MODERATING EFFECT OF GENDER ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management and conflict management effectiveness among senior staff in selected public universities in South-West Nigeria. Grounded in theoretical frameworks such as the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, the study explored how key dimensions of knowledge management—acquisition, sharing, creation, and retention—influence the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies, and whether these relationships vary by gender. A descriptive survey design was employed, with data collected from 428 senior academic and non-academic staff across six public universities. Multiple regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between knowledge management practices and conflict management effectiveness. Knowledge retention was identified as the strongest predictor, followed by knowledge sharing and acquisition. However, gender as a moderating variable did not have a statistically significant effect on the relationship, indicating that knowledge management strategies are generally effective across genders. Nonetheless, perceptual differences were observed, with female respondents reporting a higher perceived impact of knowledge management on conflict resolution. These findings highlight the importance of inclusive, gender-sensitive knowledge management practices to enhance conflict resolution outcomes in academic institutions.

*Keywords: knowledge management**, c**onflict management, effectiveness, public universities*

INTRODUCTION

The management of conflict within organizations has generated considerable scholarly discourse. Conflicts—whether arising from resource allocation, task responsibilities, or interpersonal relations—are virtually inevitable in complex organizational systems (Rahim, 2023). Therefore, effective conflict management strategies are vital for maintaining organizational integrity and performance. Various models and frameworks have been developed to address the complexities of organizational conflict across diverse settings, including Rahim's (2002) organizational conflict model, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974), the Interest-Based Relational Approach (Fisher et al., 2011), and the Dynamic Conflict Model (Barki & Hartwick, 2004).

Public universities in South-West Nigeria have faced various conflicts and resolution procedures that have adversely affected institutional calendars and academic programmes. It is pertinent to note that effective conflict management is crucial for maintaining a conducive learning environment and promoting academic excellence. Knowledge management—which involves the creation, sharing, and utilization of knowledge—can play a vital role in navigating the conflict management process within tertiary institutions.

Drawing from empirical findings by previous researchers, effective conflict management is essential in mitigating these consequences through knowledge management. This includes creating and sharing knowledge, identifying and leveraging expertise, facilitating collaboration and innovation, and fostering a culture of peace necessary for continuous learning (Oyewumi, 2020; Adekunle, 2018). Knowledge Management (KM) is a critical and transformative concept that has attracted significant scholarly attention. Its origins can be traced to the late 20th century, during the information age, when organizations began to recognize that knowledge—unlike other finite resources—offers sustainable competitive advantages when managed effectively (Gao et al., 2018; Dahiya et al., 2022). Across various sectors, including healthcare, technology, and government, KM practices have been implemented with varying degrees of success due to their potential to foster innovation, enhance productivity, and facilitate effective decision-making (Abubakar et al., 2019; Abbas et al., 2020).

The problem of conflict management has remained a concern among organizational behaviourists and human resource management practitioners. Despite the recognized importance of effective conflict management in tertiary institutions, conflicts continue to pose significant challenges in South-West Nigeria, with adverse effects on academic programmes, staff morale, and institutional reputation. While KM has been acknowledged as a crucial factor in enhancing organizational performance, its specific role in conflict management effectiveness within Nigerian tertiary institutions remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of knowledge management on conflict management effectiveness in universities in South-West Nigeria. The goal is to identify strategies to improve conflict management practices and promote a culture of peace. Currently, many tertiary institutions in South-West Nigeria lack a systematic approach to leveraging KM practices to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts, resulting in frequent disruptions and ineffective resolution mechanisms.

The persistence of these conflicts—despite numerous interventions—highlights a significant gap in the existing conflict management strategies employed by these institutions. Additionally, the literature rarely addresses the influence of gender on conflict management within academic contexts, leaving an important area underexplored. Specifically, there is limited understanding of how gender differences among senior staff may influence perceptions of, and outcomes from, conflict management strategies (Gbadamosi et al., 2014).

Hence, this study seeks to examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management and conflict management effectiveness. The null hypothesis is there is no significant interactive effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management metrics and conflict management effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Management

Pollard and Kumar (2022) argued that the term *knowledge management* is often insufficient, as many programs labeled as such focus solely on information management. These programs typically emphasize the coding, storage, and dissemination of information (Nworie, 2022). An organization's ability to utilize and leverage knowledge depends largely on its human resources, who are responsible for generating, disseminating, and applying knowledge (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). The exchange and synthesis of knowledge derived from others are crucial for effective knowledge utilization (González-Piñero et al., 2021). The importance of knowledge sharing for interconnectedness at both individual and organizational levels is well recognized (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). However, a significant amount of organizational knowledge resides at the individual level, often acquired and refined through daily activities and responsibilities.

Abbas et al. (2020) proposed that humans naturally employ intuitive filtering mechanisms when evaluating the psychological processes involved in knowledge sharing. They identified situations in which individuals are hesitant to disclose information, particularly when perceptions of reliability are subjective and depend on coworkers' ability to handle commercially sensitive material. Andrews and Delahaye (2000) emphasized that the psychosocial component is a critical determinant in individuals' willingness to contribute their expertise, especially in the development of research services. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), organizational learning results from a holistic process of knowledge transfer. This process includes the active pursuit and creation of novel and previously unknown knowledge, encompassing various forms of knowledge exchange between individuals and organizations.

Knowledge management involves the discovery, creation, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge. Its principles emphasize the need for organizations to "know what they know." All businesses inherently store, access, and deliver knowledge in specific ways. Knowledge is essential for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Awan and Jabbar (2019), as well as Ahmed and Mohamed (2017), noted that proper knowledge management improves organizational performance across both public and private sectors. They further stressed that retaining and properly training employees not only enhances their skills but also builds their confidence.

Conflict Management

The concept of conflict management (CM) has traditionally been associated with conflict containment and resolution. CM refers to the discipline of recognizing conflict and addressing it in a fair, effective, and constructive manner. This process requires skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, and interest-based negotiation (Gordon, 2024). The ultimate goal of conflict resolution is to eliminate affective conflict, maintain a moderate level of substantive conflict, and apply optimal strategies to enhance workplace productivity.

Effective conflict management in educational institutions requires appropriate leadership styles from school administrators or chief executives. Demers, as cited in Magagula (2017), outlined three peaceful strategies for resolving crises among conflicting parties: mediation, arbitration, and

reconciliation. Magagula (2017) suggested that these strategies could be adopted by universities to resolve conflicts among aggrieved groups. Furthermore, conflict communication within schools should be free from propaganda and cognitive discrepancy.

Cognitive discrepancy arises when conflicting groups develop entirely opposing interpretations of the causes and circumstances surrounding the conflict. Messages based on propaganda and cognitive distortion often give rise to rumors, mislead third-party stakeholders, and hinder conflict resolution efforts. Literature shows that third parties are more likely to sympathize with victims of misinformation rather than with the source of falsehoods (Bray, 1999). Communicators involved in school crisis management should not conceal the truth. Their messages of peace, assurances of restoration, and promises of cooperation must be sincere and transparent (Agbonna & Okafor, 2018). Conflict negotiators must possess the personality and credibility to convince and reassure all parties of the sincerity and fairness of the resolution process.

Aluede (2021) recommended, among other measures, greater student involvement in decision-making processes as a way to reduce campus unrest. Ladipo (1997) emphasized that effective leadership is critical to preventing crises in educational institutions. Nigerian leaders and administrators of tertiary institutions must create platforms for dialogue and the development of non-violent, widely accepted conflict management strategies. Preventive approaches should be prioritized over curative measures. Additionally, conflict managers must personally value peace to effectively persuade disputing parties toward resolution.

Theoretical Framework: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)
The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), developed by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann (1974), is a widely recognized tool for assessing individual behavior in conflict situations. It outlines five conflict-handling modes along two dimensions: assertiveness and cooperativeness. According to Thomas and Kilmann (1974), no single conflict-handling mode is universally effective; instead, the appropriateness of each mode depends on the specific context of the conflict.

In the context of senior staff at public universities in South-West Nigeria, the TKI offers a valuable framework for examining how knowledge management influences the selection and effectiveness of conflict management strategies. Knowledge management may empower individuals with the information and insight needed to choose the most suitable approach to conflict resolution. For example, a well-established knowledge management system may encourage collaborative conflict resolution by providing access to institutional knowledge that supports mutual understanding and problem-solving (Folger et al., 2021).
TKI is particularly relevant to the study of how knowledge management affects conflict resolution. Singh et al. (2021) argued that knowledge management involves systematically finding, selecting, organizing, and presenting information to enhance understanding in a specific domain. In academic institutions where senior staff are tasked with complex decision-making responsibilities that impact faculty, students, and governance, effective KM can play a significant role in conflict mitigation (Girard, 2006). By managing knowledge effectively, universities can ensure informed decisions based on accurate and current data, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict escalation.

The TKI framework allows for an analysis of how knowledge management directly impacts conflict resolution strategies. For instance, when senior staff have access to detailed knowledge of institutional policies, past conflict outcomes, and the nuances of ongoing disputes, they are more equipped to engage in collaborative problem-solving that satisfies all stakeholders

(Rahim, 2023). Furthermore, knowledge management can support competing and accommodating conflict-handling styles. Armed with contextual knowledge, senior staff can better identify opportunities for compromise or understand when accommodation aligns with long-term institutional goals (Anastassiu et al., 2016). Thus, the TKI model helps contextualize how senior staff in public universities in South-West Nigeria manage conflict using available knowledge resources.

Empirical Review

Osazevbaru and Osyande (2022) investigated the effect of knowledge management on the performance of deposit-money banks in Nigeria. Their findings showed that knowledge transformation significantly enhanced employee performance, suggesting that organizations should promote robust knowledge management practices.

Harb et al. (2023) explored the impact of knowledge management on employee performance and empowerment in higher education institutions. Their study revealed that exploration-related KM practices had a significant positive effect on both performance and empowerment. Exploitative KM practices also contributed to empowerment and indirectly improved performance.

Traditionally, conflict management institutions have involved both men and women, though women often lag behind men in terms of representation for various reasons. Shepherd (2015) noted that while women have historically contributed to peace and security, their efforts are often outside formal systems such as military decision-making and international dispute resolution. He stressed the need to include women in both formal and informal processes that shape post-conflict resolution mechanisms. Currier (as cited in Brahnam et al., 2005) supported this perspective, noting that women frequently organize through grassroots activism, non-profit organizations, and informal networks, despite limited involvement in official conflict resolution efforts.

Benharda, Brett, and Lempereur (2013) examined the role of gender in conflict management. Their findings indicated that women's leadership strengths—particularly collaboration and participation—could lead to unique outcomes, especially when they have less authority over disputants. Bayu (2020) also emphasized that women have played critical roles in both wartime and peacetime as community organizers and activists.

Shepherd (2015) further argued that dismantling gender-based assumptions and ensuring women's inclusion in conflict resolution structures is essential. Birkhoff (2012) affirmed that gender influences conflict dynamics at both societal and individual levels. Echoing this sentiment, Kofi Annan (2005, as cited in Manchanda, 2012) asserted, "Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men." This aligns with the view that the involvement of both genders is vital to successful conflict management outcomes. UN Women (2012) also emphasized that almost all structural causes of conflict have gender dimensions that must be addressed.

The consensus in the literature is that fair gender representation in conflict management is crucial, as both men and women bring distinct perspectives that can enrich the process. According to the World Bank (2012), investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock transformative human potential. The following interview excerpt underscores the need for balanced gender representation in conflict resolution:

> *It is good we have fair representation. Exactly, because we are not the same—the women differ from us; the men also differ from the women. Yes, maybe our levels of understanding also differ from each other, so when the man thinks of violence, he may be calmed down*

by the woman. Men may be ready to fight while women will calm them down—or women may escalate the issue, and men may calm it down. Anything can happen. So, if gender balances, then we can manage the conflicts very well. (5th November 2019)

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The research was conducted in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria, which comprises Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Oyo, and Ekiti States. Six (6) universities were selected for the study. Senior academic and non-teaching staff from the selected public universities served as the respondents.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. First, stratified sampling was used to select three (3) states: Ogun, Ondo, and Osun. From each selected state, one federal and one state university were conveniently selected. Accordingly, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and Osun State University, Osogbo, were selected from Osun State. The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, were selected from Ogun State, while the Federal University of Technology, Akure, and Ondo State University of Medical Sciences, Ondo, were selected from Ondo State.

Finally, a proportionate sampling method was used to randomly select 428 respondents from a total population of 3,913 senior staff across the selected universities. The sample was determined based on the proportion of staff in each institution.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire developed in alignment with the study's objectives. The questionnaire items covered all key variables under investigation.

Table 1   Reliability Statistics Result

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
.883	23

Reliability test result reveals that the research instrument is reliable as Cronbach Alpha shows 0.883 (88.3%)

The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections of demographic information, Knowledge Management scales and Conflict Management scales. The descriptive data collected were analysed using frequency distributions and percentage while the formulated hypothesis was subjected to multiple regression analyses.

Table 2 Showing Population Sample and Questionnaire Distribution

S/N	State	University	No of Senior Academic staff	No of Senior Non-teaching staff	Total	(%)	Questionnaire Distributed and collected
1	Osun State	(OAU), Ile-Ife, (Federal)	869	570	1439	35	149
		(UNIOSUN) Osogbo, Osun State (State)	608	140	820	21	90
2	Ondo State	(FUTA), Akure, Ondo State (Federal)	424	263	687	19	81
		(UNIMED), Ondo, Ondo State (State)	99	54	153	4	17
3	Ogun State	(FUNNAB), Abeokuta, Ogun State (Federal)	400	221	621	16	68
		(OOU), Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State (State)	126	67	193	5	21
		TOTAL			**3913**	**100**	**428**

RESULTS

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
(Senior Academic staff from the Selected Universities)

Characteristics	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age (Years)	35 - 44	174	40.7
	45 - 54	145	33.9
	55 - 64	83	19.4
	65 - 74	24	5.6
	75+	2	.5
	Total	**428**	**100.0**
Gender	Male	261	61.0
	Female	167	39.0
	Total	**428**	**100.0**
Marital Status	Single	37	8.6
	Married	365	85.3
	Divorced	20	4.7
	Widowed	6	1.4
	Total	**428**	**100.0**
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's	123	28.7
	Master's	108	25.2
	Ph.D.	174	40.7
	Other	23	5.4
	Total	**428**	**100.0**
Status	Senior Lecturer	88	20.6
	Associate Professor	47	11.0
	Professor	40	9.3
	Other	253	59.1
	Total	**428**	**100.0**
Work Experience	10-15 years	204	47.7
	16-20 years	143	33.4
	21-25 years	58	13.6
	More than 25 years	23	5.4
	Total	**428**	**100.0**

Source: *Authors' Computation, 2025*

The analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of senior academic staff from selected universities reveals several key patterns. The majority of respondents (40.7%) are aged 35–44, indicating a dominance of early to mid-career professionals, while those aged 45–54 (33.9%) represent more advanced career stages. Gender distribution shows a male majority (61.0%), suggesting a potential gender imbalance in senior academic roles. This sampling bias is acknowledged, and further studies with more balanced gender and age representation are recommended. Most respondents (85.3%) are married, indicating a possible link between marital stability and career progression. A substantial proportion (40.7%) hold Ph.D. degrees, reflecting the educational requirements for senior academic positions. Regarding professional status, a majority (59.1%) fall into the "Other" category—likely including lecturers and adjunct staff—while Senior Lecturers (20.6%), Associate Professors (11.0%), and Professors (9.3%) occupy clearly defined senior roles. Trends in work experience show a predominantly mid-career workforce, with nearly half (47.7%) having 10–15 years of experience. Overall, the findings highlight a well-qualified but gender-imbalanced workforce, largely composed of mid-career professionals.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant moderating effect of gender on relationship between knowledge management metric and conflict management effectiveness.

Table 4: *Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis showing the Moderating effect of Gender on relationship between Knowledge Management Metrics & Conflict Management Effectiveness*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.621[a]	.386	.380	5.82794	.386	66.360	4	423	.000
2	.621[b]	.386	.378	5.83477	.000	.010	1	422	.920

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Retention, Gender

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

The multiple regression analysis summarized in Table 4 evaluates the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management metrics (knowledge acquisition, sharing, creation, and retention) and conflict management effectiveness.

In **Model 1**, which excludes gender as a moderating variable, the correlation coefficient (R = 0.621) indicates a strong positive relationship between knowledge management metrics and conflict management effectiveness. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.386$) suggests that 38.6% of the variance in conflict management effectiveness is explained by the combined influence of the knowledge management metrics. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.380 further supports the model's robustness after adjusting for the number of predictors. The F-statistic (F = 66.360, p = 0.000) confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, emphasizing the relevance of knowledge management in predicting conflict management effectiveness.

In **Model 2**, gender as a moderating variable. However, the R-value (0.621) and R^2 value (0.386) remain unchanged, indicating that the inclusion of gender does not enhance the model's explanatory power. The adjusted R^2 decreases slightly to 0.378, suggesting a negligible impact on the model's overall fit. The R^2 change is 0.000, showing no increase in the proportion of variance explained with the addition of gender. Moreover, the F-change test (F = 0.010, p = 0.920) is not statistically significant, indicating that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between knowledge management metrics and conflict management effectiveness.

Table 5: *ANOVA table showing the Significance of the Predictors variables (inclusive and exclusive of Gender as the moderating variable) to the Regression model*

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9015.594	4	2253.898	66.360	.000[b]
	Residual	14367.161	423	33.965		
	Total	23382.755	427			
2	Regression	9015.942	5	1803.188	52.966	.000[c]
	Residual	14366.813	422	34.045		
	Total	23382.755	427			

a. Dependent Variable: Conflict Management Effectiveness
b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Creation and knowledge Retention
c. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Creation and knowledge Retention, Gender

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

The ANOVA results presented in Table 5 assess the significance of the predictors (knowledge management metrics) in the regression model, both with and without the inclusion of gender as a moderating variable.

Model 1 (Excluding Gender): The F-statistic is 66.360, with a significance level of p = 0.000. This indicates that the combined effect of the knowledge management metrics—knowledge acquisition, sharing, creation, and retention—on conflict management effectiveness is statistically significant.

Model 2 (Including Gender): The F-statistic is 52.966, also with a significance level of p = 0.000. This shows that even with the inclusion of gender as a predictor, the overall model remains statistically significant.

Table 6 : *Coefficient table of Multiple Regression Analysis showing the Contribution of each Knowledge Management Metrics to Conflict Management Effectiveness*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	22.999	2.777		8.283	.000
	Knowledge Acquisition	.375	.148	.116	2.524	.012
	Knowledge Sharing	.477	.133	.178	3.584	.000
	knowledge Retention	1.302	.087	.658	15.022	.000
	Knowledge Creation	.041	.106	.018	.385	.701
2	(Constant)	23.071	2.870		8.038	.000
	Knowledge Acquisition	.374	.149	.116	2.514	.012
	Knowledge Sharing	.477	.133	.179	3.579	.000
	knowledge Retention	1.304	.088	.659	14.778	.000
	Knowledge Creation	.040	.107	.018	.379	.705
	Gender	-.060	.591	-.004	-.101	.920

a. Dependent Variable: Conflict Management Effectiveness

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

The multiple regression analysis presented in Table 6 evaluates the contributions of knowledge management metrics—namely knowledge acquisition, sharing, retention, and creation—and gender to conflict management effectiveness. Two models are analyzed: Model 1 excludes gender, while Model 2 includes it as an additional predictor. The interpretations of each model are provided below.

Model 1: Excluding Gender
The analysis reveals the following:
- **Constant (B = 22.999):** This constant represents the baseline level of conflict management effectiveness when all predictors are zero. The value is statistically significant ($t = 8.283$, $p = 0.000$).
- **Knowledge Acquisition (B = 0.375, β = 0.116):** Knowledge acquisition has a positive and statistically significant contribution to conflict management effectiveness ($t = 2.524$, $p = 0.012$), although its relative effect is modest.
- **Knowledge Sharing (B = 0.477, β = 0.178):** Knowledge sharing has a moderate positive and significant impact on conflict management effectiveness ($t = 3.584$, $p = 0.000$).
- **Knowledge Retention (B = 1.302, β = 0.658):** Knowledge retention emerges as the strongest predictor, with a highly significant positive effect ($t = 15.022$, $p = 0.000$), indicating its critical role.
- **Knowledge Creation (B = 0.041, β = 0.018):** Knowledge creation shows a minimal and non-significant positive effect on conflict management effectiveness ($t = 0.385$, $p = 0.701$).

Model 2: Including Gender
When gender is introduced as a predictor, the results remain largely consistent with Model 1:
- **Constant (B = 23.071):** The baseline value remains statistically significant ($t = 8.038$, $p = 0.000$).
- **Knowledge Acquisition (B = 0.374, β = 0.116):** The positive and significant contribution of knowledge acquisition persists ($t = 2.514$, $p = 0.012$).
- **Knowledge Sharing (B = 0.477, β = 0.179):** The effect of knowledge sharing remains positive and statistically significant ($t = 3.579$, $p = 0.000$).
- **Knowledge Retention (B = 1.304, β = 0.659):** The strong and significant contribution of knowledge retention continues ($t = 14.778$, $p = 0.000$).
- **Knowledge Creation (B = 0.040, β = 0.018):** Knowledge creation still shows a minimal and non-significant effect ($t = 0.379$, $p = 0.705$).
- **Gender (B = −0.060, β = −0.004):** Gender does not significantly influence conflict management effectiveness ($t = −0.101$, $p = 0.920$), indicating it does not serve as a meaningful predictor or moderator.

Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0), which posits that gender has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between knowledge management metrics and conflict management effectiveness, is accepted, as the p-value for gender (0.920) is greater than 0.05.

DISCUSSION
The study examined the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management and conflict management effectiveness. The inclusion of gender as a moderating variable revealed no significant effect on this relationship. The model's explanatory power remained unchanged, suggesting that knowledge management practices are equally effective across genders. This finding aligns with studies such as Hossain and Wu (2009), which found no gender-based differences in knowledge management practices, though gender may indirectly influence attitudes toward collaborative practices.

From a theoretical standpoint, this result is well grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV), which conceptualizes knowledge as a strategic intangible asset that contributes to organizational effectiveness, regardless of individual-level demographic differences. According to RBV, an organization's ability to manage and apply knowledge effectively constitutes a Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable (VRIN) capability (Barney, 1991). The findings support this perspective by suggesting that the strategic value of knowledge management in resolving conflicts transcends gender-based attributes, reinforcing its role as a core organizational competency. Furthermore, Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) supports the observed findings by emphasizing the universal applicability of knowledge-sharing systems in fostering equitable organizational outcomes.

In contrast to the current findings, studies conducted in Scandinavian countries and parts of Western Europe have found gender to be a significant moderating variable in the implementation of knowledge management and collaborative decision-making. For example, Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) found that female managers in the UK were more likely to use knowledge-sharing tools effectively, particularly in conflict-prone or change-intensive environments. Similarly, von Krogh et al. (2012) reported that female leaders in Switzerland applied knowledge management systems in more nuanced and emotionally intelligent ways, leading to improved conflict resolution outcomes. These differences may be attributed to broader gender inclusiveness in workplace cultures and leadership styles in these regions, which empower women to engage more actively with knowledge management systems.

The hypothesis also tested gender differences in the perception of conflict management effectiveness based on knowledge management. An independent t-test revealed significant differences between male and female respondents. Female participants reported higher mean scores, indicating a greater perceived impact of knowledge management on conflict resolution. These results are consistent with research by Powell and Graves (2019), who suggest that women are more likely to value collaborative approaches and inclusive practices, which enhance their perception of conflict management effectiveness. Gender Role Theory (Eagly, 1987) provides further insight, proposing that societal norms shape how men and women approach conflict resolution and evaluate knowledge management practices.

Conversely, studies in East Asian countries—such as Japan and South Korea—present a somewhat different picture. Research by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) suggests that the effectiveness of knowledge management in these regions is influenced more by organizational collectivism and seniority systems than by gender. In such contexts, hierarchical respect and team cohesion take precedence over individual perceptions, rendering gender a less prominent factor in how knowledge management contributes to conflict resolution. This underscores that while the functional role of knowledge management is consistent globally, gendered perceptions and moderating effects are highly context-dependent.

Although the statistical analysis in this study found no significant moderating effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management and conflict management effectiveness, the perceptual differences between male and female respondents merit closer examination. This divergence, though not statistically significant in interaction terms, reflects underlying gendered experiences and expectations that quantitative models may not fully capture. The finding that women perceive knowledge management as more impactful calls for a contextualized explanation grounded in organizational theory, gender studies, and the knowledge systems literature.

One plausible interpretation lies in the differentiated organizational roles often occupied by women within academic institutions. Empirical studies indicate that women in higher education are more likely to hold teaching-intensive or administrative roles that emphasize interpersonal engagement, collaboration, and student-facing responsibilities (Morley, 2006; O'Connor, 2015). These roles typically require a high level of information coordination and reliance on institutional memory, making effective knowledge management systems not only beneficial but essential. Consequently, women may be more attuned to the presence—or absence—of knowledge management structures and more likely to evaluate their usefulness based on how well they support the relational and operational aspects of their work.

Moreover, women are often socialized to adopt a more relational and collaborative orientation to work, prioritizing mutual support, inclusivity, and collective problem-solving (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Fletcher, 1999). Knowledge management systems are designed to facilitate the sharing of information, promote transparency, and democratize access to institutional knowledge. For individuals with a relational work orientation, such systems are perceived not only as tools for efficiency but also as mechanisms that enhance organizational trust and cohesion. Women, therefore, may view knowledge management as more impactful because it aligns with and reinforces these relational values.

CONCLUSIONS

The study examined the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between knowledge management indicators and conflict management effectiveness. The findings suggest that gender does not significantly affect this relationship, indicating that knowledge management practices are equally effective across genders. However, perceptual differences between male and female respondents were observed, with female respondents reporting a greater perceived effectiveness of knowledge management in conflict resolution. This underscores the need for inclusive knowledge management approaches that incorporate diverse perspectives to enhance organizational performance.

The study does, however, have some limitations, including an unbalanced representation of gender and age groups. The sample was predominantly composed of mid-career male respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.
To address gender-based perceptual disparities, the study recommends that knowledge management systems be designed to incorporate a range of perspectives. Organizations should establish knowledge management steering groups or committees comprising a balanced mix of male and female staff from various departments and levels. These groups should be responsible for the design, dissemination, and evaluation of knowledge management initiatives related to conflict resolution.

In the university context, KM principles should be embedded in faculty induction programs, knowledge management training, gender-sensitive conflict resolution frameworks, and continuous professional development (CPD) initiatives. Conflict resolution strategies are more likely to be effective when implemented in an inclusive environment that values and incorporates the perspectives of all individuals.

In conclusion, while the study finds no statistically significant moderating effect of gender on the relationship between knowledge management and conflict management effectiveness, the observed gender-based perceptual differences remain noteworthy and warrant further exploration.

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