Essay on organizational conflict

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Introduction

In running an organization, there is bound to be conflict. This is due to the fact that different individuals perceive different things and draw different conclusions from similar situations. To this end, each person tends to generate personal opinion, beliefs and interests. Such inherent differentiate approach to similar situations will cause members of the same organization to oppose issues presented by fellow workmates. The result is disagreements in the organization, which if not checked, would render the performance and the union of the organization in total disarray. Managers have the role of running a cohesive organization whose workforce needs to work together and iron out issues going beyond disagreements towards attaining a greater goal. However, recent perspectives have proposed that conflicts should not be viewed as destructive in nature. Such perspectives have proposed that managers should employ such conflicts in order to spur growth and some sought of internal competition. This research paper reviews the concept of

organization conflict providing the different perspectives associated with organization conflict.

Views of Organization conflicts

Organizational conflicts can be viewed from several perspectives depending how the management considers the conflict. The traditional perceptive which was quite dominant in mid 20th century considers organizational conflict a terrible occurrences in an organization . Traditional views of organizational conflict believe that a conflict in the organization is perpetrated by sections of employees who are either malicious or disinterested in the interest of the organization . Such view of the conflict is associated with violence, irrationality and destruction.

Traditional views of organizational conflicts argue that such disagreement should be fully eliminated, sufficiently suppressed or reduced . The management is expected to take an authoritarian approach to the conflict and assert their rule. However, such highhanded approach to managing the employees led to violent and non fruitful confrontations. Thus, labor union emerged as the apparatus that would be used to provide employer-employee relations.

A second perspective that has recently gained in attention and preference is the human relation view, also known as contemporary or behavioral view . The human relation view argues that conflict in an organization is inventible and therefore can never be fully wished away. Further, organizational conflict could also result in positive or negative outcomes. This view of the conflict insists that if a conflict is properly handled, it will lead to increased

performance in the organization. However, Sayles & Smith (2006) assert that the extent to which conflict increases the performance of the organization is rather limited and therefore the management must be keen to know when to deter further conflict. Thus, this view of the conflict advocates for limited encouragement of organizational conflict to a point where performance begins to be curtailed.

A more transformative view of organizational conflict is the interactionist view. While human relation view accepts and allows the conflict to persist in an organization but only to a manageable level, the interactionist view considers organizational conflict as a good thing and therefore encourages conflicts . The interactionist view considers a tranquil, cohesive, peaceful and a harmonious organization to be static and lacking in creativity. Verma (1998) argues that encouraging a consistent level of organizational conflict ensures creativity, innovation and viable engagements. It gives an organization some much needed internal competition that would spur growth. However, just as the human relation view, interactionist view appreciates that too much conflict may curtail performance. Therefore, the management needs to evaluate when such conflict begins to hurt performance and mitigate but not eliminate the conflict.

Functional conflict

The term functional conflict is used to refer to disagreements within an organization that serves the interests of the organization. It allows to the organization to further its interest and therefore meet its goals and expected

performance levels. The criminal system is composed of several agencies that enjoy such functional conflict.

One of the greatest beneficiaries of organizational conflict is the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the US and is composed of nine judges including the Chief Justice. Ideally, the Supreme Court relies on differing views of the nine judges in order to arrive at a verdict. Each judge is allowed to provide legal opinions and views and the verdict is put to a vote. Such constructive disagreement allows the judges to explore different issues associated with the case .

Dysfunctional conflicts

Contrary to functional conflicts, a dysfunctional conflict is one that threatens the interests of organization . A dysfunctional conflict deters the members of the organization from effectively executing their duties and therefore the performance of the organization is significantly curtailed.

Arizona's Maricopa County criminal Justice system is a good example of organization suffering dysfunctional conflicts . The county Sheriffs, the county attorney and the judges seem to be embroiled in unending conflicts. The sheriff's office accuses judges and the county attorney offices of corruption and racketeering. On the other hand, the attorney's office accuses the sheriff of poor management and investigation into corruption. These conflicts have painted the county criminal system in bad light.

Conclusion

Organizational conflict provides an organization with the opportunity to address different issues from different angles. While traditionally conflict was viewed as repugnant in nature, newer perspectives give room to conflict however the extent of such encouraged conflicts must be checked. Thus, it is upon the management to check such conflict and make sure that it encourages improved performance.

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