompassing personal conduct as well as international relations. Consequently, the concept of peace, alongside the inevitability of conflict, is also addressed within Islamic teachings. Notably, the origins of humanity, marked by the creation of Adam and Eve, illustrate the initial conflict between them and Satan (the devil). The Quran explicitly states that Allah declared their enmity. Since that time, human civilization has been characterized by ongoing conflicts, battles, and disputes. In response, Allah has provided comprehensive principles for conflict resolution, which are embedded in the Quran and the Hadith, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) conveyed these guidelines and exemplified their application in his own life when necessary. This demonstrates the practical aspects of Islamic teachings in resolving disputes, affirming the completeness of Islam as the ultimate religion of Allah, the Almighty.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based entirely on published secondary data and evidence, with a primary focus on historical documentation. The paper critically examines arguments both for and against various conflicts without altering the factual context. It avoids manipulating historical narratives and aims to investigate the contributions of the Prophet (ﷺ) to civilization, particularly in the realm of dispute resolution. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all aspects of conflict are covered due to the extensive scope of the topic. The study concentrates on specific conflict incidents during the Prophet's (ﷺ) life and the strategies he employed to address them. By analyzing the nature and characteristics of these conflicts, the author seeks to categorize the events into different types and evaluate the methods used by the Prophet (ﷺ) in relation to contemporary conflict resolution policies. Additionally, this paper is one of the few that explores this specific area, providing a new perspective for researchers.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The term "conflict" originates from the Latin word 'confligere', which translates to "to strike together" (Barash & Webel, 2002). Thus, conflict can be interpreted in both positive and negative contexts. However, it is conventionally associated with a negative connotation, as it is impossible for multiple physical entities to occupy the same space without necessitating a new position for each. From this perspective, conflict is characterized as 'a prolonged battle or collision,' 'the opposition of mutually exclusive impulses, desires, or tendencies,' and 'a controversy or disagreement' (Weeks, 1992). In essence, it reflects a state of hostility, discord in actions and feelings, among other aspects (Monjur, 2011).

Conflict is a multifaceted phenomenon in human interactions, often described using various synonymous terms such as fight, battle, clash, war, disagreement, impasse, destruction, fear, dispute, debate, avoidance, hatred, and wrongdoing. It is defined as the incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties within a relationship, accompanied by attempts to exert control over one another and feelings of antagonism (Fisher, 1990).

Despite its common perception as a negative experience, conflict is inherently neutral; it possesses the capacity for significant destruction and substantial creativity, as well as positive social transformation (Kriesberg, 1998). Optimists may view conflict favorably under certain circumstances, offering a fresh perspective on its role in human civilization (Ojo et al. 2010).

Dudley Weeks (1992), a renowned American expert in conflict studies, articulated a novel perspective on conflict, stating, "Indeed, conflict can serve as one of the engines of personal development and social evolution, generating opportunities to learn from and adapt to the diversities and differences that are natural and healthy characteristics of our society. Conflict can bring out into the open alternative ways of thinking and behaving. It can challenge us to manage our lives in ways that utilize our differences for mutual growth and benefit".

Conflict manifests in various forms and occurs across multiple levels of human interaction. Due to the inherent diversity of human nature and societal structures, conflict assumes a multitude of characteristics and dimensions. It is, in essence, a byproduct of the variations found within human society, culture, traditions, and rituals. Conflict arises as a natural consequence of differing beliefs and values, as well as disparities in attitudes and perceptions that compete for socio-economic and political interests among individuals, social classes, ethnic groups, and nations (Rashid, 2005).

Daniel Katz, an early theorist in the field of conflict, developed a typology that identifies three primary sources of conflict: economic, value-based, and power-related (Katz, 1965, pp. 356-390). Based on these distinctions, various types of conflict can be observed in society, including interpersonal conflict, role conflict, inter-group conflict, multi-party conflict, and international conflict (Fisher, R.). Some scholars categorize conflicts into two main types: manifest conflict, which occurs within individuals or between groups, often referred to as social conflict encompassing disputes related to family, culture, community, and religion, and underlying conflict (Rashid, 2005). Conflict resolution encompasses a variety of strategies aimed at eliminating the root causes of conflict or mitigating its severity, as well as the processes involved in settling disputes between parties. This approach typically unfolds in three stages: first, prevention; second, reduction of conflict intensity; and finally, achieving a resolution (Rashid, 2005). The phrase "conflict resolution" is often used interchangeably with terms such as Conflict Management, Conflict Settlement, Dispute Resolution, and Alternative Dispute

Resolution (ADR), among others. Despite some distinctions, these terms are generally employed synonymously to foster peace and well-being by addressing conflicts, debates, and wars.

Given that conflicts vary significantly in nature, type, and context, it is evident that a singular method or policy is insufficient to address all issues. Different conflicts necessitate distinct and tailored approaches. Consequently, a multitude of methods has been developed for this purpose. Conflicts can be resolved through various means, including violence, the evolution of issues over time, or through mutual agreement (Barash & Webel, 2002). Currently, key methods and practices employed by peacemakers include toleration, avoidance, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, coercion (Rashid, 2005), collaborative law, conciliation, litigation, and diplomacy. Among these, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration are recognized as traditional methods for dispute resolution (Weeks, 1992).

STRATEGIES FROM LIFE OF HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (ﷺ)

Muhammad (ﷺ), the Prophet of Islam, serves as an exemplary figure and a model for all humanity. He established himself as the legislator of Islamic principles and practices through his words and actions. The Islamic ideology cannot be fully comprehended without his traditions, which encompass his sayings, actions, and approvals. Islam provides a comprehensive framework for human behavior and conduct, drawing from its two primary sources: the Quran and Hadith. Therefore, from the Islamic perspective, Hadith, which offers a thorough interpretation of the Quran, plays a crucial role in developing new solutions.

While exploring for the solutions of burning issues of peace and conflict, we find a range of traditions alongside the teachings of the Quran. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) led his community toward achieving true peace, skillfully resolving various disputes through his many speeches and actions. Scholars have drawn the Islamic understanding of peace and conflict from these teachings, which are primarily reflected in his sayings, as he provided guidance to the 'Ummah' on numerous occasions.

Additionally, other traditions are based on the actions of Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) actions, which are mainly documented in the Books of Sirah. Throughout his 63 years, Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) faced numerous conflicts that impacted his personal relationships as well as his governmental and international interactions. The contemporary context and the rise of a new religion added further complexity to these situations. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) addressed these challenges with innovative strategies that impressed his contemporaries and continue to resonate today (Qasim, 2014). His efforts, made around 1400 years ago, are viewed by Islamic scholars as enduring examples of effective conflict resolution. Traditional methods and current research in peace and conflict studies further highlight his remarkable contributions. A comprehensive analysis of his peace initiatives offers insights that can be applied to modern conflict resolution strategies, with necessary adjustments. This discussion emphasizes some of the Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) approaches to dispute management and assesses their relevance to today's conflict resolution policies.

Coalition Against Injustice and Oppression

One of the most significant conflict resolution strategies in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was actively involved is known as Hilf al-Fudul, an alliance formed to bring an end to the Harb al-Fijar, or the sacrilegious wars, among the Arab tribes. This conflict earned the designation of 'sacrilegious' due to its occurrence during the sacred months when warfare is prohibited, involving the Kinana and Quraish tribes against the Qays Aylan tribe. As previously mentioned, the battles unfolded in four phases, with the final confrontation taking place when the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was just twenty years old, prior to his Prophethood. During this last battle, he assisted his uncle by collecting arrows shot by the adversaries for reuse. The hostilities concluded with the establishment of the alliance of fudul, which was formalized four months after the last fijar war. The catalyst for this pact was an incident involving As bin Wa'il, who purchased goods from a traveler from Zabid but subsequently refused to pay the agreed price. The traveler, seeking assistance, called out for help at the Ka'abah, prompting Zubair bin Abdul Muttalib to convene a meeting at the residence of Abdullahi bin Jud'an, attended by prominent figures from the Quraish and other tribes, including the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They collectively established a pact, swearing by Allah to support the oppressed, prevent injustice, refrain from shameful acts, halt killings, and protect the vulnerable, including strangers and

neighbors, while upholding the rights of all individuals. Following this meeting, they preceded to As bin Wa'il's residence, confiscated the goods, and returned them to the rightful owner. In a similar instance, another pilgrim from Kath'am, accompanied by his middle-aged daughter Qatul, sought help when Nabih bin Hajjaj abducted her. The man appealed to the members of the fudul, who intervened at Nabih's home, rescued the young woman, and reunited her with her father. (Al-Mubarkpuri, 2002).

The coalition of al-Fudul, to which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) made significant contributions, represented a significant shift away from the pre-Islamic tribal conflicts known as *fijar*. This event underscores the effectiveness of forming alliances as a means to promote peace and counteract the injustices and tyranny that frequently result in corruption, violence, disorder, and warfare, as observed among the various tribes of pre-Islamic Arabia. In conclusion, the al-Fudul alliance was regarded as a distinguished and honorable agreement among the Arabs, which successfully put an end to the prolonged bloodshed that had plagued them.

Arbitration

Arbitration served as a significant method employed by the Prophet (ﷺ) to prevent and resolve conflicts. Throughout his life, he applied this approach in various circumstances, successfully restoring peace and harmony among individuals. A prominent instance of the Prophet's arbitration occurred when he was 35 years old, five years prior to his Prophethood, during the reconstruction of the Ka'abah (Rehmani et al. 2014).

After several events had compromised the integrity of the Ka'abah's walls, the Quraish tribe resolved to demolish and rebuild it. The reconstruction efforts were allocated among different tribes, with each tribe assigned a specific section to ensure shared honor in this esteemed task. The process proceeded smoothly until the moment of placing the Black Stone, at which point a dispute arose regarding which tribe would be honored with this task. The contention escalated to the brink of violence when Abu Umayyah Ibn al-Mughirah al-Makhzumi, the eldest among them, suggested that the decision be left to the first person to enter the mosque, a proposal that was unanimously accepted. By divine providence, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was the first to enter, prompting the crowd to exclaim "Al-Amin!" (the trustworthy). Upon learning of their disagreement and proposed solution, he requested a mantle, upon which he placed the Black Stone. He then instructed the leaders of the tribes to collectively lift the mantle, which they did. When they reached the designated spot for the stone, he personally placed it in position, thereby averting potential bloodshed among his tribesmen through the application of wise and equitable arbitration (Ibn Hisham, 2000).

Following the migration and the establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) consistently employed arbitration as a means of resolving conflicts among various groups and individuals. In instances requiring reconciliation, the Prophet (ﷺ) promptly intervened to act as an arbiter between the conflicting parties. Al-Bukhari (1997) documented an occasion when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) traveled to Quba to mediate a dispute among the townspeople, who had escalated their disagreements to the point of throwing stones at one another. In another instance, a conflict arose within the Bani Amr Bin Awf tribe, prompting the Messenger of Allah, accompanied by some of his Sahabah (Companions), to intervene and resolve the issue. The arbitration process was lengthy, leading to Abu Bakr Siddiq taking the lead in prayer due to the Prophet's (ﷺ) prolonged absence. Additionally, an illustration of the Prophet Muhammad's arbitration approach at the individual level can be observed in a dispute that occurred in the Prophet's Masjid between Ka'ab bin Malik and Abdullahi Bin Abu Hadrad al-Salami, where the former sought repayment of a debt from the latter. Upon hearing their raised voices, the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed Ka'ab to forgive half of the debt and directed Bin Abu Hadrad to pay the remaining half, a resolution that both parties accepted, thus concluding the dispute (Al-Bukhari, 1997).

Tolerance and Patience

The management of conflicts by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was characterized by his remarkable tolerance and patience. His ability to remain composed in the face of hostility from his adversaries often served as a deterrent to potential conflicts. This is particularly evident during the formative years of Islam when the Pagan Quraish subjected him and his followers to severe persecution. For instance, while the Prophet (ﷺ) was engaged in Prayer, Uqbah Bin Abu Mu'ayt placed a camel's placenta on his back during prostration. The Prophet (ﷺ) maintained his position until his daughter, Fatimah, came to remove it. The Quraish present reacted with such laughter that they fell over one another in amusement. On another occasion, while the Prophet (ﷺ) was praying

near the Ka'abah, Uqbah Bin Abu Mu'ayt wrapped his cloak around the Prophet's neck, choking him until Abubakar intervened to save him. Additionally, when the Quraish leaders were gathered outside the Ka'abah, they spoke ill of the Prophet (ﷺ) as he approached. He chose to walk past them and circumambulated the Ka'abah three times, enduring their insults without retaliation. The following day, the same leaders confronted him again, and one of them seized his cloak. It was Abubakar al-Siddiq who once more came to the Prophet's defense, challenging their aggression against him for merely proclaiming the oneness of God. Throughout these incidents, the Prophet (ﷺ) consistently chose to forgive and continued his mission of preaching. His non-retaliatory stance, along with the patience exhibited by him and his followers, played a crucial role in preventing conflicts between the Muslims and the Pagan Quraish during the early days of Islam.

The companions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who embraced Islam endured severe persecution at the hands of the Pagan Quraish. The primary instigator of this inhumane treatment was Abu Jahal, the chief of the Quraish, who incited hostility towards the new converts. Upon learning of a new believer, he would take actions that varied based on the individual's social standing. For those of noble lineage, he would attempt to tarnish their reputation within society, while for traders, he would undermine their businesses. Conversely, if the convert belonged to a lower socio-economic background, he would resort to physical violence and incite the community against them. Abu Jahal encouraged each clan to take part in the torment of their own members who had converted, subjecting them to beatings, deprivation of food and water, imprisonment, and exposure to the extreme heat of Makkah. Some individuals were so starved that they could not maintain an upright position due to their frailty. Umayyah Bin Khalaf would lay Bilal on the searing sands of Makkah, placing a heavy stone on his chest. An-Nahdiyyah and her daughter faced severe abuse from their mistress, while Umar Bin al-Khattab, prior to his conversion, would mercilessly beat a female slave of Banu Mu'ammal until he grew weary. The Banu Makhzum clan subjected Ammar, along with his father Yasir and mother Sumayyah, to torture for their acceptance of Islam in the harsh environment of Makkah. Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) encountered them, he urged them to remain steadfast. Sumayyah ultimately lost her life for her refusal to renounce her faith (Ibn Hisham, 2000). In spite of the brutal treatment faced by the early Muslims, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) never encouraged them to seek revenge; rather, he advised them to exercise patience, assuring them that paradise awaited them as a reward for their endurance.

He additionally requested that some individuals relocate to Abyssinia, known today as Ethiopia, to escape potential torture and conflicts. This action significantly contributed to reducing violence between the early Muslims and the Pagan Quraish in Makkah.

Pacts and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Prior to the migration of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to Madinah, the prominent tribes of Awz and Khazraj that resided in the city were engaged in ongoing conflicts with one another. Additionally, the Jewish tribes of Qainuqa, Nadhir, and Quraiza had established their quarters in the outskirts of Madinah. Following his migration and the subsequent acceptance of Islam by nearly all clans of the Awz and Khazraj tribes, the Prophet formulated a pact aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence, mutual support, and camaraderie among the Muhajirun (Immigrants), the Ansar (residents of Madinah), and the Jewish tribes. This agreement significantly contributed to the harmonious coexistence of various tribes, clans, and religious groups within the emerging Islamic state of Madinah. The pact between the Muhajirun and Ansar was formalized in the residence of Anas bin Malik. Its provisions included mutual respect, kindness towards one another, and the promotion of peace among Muslims. In addition to establishing a charter of brotherhood among Muslims, the Prophet (ﷺ) also created a framework for amicable relations and peaceful coexistence between Muslims and the non-Muslim tribes of Arabia, with the objective of eliminating the remnants of pre-Islamic animosity and inter-tribal strife. Furthermore, he instituted a well-defined treaty with the non-Muslim residents of Madinah, predominantly Jews, which granted them religious freedom along with essential rights and responsibilities (Ibn Kathir, 2006; Al-Mubarakpuri, 2002). In a similar vein, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) initiated a memorandum of understanding (MoU) established with neighboring non-Muslim communities surrounding Madinah (Rehmani & Hussaini, 2014) played a significant role in fostering a peaceful atmosphere. The agreements and MoUs initiated by the Prophet (ﷺ) among Muslims, non-Muslims, and adjacent communities contributed to reconciliation, harmonious relations, and prosperity within the newly formed Islamic State of Madinah and its surroundings. These treaties were instrumental in reducing hostility and threats to peaceful coexistence,

promoting unity with non-Muslims, and encouraging inter-community collaboration. They also facilitated the emergence of a central authority, prohibited violence, and prevented aggression and killings, thereby enhancing overall security among diverse races, tribes, and religious groups. This was a pivotal achievement in establishing sustainable peace and harmony, not only for the community during the Prophet's (ﷺ) lifetime but also for future generations (Rehmani & Hussaini, 2014). Consequently, Arabia became a secure and unified region under the Prophet's (ﷺ) leadership, allowing Muslims to navigate freely and safely through non-Muslim territories and vice versa. For instance, in Khaibar, predominantly inhabited by the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadhir, known for their historical animosity towards Islam, some Companions of the Prophet were able to move about the town without restriction following their treaty with the Muslims (Al-Bukhari, 1997).

Compromise

Compromise is defined as an agreement reached in a dispute where the involved parties reduce their demands or relinquish certain requests to achieve a state of harmony through mutual acceptance of modified terms, which often diverge from their initial objectives. As a strategic approach to conflict management, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) utilized compromise to prevent and resolve crises and misunderstandings. Historical accounts indicate that on numerous occasions, the Prophet (ﷺ) negotiated, adjusted, and made concessions regarding his demands and aspirations to either settle or avert conflicts. A notable instance of this was the interaction between him and the Pagan Quraish at Hudaibiyyah, which resulted in a treaty that ultimately required him to accept terms contrary to his original goals. One significant goal he compromised was his desire to perform Umrah (the lesser pilgrimage) in Makkah. According to Al-Bukhari (1997), the Messenger of Allah intended to reach Makkah for Umrah, but the Pagan Quraish obstructed his access to the Ka'abah. Consequently, he (ﷺ) sacrificed his animal and shaved his head at al-Hudaibiyyah, agreeing with them to perform the pilgrimage the following year for a duration of three days. Furthermore, the treaty stipulated that no one would be permitted to accompany him from Makkah, regardless of their wishes, while any of his followers wishing to return to Makkah would be allowed to do so. The Prophet (ﷺ) consented to these terms, and Ali Bin Abi Talib documented the treaty accordingly.

Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. The acceptance of the document was contingent upon the Prophet's removal of the title "Messenger of Allah," which he did willingly, leading to a peaceful resolution. In the subsequent year, he (ﷺ) undertook the umrah pilgrimage, and after spending three days in Makkah, the Quraish requested his departure from the city, which he complied with in accordance with the treaty's stipulations.

These events illustrate the power of compromise in preventing and resolving conflicts, as exemplified by a leader who, rather than resorting to force to achieve his goals, opted for a concession to avoid confrontation with his adversaries. This approach effectively prevented violence between the Muslims and the pagan Quraish, culminating in a truce that endured for several years, during which both parties coexisted in safety and mutual respect.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness serves as a significant approach employed by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in preventing and resolving disputes, and it is also a characteristic trait that led many of his adversaries to embrace Islam. The Almighty Allah instructs the Prophet (ﷺ) to practice forgiveness as a means to win over opponents and to prevent violence. The Qur'an states: "Show forgiveness, enjoin Al-'Urf (the good), and turn away from the foolish (don't punish them). And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaytan, then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearer, All-Knower." (al-Qur'an, Surat al-Ma'idah, CH7:V199-200).

CONCLUSION

This study provides a concise analysis and classification of various practical approaches employed by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in conflict management, both prior to his Prophethood in Makkah and during his prophetic mission in the Makkah and Madinah periods. The findings indicate that the strategies he implemented were effective in mitigating the rampant violence of his time, demonstrating their relevance in addressing inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria, given the parallels in the underlying causes and consequences of both situations, as well as the nature of the involved parties. Furthermore, the research reveals that Islam allows Muslims to collaborate with non-Muslims to combat injustice, as illustrated by the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ). This serves as a valuable lesson for all Muslims in their efforts to address the ongoing issues of injustice, tyranny, and inter-religious strife within their nation.

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