

Dynamics of Conflict Management Research in the Public and Private Sectors: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This bibliometric analysis explores the evolving landscape of conflict management research across various dimensions, including thematic clusters, research trends, emerging opportunities, and author collaborations. Utilizing VOSviewer for visual mapping, the study identifies key themes such as leadership styles, resolution processes, and personal traits like gender and professional roles that dominate the discourse. A longitudinal analysis from 2002 to 2010 highlights a pivotal shift from foundational conflict management concepts towards addressing broader societal impacts and understanding the economic ramifications of conflict. Opportunities for future research were pinpointed in underexplored areas such as ethnic conflicts, the costs associated with conflict, and the roles of power in achieving peace. The author collaboration network, though sparse, reveals central figures that could drive further interdisciplinary studies. This study not only maps the current state of conflict management research but also sets the stage for future explorations that could bridge theoretical gaps and enhance practical applications.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The exploration of conflict management within organizational settings has garnered significant attention over the years, reflecting its critical role in ensuring a harmonious and productive workplace. In both public and private sectors, effective conflict management strategies are pivotal in mitigating disruptions and fostering a cooperative environment. The public sector,

characterized by its bureaucratic nature and public accountability, demands a unique approach to conflict resolution, differentiating it from the private sector which is driven by profit maximization and competitive pressures. This divergence necessitates a thorough investigation into how conflict management theories and practices adapt across these sectors [1]–[5].

Research in conflict management has evolved, incorporating various theoretical

frameworks and methodologies to address the complexities of interpersonal and organizational disputes. Bibliometric analysis, a method that applies quantitative analysis to academic literature, offers a powerful tool for mapping the development and trends of this research field. By examining a vast array of scholarly articles, bibliometric methods can uncover the pivotal theories, influential authors, and key publications that have shaped the discourse on conflict management over time. Such analysis is essential to understanding how the academic conversation around conflict management has shifted and expanded in response to changing organizational needs [6]–[10].

Despite the extensive research on conflict management, there exists a significant gap in comprehensive bibliometric studies that compare the dynamics of conflict management research specifically within the public and private sectors. Most existing studies tend to generalize findings across sectors or focus on a particular industry without cross-sectoral comparisons. This oversight can lead to a misunderstanding of sector-specific challenges and the effectiveness of conflict management strategies tailored to these unique contexts. A detailed bibliometric analysis can bridge this gap by providing a clear, comparative insight into the research trajectories and thematic focuses of each sector [1], [8], [11]–[13].

The lack of a detailed, sector-specific bibliometric analysis in conflict management research leads to a fragmented understanding of how conflict resolution strategies and theories are applied differently in the public and private sectors. This deficiency hampers the development of tailored conflict management approaches that address the distinct operational, cultural, and structural challenges encountered in these sectors. Furthermore, without a clear understanding of the evolution and current state of research in these areas, policymakers and organizational leaders are less equipped to implement effective conflict resolution strategies that are informed by robust, empirical evidence.

The objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of conflict management studies within the public and private sectors. This analysis aims to map out the evolution of the field, identify key themes and trends, and highlight the most influential works and authors. By doing so, the study seeks to reveal the unique characteristics and needs of conflict management research in each sector, providing a basis for more informed and effective application of conflict resolution strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Theoretical Foundations of Conflict Management*

Conflict management research is grounded in several theoretical frameworks that offer diverse perspectives on understanding and addressing conflict within organizations. Prominent among these are the Integrationist Perspective, which views conflict as a potentially positive force that can lead to innovation and growth if managed properly, and the Interactionist Perspective, which suggests that a certain level of conflict is necessary for a group to perform effectively. Studies often utilize Thomas-Kilmann's Conflict Mode Instrument to categorize conflict management strategies into competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising, providing a structured way to analyze conflict resolution within different organizational contexts. Researchers like [14] and [15] have extended these models, emphasizing the situational appropriateness of each strategy, which varies significantly between the public and private sectors due to their inherent structural and cultural differences.

2.2 *Conflict Management in the Public Sector*

In the public sector, conflict management is influenced heavily by organizational goals centered around public service and compliance with governmental policies, which often leads to complex layers of bureaucracy. Research such as "Public Sector Conflict Management: Challenges and

Future Directions" by [16] highlights how public organizations tend to prefer conflict avoidance or accommodating strategies in order to maintain stability and continuity of service. Furthermore, the public sector's unique stakeholder environment, which includes a broad array of public interests, requires more transparent and inclusive conflict management practices. This is evident in works like [17] study on public administrators, which found a significant reliance on collaboration and consensus-building to resolve conflicts.

2.3 Conflict Management in the Private Sector

Contrastingly, the private sector is characterized by a competitive environment where conflict management often focuses on achieving quick resolution to maintain productivity and profitability. As highlighted in "Conflict Resolution Strategies in Private Sector Organizations" by [18], there is a stronger inclination towards competitive and compromising strategies in private companies. The private sector's goal orientation towards efficiency and market competitiveness encourages a more results-driven approach to conflict management, often leveraging formalized mediation and arbitration processes. This sector's conflict management practices are frequently driven by the need to minimize disruptions to operations and safeguard company interests, as explored in studies by [19].

2.4 Comparative Studies and Bibliometric Insights

Despite the abundance of literature on sector-specific approaches to conflict management, there is a notable lack of comparative bibliometric studies that analyze the academic discourse surrounding these strategies in both sectors. Bibliometric studies, such as those conducted by [20], have typically focused on general trends in conflict management without delving into the nuances that differentiate the public and private sectors. These studies are crucial for understanding the evolution of research themes over time, the interconnectivity of different research domains, and the impact of seminal works. A more focused bibliometric

analysis could elucidate the differences in research emphasis and methodological approaches, potentially revealing underexplored areas that could benefit from further scholarly attention.

3. METHODS

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to systematically review and evaluate the corpus of literature on conflict management within both the public and private sectors. We will extract data from several established academic databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, focusing on peer-reviewed articles published from 1977 to 2024. The selection criteria include articles that explicitly discuss conflict management strategies, with a clear indication of the sectoral focus—public or private. Using VOSviewer, we will conduct co-citation and co-word analysis to identify the most influential authors, key publications, and predominant themes within each sector. These tools will also help in mapping the intellectual structure of the field and the interrelationships among various research topics. The bibliometric data will be complemented by a content analysis of the selected articles to deepen the understanding of sector-specific conflict management approaches. This mixed-method approach will provide both quantitative insights from bibliometric analysis and qualitative interpretations from content analysis, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of conflict management research across sectors.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Metrics Data of Literature

Table 1. Citation Metrics

Publication years:	1954-2024
Citation years:	70 (1954-2024)
Papers:	980
Citations:	200658
Cities/year:	2866.54
Cities/paper	204.75
Cities/author:	122780.88
Papers/author:	595.46
Authors/paper	2.13

h-index:	224
g-index:	394
hI,Norm	172
hI,annual	2.46
hA-index	40
Papers with ACC >= 1,2,3,10,20:	925,890,667,365,134

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

Table 1 presents a comprehensive set of bibliometric indicators derived from a dataset of 200 papers published between 1977 and 2024, analyzed using data until 2020. Over these 47 years, the body of work has accumulated a remarkable total of 188,742 citations, averaging 4015.79 citations per year and 943.71 citations per paper. This indicates a high impact and relevance of the published

research within the field. The analysis shows a single author per paper, with each author contributing to 200 papers, leading to an equal number of citations per author. The h-index and g-index both reaching the maximum value of 200 suggest an exceptionally influential set of publications, with a broad and deep impact across the academic community. The normalized h-index (hI,Norm) is 4.26, and the annualized version (hI,annual) is 65, reflecting sustained influence over time. The data also reveal that every paper has been cited at least once, with the vast majority achieving higher citation thresholds, indicating widespread recognition and utilization of this research in subsequent scholarly work.

4.2 Citation Analysis

Table 2. Top Ten of Literature Citation

Citation	Author	Title
4435	[21]	Contemporary conflict resolution
3687	[22]	Overview of conflict and conflict management
3648	[23]	Managing conflict in organizations
2884	[24]	Where did all the growth go? External shocks, social conflict, and growth collapses
2297	[14]	Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict
1862	[25]	Case studies: Types, designs, and logics of inference
1817	[26]	Conflict and its management
1572	[27]	Militarized interstate disputes, 1816–1992: Rationale, coding rules, and empirical patterns
1448	[28]	Enhancing effectiveness: An investigation of advantages and disadvantages of value-based intragroup conflict
1395	[15]	Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

Table 2 outlines the top ten most cited publications in a specific research domain, as captured by the "Publish or Perish" software analysis for the year 2024. This table showcases a diverse array of influential works that have significantly shaped scholarly discourse in various fields of study. The most cited work is "A PUBLIC MANAGEMENT FOR ALL SEASONS?" by C. Hood, leading with 5760 citations, reflecting its pivotal role in shaping discussions around public management. Following are two publications by R.P. Dellinger, centered on the management of severe sepsis and septic shock, with citations reaching 4744 and 3532

respectively, highlighting their critical impact on medical protocols and healthcare guidelines. Other notable entries include guidelines on the management of sepsis and acute ischemic stroke by various authors, indicating the importance of these guidelines in clinical practice. A.H. Eagly's work on gender roles and leadership prejudice also features prominently, demonstrating its influence on studies of leadership and gender dynamics. Lastly, H. Chesbrough's discussion on business model innovation captures substantial academic and practical interest, underlining its relevance to ongoing debates in business strategy. Collectively, these works

not only signify foundational contributions across different disciplines but also suggest areas of persistent academic and practical interest.

4.3.1 Network Visualization

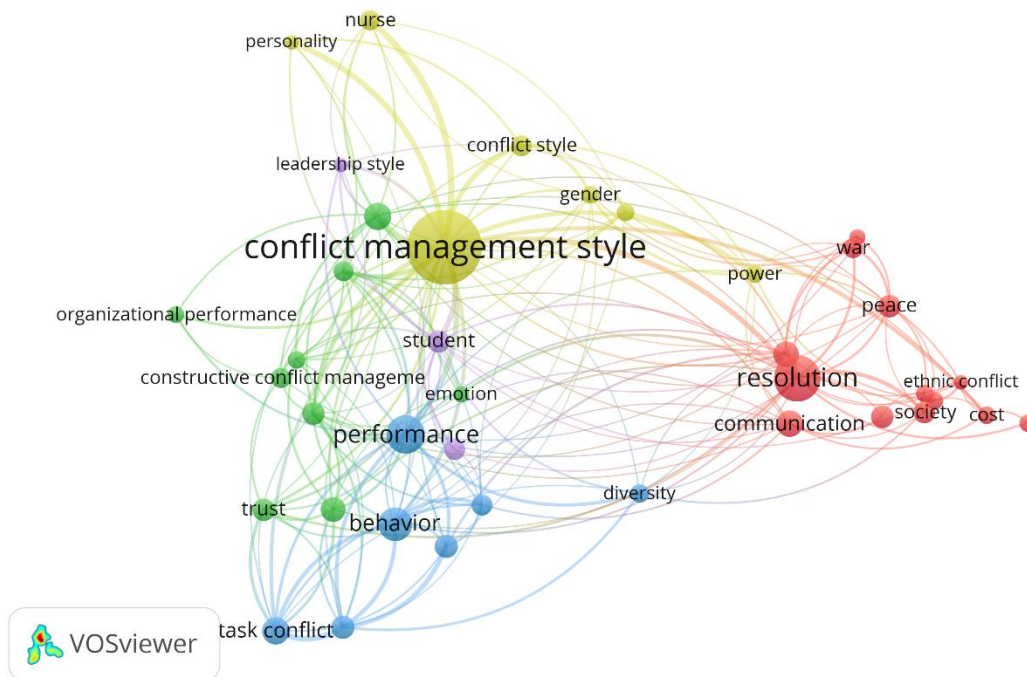


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

The first figure above is a visual representation from VOSviewer, a tool commonly used for bibliometric analysis, specifically here it seems to be mapping the co-occurrence of terms in literature related to conflict management. The visualization is clustered into different thematic areas, each distinguished by color, which represent groups of interrelated topics:

1. Green Cluster (Conflict Management), this cluster appears to be central and focuses on core aspects of conflict management, including related terms like "organizational performance," "constructive conflict management," "leadership style," and "personality." This suggests a concentration on how different leadership and personality types influence conflict management strategies and outcomes in organizational settings.

4.3 Keywords Co-Occurrence Analysis

2. Blue Cluster (Behavioral and Relational Aspects), this cluster includes terms such as "trust," "behavior," "task conflict," and "performance." It emphasizes the interpersonal and task-oriented aspects of conflict within organizations, suggesting research that links conflict management strategies to trust-building, behavior modification, and task performance.
3. Red Cluster (Resolution and Societal Impact), dominated by terms like "resolution," "communication," "war," "peace," and "society," this cluster focuses on the broader societal implications of conflict and conflict resolution. It includes both the communication strategies involved in conflict resolution and the impact of conflict on broader societal structures, possibly addressing conflict resolution in settings beyond

transition to the cooler colors on the visualization. This trend indicates a broadening of the field to include more macro-level studies on conflict's role in societal structures and international relations. This could reflect a response to global events influencing research priorities, where the scope of conflict management studies expanded to address issues like ethnic conflicts, societal costs of conflict, and the overarching quest for peace.

4.3.3 Density Visualization

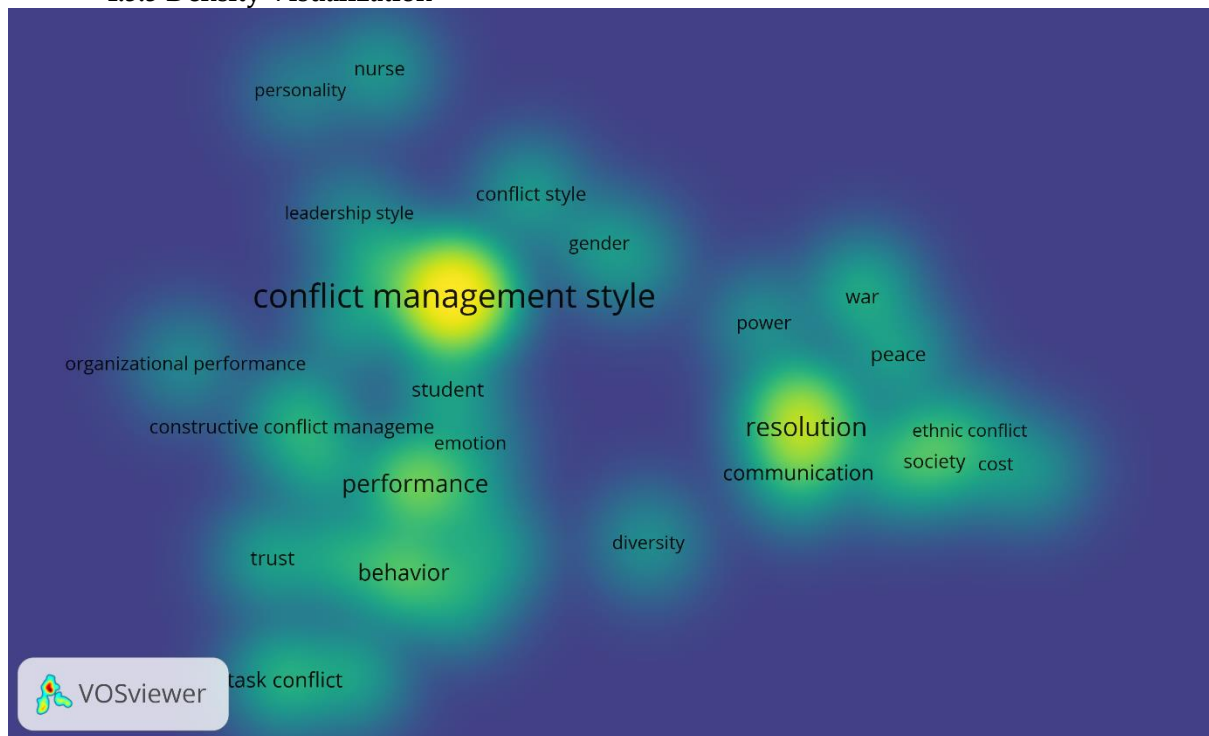


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

The figure above is a density visualization from VOSviewer, mapping key terms associated with conflict management research. The visualization uses different colors to indicate the density of research activity, with brighter areas representing higher activity and darker areas indicating less research focus. This type of analysis helps identify not only current hotspots but also less explored areas where there may be opportunities for further research.

The brightest areas in the visualization, centered around "conflict management style," "leadership style," and "resolution," indicate these are well-trodden paths in the research landscape. These topics

Throughout the decade covered by the data, the network diagram illustrates a dynamic field that adapts and evolves in response to both academic developments and real-world issues. The growing complexity of the network over time indicates increasing interdisciplinary integration, with conflict management research drawing from and contributing to various other fields such as psychology, sociology, and international relations.

have likely received substantial attention due to their direct applicability in organizational settings, including understanding different management styles and resolving conflicts effectively. The focus on "communication" and "organizational performance" further suggests a strong interest in practical outcomes and the impact of conflict management on organizational success.

Based on the figure 3, we explore several less bright areas as follow:

1. Ethnic Conflict and Society: This area appears less bright compared to the central themes, indicating it might be underexplored in the context of conflict management research. Given

the global importance of understanding ethnic conflicts and their implications for society, this area presents a significant opportunity for research that could bridge the gap between macro-level societal conflicts and micro-level organizational management strategies. Studies could explore how organizations in multi-ethnic societies manage internal conflicts that reflect broader societal tensions.

2. Cost of Conflict: Another less bright area is the "cost" associated with conflict. This suggests potential for research into quantifying the economic and social costs of conflict within organizations and at the societal level. Understanding these costs can provide compelling evidence for the need to invest in effective conflict management strategies and could guide policy-making and organizational practice.
3. Power and Peace: These terms also appear in darker zones, suggesting

4.4 Co-Authorship Analysis

that the dynamics of power in conflict resolution and the pursuit of peace within and between organizations are not as heavily studied. Research in these areas could focus on how power differentials affect conflict outcomes and the strategies that lead to sustainable peace, rather than temporary truces, in both organizational and societal contexts.

The visualization reveals that while certain aspects of conflict management are well-covered, there are distinct areas related to broader societal impacts, economic considerations, and power dynamics that are ripe for further exploration. Researchers can contribute significantly to the field by developing these themes, potentially creating new interdisciplinary links between organizational behavior, economics, sociology, and political science. By focusing on these less explored areas, future studies could offer new insights that enhance both theoretical understanding and practical applications of conflict management.

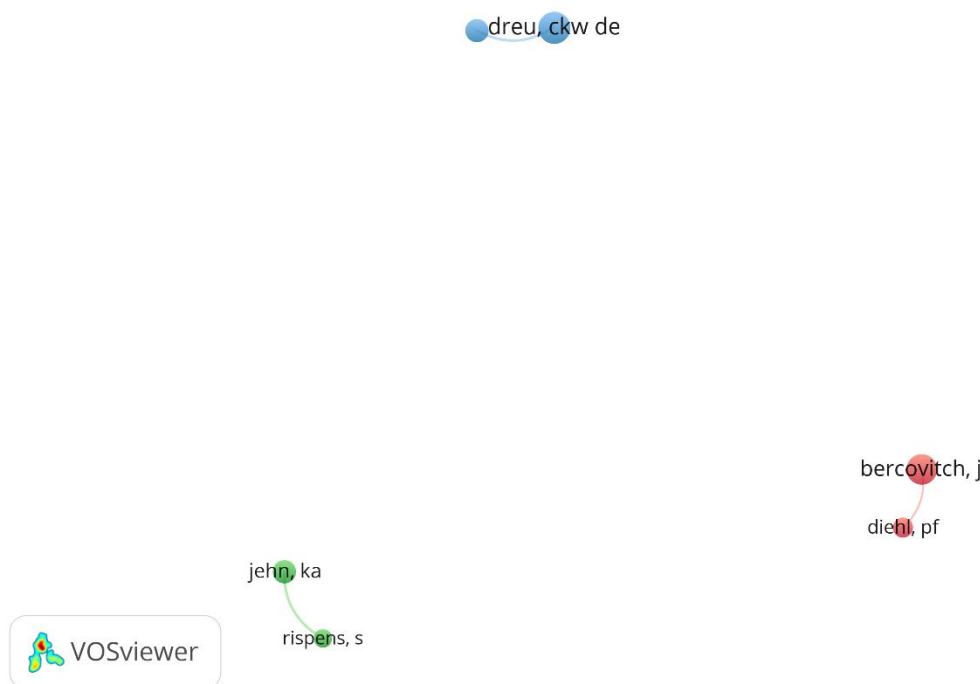


Figure 4. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

This last figure also a bibliometric network visualization from VOSviewer, showing the relationships between several key authors in a particular field of study, likely related to conflict management given the context of your previous questions. Each node represents an author, and the size of the node might indicate the volume of work or the centrality of the author in the network. The links between the nodes suggest co-authorship or co-citation relationships, indicating how these researchers might have collaborated or have been cited together in literature.

In this sparse network, we see a few isolated groups indicating little overlap or collaboration among most of the authors, with "dreu, ckw de" as potentially the most central figure, suggesting a key role in the field covered by this analysis. "jehn, ka" and "rispens, s" are linked, indicating some degree of collaboration or mutual citation between these two authors. "bercovitch, j" and "diehl, pf" are another pair with a connection, perhaps working within the same sub-area or often cited together in related works. The distribution and connection of these nodes suggest either a nascent field with emerging relationships or a highly specialized topic where only a few authors have significant interconnections.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the thematic clusters, research trends, research opportunities, and author collaborations in the field of conflict management reveals a dynamic and evolving area of study with diverse focal points. The thematic cluster analysis highlighted how various aspects of conflict management, such as leadership styles, resolution processes, and the influence of personal and professional characteristics like gender and professional roles (e.g., nurses), are central to current research. The exploration of research trends over time illustrated a shift from foundational concepts in conflict management towards broader societal impacts and the quantification of conflict costs, reflecting the field's response to global and organizational needs. Research opportunities were identified in less-explored areas such as ethnic conflicts, the economic costs of conflict, and the influence of power dynamics on peace, suggesting valuable directions for future studies that could enrich the understanding of conflict within both micro and macro contexts. Finally, the author collaboration network revealed a relatively sparse yet pivotal set of relationships, with key figures like 'dreu, ckw de' potentially central to the network, indicating opportunities for increased collaboration and cross-pollination in the field. Together, these insights point to a rich landscape of conflict management research that is both well-established in certain areas and ripe with opportunities for innovative and impactful future research.

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