



Republic of the Philippines
SOUTHERN LEYTE STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF TEACHER EDUCATION
San Isidro, Tomas Oppus, Southern Leyte

GRADUATE SCHOOL

SEMINARS IN MANAGEMENT
SECOND SEMESTER 2018-2019

ARTICLE REVIEW #1

JEARE V. CANTA

Ed.D-EM Student

Agents of Conflict in the Organization and Its Resolution

Citation: Chaudhry, Atif M. "Organizational Conflict and Conflict Management: A Synthesis Literature" Journal of Business and Management Research, 9 (2015) 238-244

Abstract

Conflicts as a natural and inevitable aspect of human interaction may cause functional or dysfunctional consequences according to the management style. Hence, management of conflict is extremely important for organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This review article intends to expose the agents of organizational conflict and reveals its resolution to aid an effective and productive management conflict in the organization. Nevertheless, the components of emotionality, acceptability, importance and resolution potential can provide insight into the potential harm of conflict.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management, Organizational Conflict, Affective Conflict, Procedural Conflict, Task Conflict

Introduction

Conflicts as a natural and inevitable aspect of human interaction may cause functional or dysfunctional consequences according to the management style. Hence, management of conflict is extremely important for organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and some writers consider it as the most important issue in the management of the organization.

The article “Organizational Conflict and Conflict Management: a synthesis of literature” intends to draw the key themes from the extant literature on nature of conflict and its key dimensions as well as the factors that contribute to conflict escalation or mitigation. The author claimed that “conflict is a cohesive framework of behavior and perception of organizational members, which is triggered (or maintained) by the feelings of being deprived with an awareness of incompatibility with others”. It also stated that “conflict at the workplace serves as an indicator, identifying the malfunctioning systems within an organization, helping us in their identification and alerting us to strategically take the necessary steps to manage it effectively”.

Harolds & Wood, 2012 pointed that conflict has the capacity to change important aspects of the organization, such as reward or resource allocation and administrative allocation. It's not only the existence of conflict that can lead to such alterations. It depends on the magnitude of the conflict that what type of changes will occur as a result of it and which areas will be influenced by it. Additionally, conflict is not always dysfunctional and it can be of importance at times. Nevertheless, it also draws attention towards the prospect that assuming conflict as a functional part of people and processes portrays a partial aspect of this phenomenon.

De Dreu (2008) has offered further speculation for the nature of conflict as being functional or damaging for the organization. It has been argued that conflict can support organization in moving towards growth, though, such generalizations portray it as an innately beneficial factor for the organization. It has been further stated that the dysfunctional aspects of conflict tends to have a more profound effect on the groups and teams at the workplace as compared to functional aspect.

A commonly used model to understand conflict types focuses on interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflict within the workplace (Jehn & Bendersky, 2009). Other models of conflict have adopted a different perspective to this phenomenon.

Instead of limiting their perspective to the direction of conflict within or outside the group, researchers have delved into more generic models of conflict (Rahim, 2008). According to Passos and Caetano (2015), affective conflict arises when an incongruity occurs in the emotional experience of two or more employees. On the other hand substantive conflict is related to the organizational processes, where employees may experience disagreement in terms of the ways in which specific organizational tasks can be performed.

Task conflict can be manifested in scenarios when team members get different directions from different department. The employees may have to face instructions from their supervisor and other departmental heads which may be incompatible. From a constructive perspective, task conflict enhances creativity, members get alternate ideas for the task at hand, it stimulates discussion and constructive feedback from the group members is likely to flow in, so as a result the group performs better. It has also been observed that availability of varied perspectives helps the workplace teams to offer better productivity as the knowledge of different employees is assimilated to perform the allocated tasks (Wlodarczyk, 2010).

Affective or Relationship conflict is an intricate phenomenon as various factors can trigger or inhibit its presence in a work team. Bezrukova, Jehn, Zanutto and Thatcher (2009) have identified workgroup 'fault lines' as a key feature which promotes conflict among the group. Since members associate themselves with the subgroups within a larger work team, this association can result in issues such as prejudice towards some members of the group. As a consequence, the employees experience affective conflict within the team. In addition to this, fault lines can also stir negative feelings of one work team towards another, leading to intergroup conflict.

Procedural or process conflict entails the differences of opinion pertaining to the distribution of work responsibilities. Within the context of procedural conflict, the group members may debate over which task should be performed by whom, putting forward different perspectives (Jehn, 2007). It has been further argued that intricate nature of workplace procedures and presence of bureaucratic organizational structure may enhance the chances of such procedural conflict (Jehn & Bendersky, 2008). Even though allocation of work responsibilities can give rise to conflict among work teams, the management continues to use the tools of job rotation and job enrichment to increase the level of motivation of the employees. This indicates that procedural conflict doesn't carry as damaging consequences as affective conflict. Nevertheless, arguments over job responsibilities can extend beyond simple procedural discussion, moving

towards personal based argument, thus triggering affective conflict. On the contrary, procedural conflict can help the group members in identifying the person job fit within the group, taking the various perspectives into consideration.

A great deal of research in the domain of organizational conflict has been centered on the personal factors and their contribution in creating, maintaining and enhancing conflict within an organization. Task conflict on the other hand has not received the same level of attention from the scholars. Task conflict primarily is viewed as a disagreement related to the end result of the organizational processes (Tidd, McIntyre & Friedman, 2014; Vodosek, 2007).

Moreover, Jehn (2012) has made an important contribution by identifying the presence of four components of intragroup conflict: negative emotionality, importance, acceptability and resolution potential. These components are not only related to the context of intragroup conflict, but can also be applied on interpersonal and intergroup conflict within the workplace.

Based on these studies, the author presented the article systematically. His article is not biased and contains sufficient and adequate information to justify each idea. Indeed, he cited various researchers to support his claims about organizational conflict and conflict management that aid to avoid opinionated notion.

Article Summary

The research studies have enhanced our understanding of the nature and components of organizational conflict and its effects on group performance. It has been observed that not every incident of conflict is harmful for an organization. Nevertheless, the components of emotionality, acceptability, importance and resolution potential can provide insight into the potential harm. A conflict can cause to the group performance and organizational productivity. The type of conflict determines the degree of these components, thus resulting in the increase or decline in employee performance. The interplay of these dimensions in a way create a context within which the members of a work team interact with each other, present different opinions and move towards a mutually agreed course of action. On the other hand, conflict contexts (task, process or relationship) which are marked by high emotionality can be regarded as the formula for definite disaster.

Critical Reflections

This article wanted to develop a model that would identify the key types and relationship between the factors that trigger, promote or diminish organizational conflict. It is perceived that this model would give a better and a clearer understanding to the readers. It provides systematic information in the sense everything is accurately and clearly defined. Indeed, it is stipulated in the article the agents of organizational conflict and its resolution. Each agent and resolution is well-explained provided with concrete and specific examples. However, statistics or illustrations on every agent and resolution were not found in the article. This may provide a strong evidence that would really determine which among the agents of conflict frequently arise and so with the best effective and efficient resolution.

Contrariwise, the article presented a clear definition on every concept. There is further explanation to each agent and resolution with sufficient evidences even there is no statistics and illustrations presented. Still, it provided the readers understand the article well. This also offers new knowledge to the subject reader that could be used in the field most especially when managing conflict in the organization and running it.

Conclusion

The article provides a clearer and better understanding about the different types of conflict and the influence of its components on group productivity. Determining such conflict and influence would allow the management and team leaders to decide how to pursue and handle with conflict. It can also help them in making decision about mitigating the occurrence of negative conflict in future, while maximizing on the constructive potential of conflict.

Further Research

Many conflicts are the result of differences in attitudes, values, and perceptions. Sometimes, without even realizing it, we bring feelings or concerns into an interaction that predisposes us to react in a certain way. For example, if you are afraid of dogs and encounter a neighbor with a dog while out walking one morning, you may react with fear or even hostility. Upon reflection, you realize this fear is due to a fear of animals you've had since you were a child. But the neighbor, without knowing this background, might misinterpret your strong reaction and conclude you dislike the neighbor rather than fear the dog. Without a chance to communicate—for the neighbor to share his or her perception with you and for you to explain the background behind your reaction—it is likely that you will each emerge from the interaction with a vastly different

understanding of what just occurred, and with different, possibly negative, opinions of each other.

Conflicting values are a common and difficult-to-resolve source of conflict between people. Differences in religious beliefs, attitudes towards diverse others, clashes in family values, or in work ethic might result in interpersonal differences that surface in the work environment. For example, a young consultant who must leave work by Friday afternoon is viewed by her colleagues as a slacker when they are left to work late on a client deliverable. The fact is she is an Orthodox Jew. Her manager knows this but her colleagues do not. In this case it would be preferable for her colleagues to be aware of her beliefs. This way the team could make accommodations for her early departure on Fridays, and she could perhaps offer to work late on Thursdays. Fear, confusion, anxiety, and hostility are common attitudes and perceptions and a frequent source of conflict between individuals and groups, and these feelings are often magnified when the individuals are demographically different. As can be seen from the above example, these attitudes toward and perceptions about others can be long lasting and self-fulfilling. When such feelings are allowed to develop, conflict is bound to occur.

References

- Almost, J., Doran, D. M., McGillis H, L., & Spence, L. H. K. (2010). Antecedents and consequences of intra-group conflict among nurses. *Journal of nursing management*, 18, 981-992.
- Avolio, B. J. & Bass, B., 2008. Transforming Leadership Charisma. *Emerging Leadership Vista*,
- Bezrukova, K., Jehn, K. A., Zanutto, E. L., & Thatcher, S. M. (2009). Do workgroup faultlines help or hurt? A moderated model of faultlines, team identification, and group performance. *Organization Science*, 20, 35-50.
- Cabarteja, M. C., 2012. *School Administrators Involvement in the Implementation of Environmental Management Program*. Unpublished Dissertation, Urdaneta City University.
- Catubay, M. R. S., 2013. *Management of Stakeholders Inputs to K to 12 Basic Education Program*. Unpublished Dissertation, Urdaneta City University.
- De Dreu, C. K. (2008). The virtue and vice of workplace conflict: Food for (pessimistic) thought. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, 5-18.
- Herrera, M. M., 2012. *Human Resources Management of Secondary Schools*. Unpublished Dissertation, Urdaneta City University.

Maguire, S., Allen, P., & McKelvey, B. (2011). Introduction. In P. Allen, S. Maguire & B. McKelvey (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of complexity and management* (pp.1–26). London, UK: Sage.

Nair, N. (2008). Towards understanding the role of emotions in conflict: a review and future directions. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 19, 359-381.

Passos, A. M., & Caetano, A. (2005). Exploring the effects of intragroup conflict and past performance feedback on team effectiveness. *Journal of managerial psychology*, 20, 231-244.

Ren, H., & Gray, B. (2009). Repairing relationship conflict: How violation types and culture influence the effectiveness of restoration rituals. *Academy of Management Review*, 34, 105-126.

