Conflict resolution assignment

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S. S. R. Dominated Western method to conflict. Conflict was viewed as a win-lose solution. According to Dana (2001) there are only three ways to resolve any conflict; power contests, rights contests, and interests reconciliation. Power contest is based on Cossets (1967) win-lose situation. Each party views their point as right each wanting power over the other. Rights contest is an orderly system which has rules, regulations, policies, precedents and a hierarchy of authority which is used in order to " win" again this model is a win-lose resolution. The solution to conflict resolution is interest reconciliation.

This approach enlists support from both parties to find the best solution. All parties win with interest reconciliation model as their solution. Conflict in the workplace is a condition between or among two or more workers whose jobs are independent, who feel angry, who perceive the other(s) as being at fault, and act in a way that causes a business problem. Conflict has three elements feelings (emotions), perceptions (thoughts) and actions (behaviors). " Psychologists consider these three the only dimensions of human experience. So, conflict is rooted in all parts of the human nature" Dana, 2001, p.) some confuse conflict with indecision, disagreement, stress, or some other common experience that may cause or be caused by a conflict. However, those elements are not best handled by conflict resolution. The question many ask, is conflict normal? Conflict is a fact Of any organizational life. On the job, " conflict is a stubborn fact of organizational life" (Kola and Putnam, 1 992, p. 31 1). Rather than seeing conflict as abnormal, Pond (1992) suggests we view organizations as " arenas for staging conflicts, and

managers as both fight promoters who organize bouts and as referees who regulate hem" (p. 259).

In addition, pond states that in the company, agency, or small business, conflict may be the very essence of what the organization is about, and if " conflict isn't happening then the organization has no reason for being" (p. 259). One study surveyed workers and found that almost 85 percent reported conflicts at work (Evolved and Bergmann 1989). With an increasing awareness of cultural diversity and gender equity issues, it is essential that employees become familiar with issues surrounding promotions and harassment. In fact, one can see training in organizations as a form of reverting conflict management (Hathaway, 1995).

The recognition of the frequency of conflict at work has led to books on mediating conflict in the workplace (Hairbrush and Willow 1 995), showing how managers can learn conflict management skills to intervene in disputes in their organization. As employees, daily work with clients, customers, co-workers, or bosses can be a struggle. Conflict is as Willow (1995) wrote, " What determines the course of a relationship is in a large measure determined by how successfully the participants move through conflict episodes" (p. 95).

Conflict resolution has eve styles, giving in, avoiding, fight it out, comprise, and work together style. No style is right or wrong; however some do work better than others. Accommodation, giving in to the other's wishes or smoothing waves sacrifices one's own goals for the sake of the other person. Accommodates often use phrases like: " Whatever you want is fine with me.

" When one party in a conflict genuinely does not care about the outcome of the conflict, accommodation may be the right choice for that situation. However, if accommodation is the only style a person utilizes, he or she is advised to learn more skills.

Avoidance is characterized by behaviors that either ignore or refuse to engage in the conflict. While avoidance is by some consider a negative style that shows low concern for both one's own and the other party's interests, there are sometimes strategic reasons to avoid conflict. For example, when the relationship is short-term and the issue is not important or when the situation has a potential to escalate to violence, avoidance may be the prudent choice. Fight it out, competition, or win/lose, style maximizes reaching one's own goals or getting the problem solved at the cost of the others goals or feelings.

While always choosing competition has negative repercussions for relationships, businesses and cultures, it can occasionally be the right style to choose if the other party is firmly fixed in a competitive style or there are limited resources. While competitive strategy is not necessarily dysfunctional, competition can easily slip into a destructive situation. Understanding the methods and strategies of others who use competitive styles can assist conflict managers in neutralizing the negative consequences of competition and work toward a mutual gain approach.

Compromise is a give and take of resources. The classic compromise in negotiating is to " split the difference" between two positions. While there is no victor from compromise, each person also fails to achieve her or his

original goal. Finally, working together to collaborate is when parties cooperatively team up until a mutually agreeable solution is found. Compromise and collaboration are win-win solution where as the other styles are win-lose. Why do people avoid dealing with conflict? People have a natural instinct of fear and some let that fear overpower them.

The fear of harm causes people to fight-or-flight. Individuals will choose the flight option when in a dangerous part of a city that they have never been in before in order to avoid danger, it shows wisdom or strength to get out a of physically abusive relationship, commendable to stay out emotionally abusive relationships. In spite of this, in some cases people have the response to flight to a false perception of harm. People overstress in their minds the emotional harm that someone can cause harm.

The same is said for conflict in the workplace, people will avoid conflict for fear of being harmed by others. Some avoid conflict because of a fear of rejection from others. These individuals feel others will withdraw their friendship or push them away causing more hurt. People have the perception if they do not risk rejection they can suppress their needs and feelings. Loss of relationship is the fear of rejection taken up a level they fear totally losing a relationship. Others avoid conflict to mask their true desires because preserving a relationship is more important than getting what they want.

These individuals are trapped into believing their worth is dependent on another accepting them. People avoid conflict for fear of anger. These people do not like listening to someone who s angry. They believe another will hurt them, reject them, or leave them, and they just cannot stand to witness

anger. However, anger is just anger and it is not necessarily directed toward them. Individuals do not want to be seen as selfish. In some situations people are not afraid of others reactions, but rather their interpretation of the situation.

They fear that they will appear selfish. However, is it wrong to have a need, feeling, or want and to express it? Society has sometimes had it seem that way. Although, there is nothing wrong with asking for what individuals want versus feeling they are entitled to always getting what they want. The truth is if one never asks, then they are depriving people around them from being able give to them effectively. Still, people who feel their wants should not be fulfilled, regardless of what others want, fall into the selfishness category.

Sometimes people avoid conflict for fear of saying the wrong thing or something they will regret Individuals will avoid conflict rather than risk putting " their foot in their mouth" they contain their anger and frustration which often leads to that which they fear. When people have conflicts in the past that have failed so they avoid future conflict or the fear of failing those too and begin to believe the confrontation is not worth the emotional energy it takes to deal with others. The fear of failing can impact other aspects of ones life. The fear of hurting another is more than just saying the wrong thing.

These individuals are extremely sensitive and caring. They would rather hurt themselves than risk hurting another. The fear of success is a fear that most over look. However, it is much like the fear of failure. Some people are afraid to get what they want; they believe they will never get it. These people feel

they do not deserve what they want, the uniqueness of getting of what they want is regret, or the responsibility is more than they need or desire. The fear of intimacy is the most subconscious of the fears. People do not want to share their dreams, desires, and wants with others.

They feel they are private and do not want to be exposed. People do not want to appear weak. If resolution involves giving in, avoiding, or compromise they may feel they appear as though they do not have confidence. People do not want the stress of confrontation. They feel it is better to avoid conflict rather than deal with the stress it will cause them in the workplace between co-workers. Our society tends to reward alternative responses to conflict, rather than negotiation. People, who aggressively pursue their needs, competing rather than collaborating, are often satisfied by others who prefer to accommodate.

Managers and leaders are often rewarded for their aggressive, controlling approaches to problems, rather than taking a more compassionate approach to issues that may seem less decisive to the public or their staffs. Conflict resolution requires profound courage on the part of all parties: It takes courage to honestly and clearly express on?? s needs, and it takes courage to sit down and listen to one's adversaries. It takes courage to look at one's own role in the dispute, and it takes courage to approach others with a sense of empathy, open news and respect for their perspective.

Collaborative approaches to conflict management require individuals to engage in the moment of dialogue in thoughtful and meaningful ways, so it is understandable if people tend to avoid such situations until the balance of

wisdom tips in favor of negotiation. People have certain perceptions in conflict when dealing with different situations. Culture shapes and frames each individual's interpretation of appropriate behaviors during conflicts. Conflict across cultures, whether across nations or across the diverse cultures within a country, exacerbates the routine difficulties of conflict management (Fry and Bookstores, 1997).

There is no clear conclusion about whether men and women actually behave in different ways while conducting conflicts. However, gender stereotypes do affect conflict behaviors when individuals act and react based on stereotypes of how men and women will/should act rather than selecting behaviors appropriate for the individual one is communicating with (Frisson and Victor, 1997). Parties respond to conflicts on the basis of the knowledge they have bout the issue at hand. This includes situation-specific knowledge and general knowledge.

The understanding Of the knowledge they have can influence the person's willingness to engage in efforts to manage the conflict, either reinforcing confidence to deal with the dilemma or undermining one's willingness to flexibly consider alternatives. The person sharing the message is considered to be the messenger. Fifth messenger is perceived to be a threat (powerful, scary, unknown, etc.) the message can influence others responses to the overall situation being experienced. For example, if a big Cary-looking guy is yelling at people they may respond differently than if a diminutive, calm person would express the same message.

Additionally, if the people knew the messenger previously, they might respond differently based upon that prior sense of the person's credibility. People are more inclined to listen with respect to someone they view more credible than if the message comes from someone who lacks credibility and integrity. Some people have had significant life experiences that continue to influence their perceptions of current situations. These experiences may have left them fearful, lacking rust, and reluctant to take risks. On the other hand, previous experiences may have left them confident, willing to take chances and experience the unknown.

Either way, one must acknowledge the role of previous experiences as elements of their perceptual filter in the current dilemma. These factors, along with Others, work together to form the perceptual filters through which people experience conflict. As a result, their reactions to the threat and dilemma posed by conflict should be anticipated to include varying understandings of the situation. This also means that they can anticipate that n many conflicts there will be significant misunderstanding of each other's perceptions, needs and feelings.

These challenges contribute to our emerging sense, during conflict, that the situation is overwhelming and unsolvable. As such, they become critical sources of potential understanding, insight and possibility. How do people respond to conflict? There are three responses to conflict emotional, cognitive and physical responses that are Important windows into our experience during conflict, for they frequently tell people more about what is the true source of threat that is perceived; by understanding the thoughts,

feelings and behavior to conflict, a better insight into the best potential solution to the situation.

Emotional (feelings) are the feelings we experience in conflict, ranging from anger and fear to despair and confusion. Emotional responses are often misunderstood, as people tend to believe that others feel the same as they do. Thus, differing emotional responses are confusing and, at times, threatening. Cognitive (thinking) are our ideas and thoughts about a conflict, often present as inner voices or internal observers in the midst of a situation. Through sub-visualization (self- elk), people understand these cognitive responses. Physical (behavior) can play an important role in our ability to meet our needs in the conflict.

They include heightened stress, bodily tension, increased perspiration, tunnel vision, shallow or accelerated breathing, nausea, and rapid heartbeat. These responses are similar to those we experience in high-anxiety situations, and they may be managed through stress management techniques. Establishing a calmer environment in which emotions can be managed is more likely if the physical response is addressed effectively. Dealing with someone unwilling to agitate can be difficult for the person who is trying to resolve the conflict.

However, the " 8 Step Model" can be very beneficial, by focusing first on listening to the other person, and seeking to understand the sources of their resistance, the stage can be set for clarifying the conditions he or she requires in order to talk things out. This is not about being ' right' or ' wrong' in the situation, but a practical strategy for getting the other person engaged

as a partner in the negotiation process. Another alternative is to focus on things we can do to influence conflicts in the future, rather than putting initial energy into understanding (or solving) problems we have had in the past.

By remaining relatively flexible about the agenda – taking on topics individuals care about, but not necessarily the most pressing issues – thus, creating an opportunity to reduce the fears associated with resistance. While the conflict may not be able to be truly resolved, some key issues that exist will be managed and will help to prevent the issues from getting worse. Power is an important and complex issue facing anyone seeking a negotiated solution to a conflict. Before negotiating clarify the true sources of power in the room: The boss has position power, associated with the " carrots and sticks" that come with the role.

She or he may also have coercive power, supported by contracts or statute that compels employees to behave in certain ways and do certain tasks associated with the job. Some may have a great deal of expertise power, accumulated from doing your job over a period of time. Either conflict participants may possess normative power, through which they know " the lay of the land" in their department and, therefore, how to get things done. And either may possess referent power, through which others how respect for the manner in which the employee conducts themselves.

Generally, referent power accrues to those who demonstrate a mature willingness to seek collaborative solutions. An impasse is the sense Of being " stuck". Impasse is the point within a dispute in which the parties are

unable to perceive effective solutions. People feel stuck, frustrated, angry, and disillusioned. Therefore, they might either dig their heels in deeper, anchoring themselves in extreme and rigid positions, or they might decide to withdraw from negotiation. Either way, impasse represents a turning point in our efforts to negotiate a solution to the conflict.

As such, rather than avoiding or dreading it, impasse should be viewed with calmness, patience, and respect. Mufti-party disputes are complex situations, and they require careful attention and persistence. However, the same " 8 Step Model" can be applied to the disputes. In spite of using the same process expect everything to take a bit longer than if there where only two or three people. Patiently make sure that all points of view are heard, that issues are clarified for all to see, and that all members in the group accept the agreements being negotiated.

If here are limits to the group's decision-making power, then it is important to acknowledge those limits and understand how they are perceived by all members of the group. There are many different ideas of the steps for resolution, some claim five steps while others claim six or seven for the purpose of this paper Weeks (1992) eight step resolution style is identified. Step one – Create an Effective Atmosphere Creating the right atmosphere in which the conflict resolution process will take place is very important, yet most overlook its importance.

The atmosphere is the frame around the canvas which will be painted the estimations and building of better relationships (Weeks, 1992). Step two – Clarify Perceptions Perceptions are lenses through which a person sees

themselves, others, their relationships, and the situations they encounter. Perceptions have a great influence on behavior of people. Once people perceive something in certain way, even if the perception is wrong, in the mind it is that way, and often base behaviors on that perception (Weeks, 1992).

Step three -?? Focus on the Individual and Shared Needs This step builds on the previous step as needs as the conditions people perceive they cannot do without, those conditions critical to each persons libeling and relationships. However, step three focuses more on skills involved in the conflict partnership approach. There are several key points to keep in mind in this step. 1) Needs are the foundation of relationship and are an essential part of that foundation. 2) People sometimes confuse needs with desires. 3) Personal needs in relationships perceived by individuals must allow for respect of the needs or the relationship (Weeks, 1992).

Step four Build Shared Power Power is a part of every relationship. However, the way people perceive and use power is seen frequently as a dirty word. Such as when people use power as means to control or to manipulate some else to get what they want. Although, power is and of itself not corrupt, it is the way in which people use their power and whether they allow such power to corrupt. Developing positive self power through a clear self-image means that we base our perceptions of ourselves not on what others expect of us or want us to be but what we believe to be our own needs, capabilities, priorities and goals (Weeks, 1992, p. 52). Step five – Look to the Future, Then Learn from the Past. All relationships and conflicts have a past, present and future. Resolving inflicts requires dealing with all three. The conflict

partnership process encourages the use of positive power to focus on the present-future to learn from the past. The past experiences people face set the landscape for present and future decision making and how relate to others (Weeks, 1992). Step six – Generate Options People have the ability to discover new possibilities in their relationships as well as conflict resolution.

However, both are Often impaired by the packaged truths and limited vision people hold onto in times of stress, insecurity, and conflict. Generating options breaks through the predetermined restrictions roughs into the conflict resolution process. Generating options imparts choices which specific steps to resolve conflicts and enhanced relationship can be agreed upon (Weeks, 1992). Step seven – Develop " Doable": the Stepping-stones to Action Doable are the necessary stepping-stones taken along the way to resolve conflict.

Doable are explicit acts that stand a good possibility of success, meet some individual and shared need, and depend on positive power, usually shared power to be carried out. Working on and accomplishing some doable can help the conflict partners see more clearly where they need to go. Many conflict partners have changed their preconceived definitions of both the conflict itself and the expected outcome due to the lessons learned and clarified perceptions through working with doable (Weeks, 1 992) Step eight – Make Mutual-Benefit Agreements Mutual-benefit agreements are the next step on the pathway to conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution agreements must be realistic and effective enough to survive and the potential to develop further as challenges arise in the future.

Mutual-benefit agreements replace the need or want for demands, see the others needs, shared goals, and establish a standard herein power is identified as positive mutual action through which differences can be dealt with constructively (Weeks, 1992). Conclusion Conflict is an unavoidable aspect of everyday life whether it is with family, teachers, students, friends, or an organization.

The best approach to resolving conflict is interest reconciliation. It joins both parties of the dispute to find the best solution. In so doing, all parties win. People respond to conflict in three ways emotional (feelings), cognitive (thinking), and physical (behavior). All are important to the conflict experience. They allow a better wariness to best furnish a solution to the situation. An important tactic to conflict resolution is to develop persuasion skills with the ability to clearly explain one's point of view and to argue for their conclusions and convictions.