

Conflicts in work place

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Conflicts management in work place OVERVIEW The purpose of this assignment is to critically analyze the conflicts in working place and try to understand organization behavior with respect to conflict effect. I also try to focus whether conflict is necessary or not by using range of theoretical perspectives and ideologies of conflict. INTRODUCTION: Conflicts are unpleasant, but it is a kind of force that ruling almost every aspect of our life. As time passes in every working relationship it is common to produce conflict (John Newstrom 2007, p. 253). Conflict can arise from various sources and directions but it can emerge in short duration of time among people of any level, and it may require proper management. Conflict can be constructive or destructive depending on ability of management. Hence managers should be aware of it and must know when and how to stimulate conflict in better way to resolve from it in time. Conflict is defined as “[.. a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something the first party cares about” (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007, p. 661). Every organization has some sets of rules for its existence and to stay competent in the market and its survival as they desired. For this organization should be stable, always integrated, well coordinated, order and unanimity. As we know that organization is a place where people work together to achieve a common goal.

But to attain the goal everyone has to struggle, cooperate, obey rules, and always communicate with each other to complete the given task in time. But history shows that many organization fallen because of these interpersonal relationships of the people are not productive, cooperative, and satisfying which directly effects the reputation of the organization and creates a big

problem for its growth. Many people believe that organization is interfered with conflicts and many other factors such as disintegration, antagonism, frequent changes, and divided loyalties.

But it is also seen that people believe conflicts are necessary to perform organization effectively. Let have a close look on conflict in organization and people point of view: WHY CONFLICT ARISE? In any situation conflict can arise between two or more parties when they think opposite and feel themselves in opposition. Conflict can arise due to many factors. For example: To achieve the goal in time different people apply different methods and techniques, but some time because of disagreement among the people due to different experience can produce the conflict.

It is an interpersonal process; “ conflicts also arise due to tack inter-dependence, policies, ambiguity of roles and rules, personalitydifferences, ineffectivecommunication, the competition over scarce resources, and underlying differences in attitudes, beliefs, and experiences” (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007, p. 661). Conflict can be functional or dysfunctional; we can consider it constructive or destructive depending on its management. But important question is whether conflict is necessary or not for any organization?

Levels of Conflict: In any working place conflict can be possible to occur within an employee, between individuals or groups, and across organizations as they compete. Sources of Conflict: Organizational change, Different sets of values, Threats to status, Contrasting perceptions, Lack of trust, personality clashes, and personality differences. IS CONFLICT NECESSARY

EVIL OR NOT: From many decades, there has much debate that concerning whether conflict within the organization is necessary or not. Dean Tjosvold (2008) argued that conflict was inevitable aspect of all organizations; that properly conducted; it lead to a better understanding between individuals, as well as to better ways of working. Since conflict was essential to successful teamwork and organizational effectiveness, it should be welcomed and managed appropriately. In contrast, Carten De Dreu (2008) stated that conflict was always detrimental, and that the research support for the beneficial aspects of workplace conflict was weak.

He said that conflict was beneficial in only a very few, specific situations; and that even in theses, it had negative consequences which outweighed the positive ones. He felt that organizations had to make efforts to manage conflict, not because it had positive effects but so as to minimize its negative ones" (BUCHANAN AND HUCZYNSKI, 2010). THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CONFLICT: According to traditional perceptives conflicts are negative and indicates something is wrong. It must be avoided or eliminate.

The contemporary perspective describes conflict as inevitable. It describes that if conflicts are very high or low they have negative consequences which affect the performance of the organization. CONTRASTING VIEWS OF CONFLICT: It is found that there are three views of conflict: positive, negative and ' balanced'. Positive view: This view consider conflict are positive in organizations, but if it is managed and Considered can be positive and they believe that if the conflict managed and resolution effectively many time we can see constructive outcomes.

This helps them to think how they can adopt different process to do things and conflict resolution process is many time seen a stimulus for positive change in the organization. This view tells resolving conflict also help to adapt to changes and it is seen more acceptable (Coiser & Dalton, 1990). Conflict help in decision making process; because it is nature and people have different opinions, thoughts, attitudes and values for any given situation which can be beneficial in making and choosing better idea and decision. ositive view of conflict help us to encourage to work in difference and it tell positive outcomes of conflicts are very beneficial to the organization, it may increase quality of work and personal satisfaction and also increases commitment and motivation to complete the task in time.

Negative view: This view considers conflict as negative, it tells that conflict is dangerous and have serious negative effects and may diverts organization goalsto achieve and also effect on out psychological wellbeing. This view express that conflict also affect ideas, created tension, increasesstressand anxiety.

And conflict may be detrimental to individual and group development over period of time. (Baron, R. A. and Richardson, S. R. , Human Aggression, 2nd edition (Plenum Press, New York, 1991).) ' Balanced' view: This view of conflict some time preferable from a managerial perspective. In this approach sometime conflict are destructive and some time they are highly desirable and constructive. But managing conflict is essential for attaining the goal for any manager. TRANSITIONS IN CONFLICT THOUGHT:

Organization conflict has different definitions and perspectives from many years.

One thought of school argued that, conflict must be avoided in order to run the organization effectively, without any malfunctioning within it. This thought called traditional view. Another thought of school argued that conflicts in any organization are natural and inevitable. According to this view conflict is not a evil, but it tells that management should have the ability for improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency. We called this thought behavioral view. Third thought is interactionist approach and it is most recent perspective. This thought of school argues that conflicts are positive and important for any organization.

It tells that conflicts are absolutely necessary for improving organization effectiveness and efficiency. (Adapted from: Stephen R. Robbins, Managing Organization Conflict: A Nontraditional Approach (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall, 1974).) THE TRADITIONAL VIEW: In this view, it is assumed that conflict is natural and very bad, it should be avoided and eliminate immediately. There will be always negative impact on organizational performance. And it is believed that organization cannot perform effectively, if the conflicts are not eliminated in time.

According to this approach conflicts are harmful and must be avoided. Conflicts can cause violence, destruction, and some time irrationality problems. It is manager responsibility to identify the conflicts if any and try to eliminate it to get rid of problems. This traditional perspective prevailed the management and organizational lit during the late nineteenth century and continued to be mid - 1940s. The Behavioral View: In this behavioral view

traditional approach was followed and it is argued that occurrence of conflicts are natural in organizations.

But behavioralists argued that conflicts are inevitable they advocated accepting the conflict. The behavioral view explains that conflict cannot be eliminated and they believe that conflict may benefit organization performance. They believe conflicts are inevitable and must resolve in time. The view prevailed management and organization from the late 1940s through the mid-1970s. The Interactionist View: It is the current theoretical perspective on conflict, this approach encourages conflict and they believe that conflict is positive for any organization.

In interactionists approach believe that conflict can help to make new ideas, improve intra group cohesiveness, because of different opinion and different experience it help in making better decision in time, and many benefits to the organization. Interactionists perspective encourage functional opposition and necessity of conflict for the effectiveness of the organization. In this view it not only focuses of conflict stimulation but also choose appropriate conflict resolution process by the management. And explains conflict management are the major responsibility for the managers.

It is seen that many evidence suggests conflict is necessary and important in organization because it improves the quality of decision making. (Coiser & Schwenk, 1990). Thus I think the major problem is not conflict itself, but the problem is how to manage the conflict in the organization. So we can expect conflict may be result functional or dysfunctional and any one of them have serious effect to achieve the goal in time of any organization. This functional

conflict is helpful to nurture the individuals in the working place to improve the creativity, adaption and innovation of the organization. (Thomas, K. W. 'Conflict and conflict management', in Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, ed. M. D. Dunnette (Rand McNally, Chicago, 1976).) Because of complacency some organizations are failure, but can be traced back to too much harmony. (Robbins, S. P. , Essentials of Organizational Behavior (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1992).) But in reality most organization try to eliminate any type of conflict because they think elimination of conflict solve the problem and perform organization effectively. But now we can see and argue that functional conflict should be encouraged and dysfunctional conflict should be discouraged.

It has spent more than three decades by many researchers, scholar and behavioural scientist to analyze the affects of dysfunctional intergroup conflict in the people who experiences it (Sherif and Sherif, Groups in Harmony and Tension (Harper and Row, New York, 1953).) -Within groups: it increases the group cohesiveness, able to emphasis on loyalty, rise in desired autocratic leadership and focus on activity; -Between groups: there will be distorted in perceptions, communication is not effective and some time negative stereotyping.

View of Conflict can be better understood by different frame of references. Frame of reference: " It is describe as, a person's perceptions and interpretations of events, and involve assumptions about reality, attitudes towards what is possible, and conventions regarding correct behavior" (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007, p. 661). Contrasting frames of reference: It is

seen that literature distinguishes four different frames of reference for conflict, based on differentiation made by Alan Fox. They are unitarist, pluralist, interactionist and radical (Fox, 1966, 1973).

All these frames are different from each other but important thing is that none of these are right or wrong. Unitarist: In unitarist frame conflict is seen badly and they think that organizations should be essentially harmonious. Pluralist: In pluralist frame sees that groups in organization have their own interests and organization is collection of groups. Interactionist: This interactionist frame sees conflict as a positive, necessary force for effective performance of any organization; Radical: In radical frame sees conflict as an inevitable outcome of capitalism in any organization.

To better understand conflict one should view it as dynamic rather than a static concept and the sequence of conflict stages can be seen as latent, perceived, felt, manifest and after math. (Pondy, L. R. , ' Organizational conflict: concept and models', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12 (1967).) Conflict is inevitable in organizational life and its results can be constructive rather than destructive depending up on how it is managed. If negative effects controlled and can be minimized then positive outcomes may result.

Effective conflict management is based in part, on a solid understanding of the different ways that conflict emerges and can be resolved. (Anderson, H. and Kyprianou. 1994. *Effective Organizational Behaviour*. edn. Oxford: Blackwell) EFFECTS OF CONFLICT IN ORGANIZATION Conflict in organization has some advantages and few disadvantages if it is not managed. In

organization many participants think conflict should be avoided and they often see conflicts are always destructive and it should be eliminated.

But in reality it is a limited view, because it is seen that all type of conflict are not destructive, some may result productive and some may nonproductive outcomes. But some participant views on conflicts is positive, they think conflict should be manage effectively and need to search the different ways to results the constructive outcome. Advantage: Conflict produces many benefits; first one, because of it people emotionally aroused with full potential to search and to find better approaches by comparing different approaches which may be useful for get better and desired results.

It helps them to boost their creativity and improves their ability for developing new ideas. Thus helps them to experiment different way to achieve the goal. And second benefit is problem can be confronted and solved, so that conflict can be brought to the surface. Disadvantages: Conflict also produces disadvantages if it is not manages properly in time, and many leads to bad results. It also raises many problems like, people may focus on personal issues, they may not cooperate properly which increases stress and people may feel fear of defeating this directly reduces their confidence and motivation level.

So it is very important to manage conflict in time. Manager should be aware of conflict and its outcomes and he should apply appropriate conflict resolution strategies, when they found conflict affecting to achieve the goal. Let us see some positive and negative outcome of conflict in working place: According to a survey, many practicing managers spend approximately 20

percent of their time to deal with conflict situation in working environment.

Schmidt records some positive and negative outcomes of conflict.

(NEWSTROM, W. 2007. Organizational Behaviour: Human Behavior at Work.

2Th edn. Singapore: McGraw-Hill/Irwin) Positive outcome include: ? Good

generation of new ideas ? People try for different and new approaches ?

Long-standing problems in any matter can be resolve ? Opportunities for

individual views clarification ? It improves creativity and interest of

participates ? It gives opportunities for individuals to test their abilities and

capacities. Negative outcomes include: ? People feel fear of defeating and

demeaned manner ? Ineffective communication increases the distance

between people ? Mistrust and suspicion among the people People

concentrate on own interest rather than organization goal ? Reduction in

cooperation which effect the teamwork ? And employee turnover increases.

CONFLICT OUTCOMES: Conflict in organization may produce four possible outcomes depending on approaches chosen by participates involved. They

are as follows: 1. lose-lose 2. Lose-win 3. Win-lose 4. Win-win Participant's

intentions and chosen strategies are the result of conflict outcomes. There

are many different conflict resolution strategies developed in the history, but

this different strategies designed for participate ntenation. CONFLICT

RESOLUTION STRATEGIES: There are five possible conflict resolution

strategies available, participant can select any strategy as he need and

apply them to reduce/remove the conflict. By using appropriate strategy it is

possible to achieve predictable outcome. These strategies are different from

each other, they are basically representing different concerns for one's own

desired outcome and for another's result. These five strategies are as follows:

Avoiding- In this conflict is avoided physically and mentally, this approach expects less positive outcome and hence reflects a low concern for either party's outcomes. Thus it results in lose - lose situation. **Smoothing-** In this strategy depending on the other party's interests problems are accommodate. This strategy approach focuses on one's own detriment by emphasizing on concerns for others which resulting in a lose-win outcome. **Forcing-** This strategy is depends on using power tactics to achieve the desired goal to win.

It depends on authority and aggressiveness in order to attain personal goals at the expense of the concern for the other party. This type of strategy result in a win-lose situation. **Compromising-** This strategy help to compromise own desires and thought by giving up something to gain something else willingly. It results with no clear-cut outcome. **Confronting-** This is one kind of strategy which helps to focus conflict directly and solve it by mutual understanding to work it through to a satisfactory resolution. This strategy helps to maximize the chances of achieving both party goals which resulting in a win-win outcome.

This strategies are effective can be chosen to win or lose by the participants. It helps to control the conflict and save the time to achieve the goal by reducing adverse harmful effects of conflicts. Avoiding and smoothing approaches are help to manage the conflict and the use of forcing approach may achieve short term goal but fail to achieve stated goal. Compromising

approach help to solve conflict but always desired goals cannot be achieved. Confronting approach is the effective strategy which solve conflict problem by facing directly by mutual understanding, hence chance of win-win outcome is more when compare to any other strategy.

CONCLUSION: Organization are dynamic entities, which is continuously changing its internal and external environments, to develop congruousness among the people, process and structure. As discussed contemporary perspectives on conflict, tell that conflict cannot be put on end to a state in organizational life. Conflict is dynamic activity that help us to emphasize on process, meaning, and variety of procedures and relationships. I think understanding conflict help us to better understanding about organization if it is in.

If there is a Conflict in any organization it help scholars and reasearchers to give insight understanding more about culture, power, change, development and other significant phenomenon in organization. Conflict may help to see the things in a new way, it help to promote different analysis, clarification in goals, increases energies, give chance for alternatives and changes, and complex problem can be solved. If conflict manage effectively it protect the organisation. Conflict enlighten the concept of rationality, which help better understanding and analyzing of organizational behavior.

Organizational conflict are not evil, and in fact there is no need to eliminate it, but it should be manage properly for enhancing individuals, groups, and organizational effectiveness. It is a phenomenon, just it can be constructive or destructive effects on organization, but it completely depends on how it is

managed by the management. Conflicts can be dysfunctional when people are not able to tolerate it, and the reason may be rigidity of the organization structure which gives fewer opportunities to changes. This may be because of ignorance of the participants who not give importance and ready to change any time when required.

So we can say that organization conflict may be because of ignorance, intolerance, vested interests, intolerant and rigidity. As discussed earlier conflict is not necessarily a bad thing, it is can be seen as a 'constructive' force and in certain circumstances and it can be welcomed or even encouraged. It helps improving organization design and functioning and to the decision-making process which help to adapt internal and external changes. If conflict identified and managed properly, it can help reduce the destructive influences in the organization. Organization ducation in subjects like Human Relation, Human Resource Management or Development, and Industrial Relations tell that conflict can be managed and its management is very important. And literature tells that how acknowledgement of conflict and its significant in the organization. So we can say that all type of conflicts are not bad, and it is always not necessary to remove, left, or ignore the conflict in the organizational life but it should be manage properly so that it help for survival of the organization without any effect on organization goals.

Now I can say that conflict leads to change, change leads to adaptation, and adaptation leads to survival. REFERENCES: 1. ANDERSON & KYPRIANOU.

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