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## Conflict management: Review of literature

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### Abstract

International conflicts based on personality differences serve some useful purpose as they force re-examination of data and approaches and resultant modifications may benefit the organisation as a whole. But persistent conflicts cause damage to it. Informal groups serve many useful functions by providing opportunities for fulfillment of security, social and esteem needs of their members, but at the same time create a number of human relations problems. They put pressure on deviants and isolates if they produce more than group norms of production, do not easily accept new employees in the groups and resists transfer of group members, inter-group conflicts also create problems. Differences in the means for goal attainment may also cause conflict. A manager and his subordinates may run into conflict about work priorities, or determination of activities that will lead to goal accomplishment. Competition for allocation of funds or other resources may also cause conflicts. This paper attempts to study the researcher's outcome of their researches on conflict management in different organisations.

**Keywords:** Conflict management, esteem needs, human relations problems, review of literature.

### Introduction

In an organizational setting, there may be several forms of interpersonal conflicts, such as hierarchical conflict between various levels of management, functional conflict between occupational specialists, professional vs. professional conflict, and so on. These conflicts may be interpreted in two forms: vertical conflict and horizontal conflict.

Vertical relationship, that is mostly in the form of superior-subordinate relationship, results into vertical conflicts which usually arise because superior attempts to control the behaviour of his subordinates, and subordinates resist such control. A subordinate may resist such control as he feels that his superior tries to control activities outside the scope of his control and he perceives conflict with his superior and the latter may feel when his attempt of control is thwarted. He is likely to interpret subordinate's resistance as due to resentment of the exercise of personal power. This perception of the behaviour may be grounded either on realities or may be due to misunderstanding between superior and subordinate.

The non-resolution of this conflict may not necessarily terminate the relationship; however, this may become a serious problem to the efficiency of the organization. More differences between superior and subordinates may create more conflict between them which ultimately adds more inefficiency to the organization. It may be argued that a superior enjoys the hierarchical support because of his position in the authority relationship; he may suppress the conflict and thereby he can remove its consequence but it is possible that he may be denied the full cooperation of his subordinates and he may be proved to be a poor superior thereby causing his position weak in the organization.

Horizontal conflict at interpersonal level is among the persons at the same hierarchical level in the same function or in different functions. Within each functional group, there may be individuals and these individuals interact among themselves. Such interactions maybe contacts for the purpose of giving, taking, and soliciting advice, counsel, information, and skilled assistance on difficult problems.

Studies to be reviewed have documented that conflict management can have important short-term and long-term consequences that protagonists are lies to experience as beneficial. Experiments have shown that cooperative conflict can constructive in the short-term as measured by understanding issues, making quality solutions, and strengthening relationships. Field studies provide evidence that the effects generalize to various organizational settings and persist over time.

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A recent study provides evidence of the value of being predisposed to manage conflict cooperatively for long-term psychological development and health.

### **Conflict management: Review of Literature**

Likert, Rensis and Likert, Jane G. (1976) describes principles and procedures that the probability of finding a solution to a conflict that is acceptable to all parties. These principles and procedures are derived from a management system with better resources for managing conflict than other systems. Emphasis is placed on a generally neglected step in problem solving that helps keep conflict from intruding into the problem-solving process. According to study conducted by Frank Harrison (1986). There is a necessity for synergy in professional organizations. Managerial and Professional orientations are opportunities for organizational conflicts. Several other studies have concurrent with Kornhauser's findings regarding a potential divergence between the value and goal orientations of professional and managers in complex organizations. One study in particular made at the Industrial Relations Center at the University of Chicago comprising separate surveys of 587 professional employees in 19 separate work groups cited differences in managerial and professional orientations toward goals and objectives as a primary source of potential conflict.

Robert A. Baron, Suzanne P. Fortin, Richard L. Frei, Laurie A. Hauver and Melisa L. Shack, (1990) <sup>[2]</sup> conducted two studies to investigate the impact of socially-induced positive effect on organizational conflict. In Study 1, male and female subjects were provoked or not provoked, and then exposed to one of several treatments designed to induce positive affect among them. Results indicated that several of these procedures (e.g., mild flattery, a small gift, self-deprecating remarks by an opponent) increased subjects' preference for resolving conflict through collaboration, but reduced their preference for resolving conflict through competition. In addition, self-deprecating remark by an opponent (actually an accomplice) increased subject's willingness to make concessions to this person during negotiations. In Study 2, male and female subjects were exposed to two treatments designed to induce positive affect (humorous, remarks, mild flattery). These were presented before, during, or after negotiations with another person (an accomplice). Both treatments reduced subjects' preferences for resolving conflict through avoidance and increased their preferences for resolving conflict through collaboration, but only when delivered during or immediately after negotiations. Together, the results of both studies suggest that simple interventions designed to induce positive affect among the parties to conflicts can yield several beneficial effects.

Hyun O. Lee and Randall G. Rogan (1991) in a study "A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Organizational conflict Management Behaviors, based on the collectivism-individualism structure, compared organizational conflict management behaviors between Korea (a collectivistic culture) and the U.S. (an individualistic culture). Employing a three-way factorial design (Culture type x Relational distance x Power relationship) the present study registered robust effects of culture type in determining one's organizational conflict management behaviors. Specifically, Koreans are found to be extensive users of solution-orientation strategies, while Americans prefer to use either

non-confrontation or control strategies in dealing with organizational conflicts. Moreover, the data also indicated that Koreans are more sensitive in exercising power when facing conflicts with subordinates in the organization. On the other hand, the effect of relational distance (in group vs. Out group) in determining one's choice of organizational conflict management styles is found to be minimal. Implications of present findings for future intercultural communication research are also discussed.

Jacqueline Y. Portello and Bonita C. Long, (1994) in analysis examined the influences of socialization and structural variables on relations among gender role orientations, interpersonal and ethical conflicts, and conflict handling styles. 134 female federal and provincial government supervisors and managers (26-65 yrs. old) completed a questionnaire that included the Bern Sex-Role Inventory and the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory. Congruence was 'found between gender role orientation and conflict handling styles. With high-instrumental traits were more likely to indicate that they would use a dominating conflict handling style androgynous (high expressive and high-instrumental traits) were more likely to indicate that they would use an integrating style. So did not report that they' would different conflict handling styles for ethical and interpersonal conflicts. The nature the conflict did not moderate gender role orientation and conflict handling style relationship.

Karen A. Jehn, (1994) <sup>[3]</sup> in a study investigates the benefits and detriments of emotional and task-related conflict in work groups. Group value consensus (GVC), or the extent to which group members share values, and group value fit (GVF), or the degree to which the culture of the group matches the ideal culture envisioned by external parties with control over the group, are hypothesized to decrease conflict. In examining 88 workgroups performing comparable organizational tasks, it was found that groups with low levels of value similarity among members and between the group and governing superiors had higher levels of conflict than groups with high levels of value similarity. As hypothesized, emotional conflict was negatively associated with group performance and Satisfaction, while task conflict was positively associated with group performance. The implications of these results for conflict management and group effectiveness are discussed.

Sorenson (1999) conducted a study at center for entrepreneurial and family business at Texas, Tech University. This study indicate that collaboration, accommodation, compromise strategies produce relatively better outcomes for organization. High levels of collaboration contribute to positive outcome for organization & High level of compromise & accommodation contribute to positive inter-personal relationship.

Zayne Aycan, Rabindra N. Kanungo and Jai B. P. Sinha (1999) <sup>[4]</sup> resented a Model of Culture Fit postulates that the socio-cultural environment affects the internal work culture, which in turn influences human resource management practices. This model was tested by two independent cross-cultural studies comparing Indian and Canadian managers and employees. In assessing socio-cultural environment and internal work culture, the "participant" technique was used in Study 1 (the respondents indicated their own beliefs and assumptions), and the "observant" technique was used in Study 2 (i.e. respondents indicated beliefs and assumptions

of the majority of individuals in society). In both studies, India scored higher than Canada on paternalism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, loyalty toward community, reactivity, and futuristic orientation. Indian employees reported having less enriched jobs than did Canadian employees. Mediated multiple regression analyses supported the Model of Culture Fit. Results suggest that the paternalism, self-reliance, and employee participation constructs merit further exploration, as does participant methodology. The study conducted by C.C Cheung and K.B Chuah (1999) examines the use of different conflict resolutions in 63 actual case studies from Hong Kong industries. Contrary to common perception and previous findings, 'confrontation', as a mode of conflict resolution, is found to be more commonly used in handling conflict. An significantly, almost all of the case incidents which used the 'confrontation' approach were said to have achieved positive consequences. The authors argue that this change of resolution strategy in the past decade could be due to the increasing number of Hong Kong companies adopting the matrix structure explicitly or implicitly in carrying their projects. It appears that in Hong Kong industries, the influence of the Chinese culture and traditional values in attitude, behaviour and professional practices of both engineers as well as managers, is diminishing. Although the 'withdrawal' and 'forcing' - were also being used for certain types of conflict, as revealed by some of the case studies, the consequences are often recognised to be dysfunctional to team work.

Personal relations in an organization depends on such as,

- a. Ower and dependency
- b. Negotiating
- c. Instrumental
- d. Socio-emotional aspects (Michael, 1989) <sup>[5]</sup>. In various studies conducted by Carten K.W. De Dreu (2007) <sup>[9, 11]</sup> and many researchers, it is discussed that workplace conflict is quite desirable, should be welcomed and, where possible, stimulated Pondy (1992). In fact, this is exactly what Van de Vliert and Dc Dreu (1994) <sup>[9, 11]</sup> suggested some time ago: 'In overly harmonious or protest-repressive situations, therefore, encouragement and intensification rather than prevention and mitigation of conflict may often be recommended.'

Michael A. Gross and Laura K. Guerrero, (2000) <sup>[5]</sup> discuss the competence model of conflict communication suggests that individuals who use various conflict styles will be perceived differently in terms of appropriateness and effectiveness. A simulated organizational decision-making task involving 100 randomly-paired dyads consisting of business students suggested that an integrative conflict style is generally perceived as the most appropriate (in terms of being both a polite, pro-social strategy and an adaptive, situational appropriate strategy) and most effective style. The dominating style tended to be perceived, as inappropriate when used by others, but some participants judged themselves as more effective when they used dominating tactics along with integrating tactics. The obliging style was generally perceived as neutral, although some participants perceived themselves to be less effective and rationally appropriate when they employed obliging tactics. The avoiding style was generally perceived as ineffective and inappropriate. Finally, compromising was perceived as a relatively neutral style, although some

participants judged their partners to be more effective and relationally appropriate if they compromised. Overall these results and others provide general support for the competence model's predictions, while also suggesting some modifications and directions for future research.

## Conclusion

A study on Conflict management, Efficacy, and performance in Organizational teams empirically links conflict management literature with research on efficacy and organizational teams. Sixty-one self-managing teams with 489 employees were recruited from the production department of a leading electronic manufacturer. Structural equation analysis supports the model that a cooperative instead of competitive approach to conflict leads to conflict efficacy that in turn results iii effective performance as measured by managers. Findings suggest how organizational teams can be prepared to make use of their autonomy to deal with problems and conflicts so that they are productive.

Although, organisations often implement team-based structures to improve performance, such restructuring does not automatically ameliorate poor performance. The study in this article explores the relationship between team members negative mood and team processes (social cohesion, workload sharing, and team conflict) to determine if negative mood has a detrimental effect on team performance via team processes. Two hundred and forty one participants completed surveys and were involved in an independently rated performance task that was completed over eight weeks. Negative mood was found to influence team processes and as a consequences, team performance.

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