

# Personalized conflict and personal

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Unlike the substantive kind of conflict which if handled in the right way it can be very beneficial to both sides personalized conflict is never beneficial to the parties involved. This is because personalized conflict is as a result of emotions and perceptions about another individual's character, personality or motives. The other reason why personalized conflict is not a good thing is that it is about emotions of the individuals unlike the substantive which is about issues.

This means that efforts to solve the problem may never work because none of the party is interested in coming up with a solution, in fact in some extreme cases the parties involved may never imagine of resolving the problem. The other difficult in these kinds of conflicts is that they get worse with time if no efforts are made to convert them to substantive conflicts. This is because each individual gets angrier, looks for problems and expects them.

A good example of this type of conflict would be to look at the case in the substantive conflict but change the way the issue was resolved. In the above case when the supervisor approached the employee about being late he plainly showed his irritation. The employee on the other hand felt that the supervisor was accusing him and therefore he became defensive. The supervisor then lays down the rules of the organization and leaves the situation at this point.

After discussing the case due to different emotions and personalities the manager feels that the employee is lazy and that he is giving excuses for his laziness and on the other side the employee feels that the supervisor is aimed at getting him. In this situation the case gets worse because even

when the employee is some few minutes late the supervisor is likely to attack him. This caused a lot of anger and frustration in the employee and therefore he embarked on measures to relieve his anger and frustration. The employee would take longer breaks and took sick leaves more frequently.

This shows how personalized conflicts may result to the situation becoming more polarized and causes more harm to the organization. The perceptions of the two parties here were then justified as the supervisor viewed the employee as lazy and the employee viewed the supervisor as if he was out to get him and pin him down, this ended in both parties disliking each other. In most cases personalized conflict occurs because a substantive conflict was not handled in the right way and one of the parties or both did not cooperate in solving the conflict.

### 3. 3. 3 Other forms of conflict

There other forms of conflicts that may be experienced in organizations although they all belong to the two broad classes described above. These are: Relationship conflict is a form of conflict that occurs as a result of strong negative emotions, poor communication, misperceptions or repeated negative behaviors. Relationship conflicts lead to disputes which later results to unwanted increasing destructive conflict.

Relational conflicts in organizations may be managed by all participants learning to accept differing perspectives and emotions. Data conflict is a form of conflict that occurs when the workers in an organization lack the information required to make decisions, acquire the wrong data, compete for information, disagree on which data is important and interpret the data

available differently. Some of these kinds of conflicts are as a result of lack of proper communication between the workers and therefore they may be prevented with proper channels of communication.

Data conflict may also be as a result of some incompatibilities in the data associated with the data, collection, communication or interpretation. Most of data conflicts are resolved by data solutions. Interest conflicts are as a result of competition of recognized incompatible needs. This kind of conflict arises when one party believes that in order to satisfy their needs those of the opponents must be sacrificed. This form of conflict is normally expressed in form of the positions held by the different parties.

Interest conflicts may occur due to substantive issues like money and time. For one to resolve this kind of conflicts the conflicting parties must be helped in defining and expressing their interests so that it may be easier to address all the interests. Structural conflicts are as a result of external forces to the parties involved like, physical resources, time, geographic locations and changes in the organization. It is necessary to assist the parties that are in this form of conflict to understand and appreciate those external forces that affect them.

Just like the data conflicts the structural conflicts are also mostly resolved through structural resolutions. If both parties agree and appreciate that a conflict has an external force then it is likely that the parties will jointly address the conflict leading to a resolution. Value conflicts are as a result of foreseen or actual incompatibilities in the belief systems of two or more parties. Values are defined as the beliefs that individuals use to give

meaning to their lives and they explain what is regarded as bad or good according to a certain group of individuals.

Although different values are not supposed to cause conflicts they do when one group of people tries to force some values to another group or when people have beliefs that do not allow some divergent issues. Trying to change the beliefs of one party in case of a value conflict will only worsen the situation and the best way is to support the expression of each party's values and ensure that they are acknowledged by the other party (Bolton, 1986).

### 3. 4 IMPACTS OF CONFLICTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Conflict is an unavoidable normal component of life that takes place when issues that people care about are incompatible and the effect of this may cause a huge economic and emotional backdrop on an organization and its members. Some of the undesirable effects of conflicts include misuse of time. This means that employees and managers spend a lot of time on issues brought about by conflicts instead of using this time for the carrying out productive work to attain the goal of the organization. A high level of turnover from the employees is another undesirable consequence of conflict.

Research conducted in 1990s indicated that a very large number of employees leave their jobs because of unresolved conflicts. Lack of proper management of conflicts in the workplace leads to high levels of stress from the workers and the organization incurs a lot of expenses due to the increased healthcare cost. A journal dealing with cases of environmental and

occupational medicine reported that about 50% of the cases of absenteeism in the workplace were as a result of stress due to conflicts.

Between the year 1995 and 1999 stress as a cause of absenteeism increased by 318% and the larger source of this stress was due to conflicts in the workplaces. The other major consequence of conflicts in the workplace is the high legal fee incurred by organizations in their aim to settle conflicts out of the organization. A survey conducted in 2005 indicated that in every 10 American companies 9 of them are involved in a case involving some kind of litigation. Unresolved conflict may cause delays in projects of the organization and this eventually leads to missed opportunities in the market.

In cases where conflicts lead to inconsistent information or confusion in the workers the customer relations may be greatly affected and this may lead to losses in the organization due to reduced sales. Work groups or teams are an effective way of working in most organizations but this may fail due to conflicts within the workers hence leading to a reduction in the productivity of the organization. Organizations that are faced with the problem of numerous unresolved conflicts always find it almost impossible to attract and retain good workers.

In general the following are the major consequences of conflicts in the workplace: low morale in the employees, increased employee turnover, decrease in productivity of the organization, increase in supervision work, decrease in quality of products and services, failure to achieve deadlines, increase in the employees' stress, distrust among employees, lack of collaboration in the organization, split alliances, abusive behavior, decrease in the customer satisfaction level, negative reputation of the organization

from the public, fractionated activities and lack of a management credibility within the organization (Wilmot and Hocker, 2007).

Given all the consequences of conflicts in the workplace as indicated above it is necessary to go further and define the effects of conflicts and quantify them. The consequences of conflicts may be quantified into 3 classes comprising of; first order effects, second order effects and third order effects. First order effects of conflicts: these are the consequences that can be easily quantified and they are mostly the results of a certain conflict.

A good example of these kinds of effects is when a conflict between two parties in an organization leads to one party leaving the organization. The first order effects in this case are the costs incurred by the organization in replacing the employee that has left. These costs include the training cost for a new employee, termination costs and the expense incurred in the recruitment of new employees. In the second order effect of conflicts it is assumed that there is a period of time spent before the new employee becomes productive to the organization.

Trying to evaluate the impact of a new employee on the effectiveness of the team is difficult and it is also difficult to measure the change in the productivity of a team as a result of the new hire. This serves as a good example of second order class of effects because it does not lead to a specific known problem. These kinds of effects are very hard to quantify. The third class of conflicts is the third order effects. This happens as a result of repeated conflicts in the organization hence the effects of the conflict become part of the culture of the organization.

These kinds of effects lead to an unfavorable working environment that is dominated by distrust, fear and aggressive behaviors as a result of non-resolved conflicts. These effects cause a major harm to the reputation of the organization and hence it becomes difficult for the organization to hire and retain people of good character. These kinds of effects are very difficult to quantify and they may not really lead to the failure of the organization.