

Conflict management term paper

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Abstract

The study relates to the conflict management and a particular case has been explained for the understanding of conflict concerning cultural and ethical issues within the workplace. The recent conflict observed is about Tim and Laura and their issues of workplace and later, it converted into a major conflict. This conflict has cultural as well as ethical issues which need to be addressed in the case study by providing proper resolution of the conflict. In initial phase, it is important to identify the sources of conflict so as to analyze the further cultural aspects and understanding the methods of dealing with cultural barriers for resolution and effective communication. Then after, the evaluation of ethical implications concentrating on the particular conflict has been traced for understanding the ethical pitfalls. There are various forms of conflict resolution and the most suitable method of negotiation has been utilized for the conflict resolution. The creation of procedures has also been developed so as to deal with future conflicts concerning the same matter. And in last, the conclusion section concludes the whole case for covering the different aspects of study.

Introduction

The conflict management practices are largely taking place and the conflicts are taking place in public in a huge manner. In reality, the conflict takes place secretly and it remains unobserved and unnoticed most of the times. The mentioned case is an informal conflict and the conflict resolution. In this conflict, the informal conflict resolution has been explained in context to the cultural and ethical concerns within the organization.

Source of the Conflict

It is important to understand the sources of conflict for the purpose of analysis and in this case, the young woman, Laura and Tim was involved in the conflict. They both work in the same organization where Laura works as a copy editor in one of the major publishing company and Tim works as a senior editor in the organization. There were seven other employees who work as a team in the company including Tim. Laura has worked for a month in the company and then, she went for a happy hour after the work timings. The team has consumed alcohol in a fair amount and at the time of leaving from the place, Tim offered Laura to share the cab and share the ride with Laura. Laura have accepted the offered and sat in the same cab. As she sat in the cab, Tim suddenly made an aggressive sexual move towards her and Laura was horrified by the incident. She instantly pushed him and told him to get out of the cab. Tim got out of the cab.

On the next day, Laura was apprehended about the last night reaction. Tim was not supervising Laura but still, Laura was worried about the reaction of that cab incident at her workplace. Tim went to her office and apologized for his unethical behavior in the cab. Laura decided not to pursue the matter in the workplace as she was new to the place and job and the incident will affect her image in the company (Lewicki, 2007). Laura dint wanted to push the matter because she did not want to bring negative attention to herself. Laura accepted his apology but still, Tim used to express his apologies whenever he found Laura alone at the same place.

Tim could not recover from the incident and used every opportunity of expressing his apologies to Laura for next three months. The constant

apology at every place was considerably awkward for Laura and it was annoying her (Connell, 2011). Laura has already accepted his apologies at the first time but after three months, she reached to the point that he should stop apologizing and therefore, she confided with some co-workers about the dilemma. And then after, the co-workers lost the respect for Tim and Tim sensed that some of the workers know about the incident by the way they interact with him at workplace (Rowe, 2005). The Tim and Laura are involved in a major conflict within the organization and the major source of conflict relates to the way of communication between the parties and the conflict could not be resolved in a proper manner.

Analysis of cultural aspects of the conflict

The initial source of the conflict relates to the sexual advance of Tim towards Laura in the cab which was a private enclosed setting. These overtures are inherently private but their consequences are played public in context to organization. It is considered as the informal private conflict and handling of this conflict will be manifested through non rational approaches and expressions. The non rational expressions such as gossip, emotional intact, aggressive behavior etc is strongly related to the case (Friedman, 2008). In the conflict of Laura and Tim, the instances of privacy are concerned and the non rational discourse is mainly dominating so as to find out the ways to express their disagreements and conflict with each other. Consequently, the apologies made by Tim became a non rational expression for Laura as they were conveyed in private to Laura. Laura responded to the initial apology in an informal manner but the private interactions have their impact on the work and office environment in a considerable manner. In fact, the major

reason of conflict for Laura relates to the privacy concern of the conflict and to keep the confidentiality of the matter. The role of conflict resolvers relates to the handling of conflict and unlike formal conflict resolution (Papero, 2010).

The resolution process of informal conflict is completely different. The confidentiality of conflict is very important unless the permission of expression is given in a formal manner. The informal dispute resolution options were taken into consideration for the management and resolution of this conflict. The informal dispute resolution options were listening, role playing, and development of options, information sharing and reframing the concerns. After the incident, the Laura and Tim were negotiating implicitly for maintain their credibility at the workplace and the interaction between Laura and Tim was implied to the testing of their values. Both have considerable value for their reputation in office. Particularly, in the conflicts of harassments, the options of informal resolution are offered rather than formal processes of grievance resolution (Costantino, 2006).

The analysis of scenario has indicated that the Laura and Tim are negotiating for the power and continuously negotiating for maintaining their reputation and credibility in the workplace. If Laura was not concerned about her image and reputation, then she might have told the director of company about the cab incident but both wanted to maintain their professional stand on priority and wanted others to view them with respect in the work place.

Methods for dealing with cultural barriers to effective communication or resolution

There are certain methods for dealing with cultural barriers to effective communication and resolution which need to be understood in an appropriate manner for better clarifications within the study. The case relates to the informal conflict resolution and therefore, the applied method is the theory of “ Interest based approach” (Bartunek, 2007). This type of conflict resolution has individual differences and helps the other party to avoid the situation. The methods are mentioned below for better understanding of dealing with cultural barriers and maintain effective communication and resolution.

- Setting of priority: The priority on relationship have to be set to ensure the mutual respect and thereby, avoiding conflicts (Connell, 2011).
- Separation of people and problems: It is important to recognize the differences between the conflictive positions and it enhances better communication as well (Gold, 2009).
- Attention to the interests: Listening can enhance the understanding power of individual and adopting the position of individual in an appropriate manner.
- Understanding the Facts: The effective communication can be established by proper understanding of facts and their impact on further decisions.

Ethical implications of intervening in this conflict

There are major ethical implications in this conflict case as the Laura and Tim were involved in a private informal conflict and could not improve the situation for a long time. The ethical issues surrounding the negotiation of

Tim and Laura were the major concern in this study. The negotiation tactics were not clear between both of them and on the surface, Tim have apologized several time but could not he was inept in the ability to understand when to stop apologizing (Rowe, 2005). And at the same time, the apologies were intrusive to Laura and later, it caused to lose his goodwill. Laura was dependent on her job for survival and therefore, she could not take risk of job and accepted the apology in initial time. She cannot escape from the situation of harassment but at the same time, she could not even quit the job. Laura was behaving ethically and could not tell Tim to stop apologizing to her. Tim was not aware of the problem causing to Laura because of his continuous apologies as he did not had any intentions of being intrusive.

At that moment, Laura should have expressed and enlightened the situation about her inappropriate behavior. And Laura should also have passively accepted the situation. The cab incident was hidden from the awareness of public and even at the work place and because of this reason, the anxiety of Laura has risen and she shared with few co-workers about the incident (Merchant, 2006). The incident has become populous at the workplace and the flow of communication has been continuously growing within the organization. The co-workers have lost respect for Tim and the secret of cab incident have not only hindered the open communication but also created unnecessary estrangements in a considerable manner.

The matter has been resolved with the help of interest based mechanism as it is meant to resolve the ethical concerns and implications. In the interest based mechanism, both the parties identify their own interests and concerns

so as to reach to the mutually acceptable agreement and later, the agreement have to be accepted by both the parties. In the case of Tim and Laura, the interest based mechanism in context to negotiation has been decided as the best feasible approach to resolve the conflict in a considerable manner. The understanding have to be made through techniques such as listening, facilitation between Tim and Laura, mediation of conflict and problem solving process so as to resolve the mutual acceptable agreement and resolve the conflict (Gilbert, 2011). The interest based mechanism have also been considered as one of the major dispute method resolution because it provide great satisfaction to both the parties and provide proper outcomes and less strain to the parties. The primary interest of Laura was to have a challenging and good reputable job but she was getting panicky and anxiety feeling whenever she was seeing Tim in the office. Laura wanted to be seen as a competent professional and the Tim's interest was also the same. Therefore, the interest of both the parties was same and mutually accepted to resolve the conflict.

Resolution of the Conflict

It has been realized that the Laura and Tim have similar interests and it has been suggested to Laura that they should talk in private to each other for resolution of the conflict. The communication system has also been facilitated to them to mediate the disagreements and Laura agreed to the matter. Tim should also ascertain that he is willing to talk to Laura about the matter and as he got to know that the Laura have approached for discussing the incident, he also agreed. It has been explained that the conversations pertaining to the conflict have to be held in private with confidence. It has

been conveyed that the feeling of Laura has been victimized and harassed because of continuous apologies of Tim and now, she wanted to resolve the conflict. It is indicated in the discussion that the reaction to first apology was ambiguous for Tim and it was unsatisfying resolution for Tim and therefore, he keep on expressing his apologues to Laura. Laura dint thought that Tim was serious in his apologies and therefore, she has given generalized reaction to him in the initial time. Tim continued to express apologies to express that he truly meant the apology. It has been considered that Tim had no intentions of hurting Laura or harassing her or causing any kind of emotional distress to her. But Tim's repeated apologies were acting as reminder for the denigrated position of Laura.

Laura also felt guilty afterwards about her behavior after the declaration of Tim that he had no intentions of hurting her. Tim admitted that the cab incident was a mistake and he truly regret for his embarrassed behavior. Tim justified his repeated apologies as a serious attempt to make himself clear to Laura and certainly don't know about the harassmet of repeated apologies to Laura. The matter has been resolved by the discussion and conflict resolution has been made between both the parties in a considerable manner.

Procedures for dealing with future conflicts

The procedures of dealing with future conflicts have to be created for avoiding the future conflicts within the same parties for better and sustainable resolution of conflict within the organization. It is indicated in this case that Laura has accepted the apology of Tim in first time after the occurrence of incident. Tim has continuously expressing his apologies to

Laura because he was not clear about the expression of Laura. Later, Laura realized that her response was not very clear and it made Tim more conscious because she has not expressed any reservation for accepting his apology for the incident.

Hence, Laura have clearly stated her acknowledgement of accepting Tim's apology and got to know the reason of continuous apologies of Tim (Lewicki, 2007). The conflict have been resolved after the acknowledgement of apology by Laura but also held to the opinion of Tim, Laura was overreacting to the matter. Laura has also indicated that she is satisfied with the resolution and agrees to the particular point that Tim does not negate her feelings. After the progress of resolution, they agreed to work in the same workplace with positive professional feelings and will avoid the conflict situation in future. After checking all the concerns, Laura have replied positively and Tim also considered that he doesn't have any problem in working with Laura in the same workplace. The conflict between Tim and Laura has been resolved with certain approaches and thereby, it is clear that they will not repeat the situations of conflict in future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the emotional expression have played a crucial role in the conflict and the escalation of conflict in a considerable manner. It is also indicated in the case that the awareness of emotional realm is the main reason of conflict and relates to the cultural and ethical concerns within the study. The conflict analysis and resolution have indicated that the emotional patterns exhibit the anxiety and can serve as warning signal for the required intervention. The theory of understanding the

conflict is very important and tends to resolve problems in a truthful manner and also help people in working through the conflict. The main goal of case study is to understand the conflict management which has been emerged due to ethical and cultural concerns at the workplace. The people involved in conflict need to share the concern and knowledge with the parties in conflict and then after, they need to be invited in life long process of differentiation. The step towards the self awareness and less reactivity is important to resolve the conflict and manage in a better manner. The case has indicated that the Tim and Laura could have prevented the destructive conflict by sharing their views and improves the situation at the workplace.

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