



ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT AND ITS RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Dr. Piyush Mehta*

Mohit Sharma**

Abstract: *The concerned research paper has drawn attention towards various aspects related to conflicts in an organization; that influence total framework of performance and related behavior of people i.e. the employees at work. The research paper has primarily sought to extract various conflict redressal and resolution strategies and hence propose desirable solutions to the managing an effective organizational performance to counter the conflict situations. In addition, it has also presented an insight into different kinds and sources of conflicts, congruent resolution strategies and application of the same.*

Keywords: *Conflict, Redressal, Resolution Strategies, Organizational Performance*

*Assistant Professor, Department of Business Management, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan - 173230, Himachal Pradesh

**PhD Scholar (Agribusiness), Institute of Agribusiness Management, SK Rajasthan Agricultural University, Bikaner- India



INTRODUCTION

Conflict has been associated with situations embodying contradictory or irreconcilable interests between two opposing groups, assuming the form of an impasse pertaining to breakdown, delay or difficulty in decision making process. Conflict has been defined as a process in which an individual purposefully makes a concerted effort to offset the efforts of another individual by some form of blockage that causes frustration to the latter in accomplishing his goals or furtherance of his interests.¹ Likewise, it is visualized as the active striving for one's own preferred goal which, if accomplished, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred goal(s), thereby causing hostility (Dwivedi, 2010). Likewise, it is visualized as the active striving for one's own preferred goal which, if accomplished, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred goals, thereby causing hostility. Too much conflict produces strong negative feelings, blindness to interdependencies and uncontrolled escalation of aggressive action and counteraction. Almost every working relationship will produce some degree of conflict across time. The challenge for the manager is to manipulate conflict to an optimal level of intensity (Carsten, et al., 1997). Opinions and issues are a good place to look to find conflicts. The existence of opposing opinions can and often does produce conflict, the seriousness of which is determined by the strength of and emotional attachment of those opinions (Cowan, 2003). Conflict can be either constructive or destructive to the functioning of a group or unit. When it's too high or too low. Conflict hinders performance. At an optimal level, there is enough conflict to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity, allow tensions to be released, and initiate the seeds for change, yet not so much as to be disruptive (Robbins, et al., 2010). Organizational conflict as it stands now is considered legitimate and positive indicator of effective organizational management. It is now recognized that conflict within certain limits is essential to productivity. Conflict can be functional to the extent to which it results in the formulation and creative solution to the right problems or the effective attainment of subsystem or organizational objectives (Rahim, 2011).

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Conflict is a fact of organizational life and there have been instances where conflicts have occurred time and again, even after the application of resolution techniques and management strategies. Management of conflict in any organization is the major



responsibility of managers/executives, so in order to create a dynamic and healthy environment conducive to effective working in the organization. Hence stems an urgent need to analyze various issues to avoid further conflicts. The negative impact and undermining consequences can be reduced or minimized by developing effective strategies, after assessment and knowledge of various issues and source of organizational conflict. Dealing conflict effectively improves quality, reduces cost upgrades leadership, and stimulates team work; while poorly managed conflict poses a gigantic threat to the organization as a whole because this disrupts smooth and efficient working as well, which in turn if still in prolonged manner, can result in long term disasters.

- (a) To study different kinds of conflicts and the factors leading to these conflicts.
- (b) To examine and analyze the conflict management styles.
- (c) To highlight the problems and challenges in the implementation of conflict resolution strategies.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design :

The present study was conducted at a Solan based pharmaceutical company, Zeta Laboratories Pvt. Ltd; choosing the concerned firm on the basis of Convenient Sampling wherein questionnaires were obtained from as many as hundred respondents .

A well structured questionnaire was constructed to collect the primary data, while secondary data sources comprised of manuals, periodicals and official documents of the organization. Further, the statistical tool applied for data analyses was the Total WeightageScore method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gender status of respondents mainly comprised of male gender, whereas female respondents were somehow little reluctant to comment on the interview schedule. Whereas, the Age status of respondents were categorized into four distinctive range segments, where respondents aging from 19yrs to 25 years were found inclined to reveal information regarding organization conflicts. The positional status in the organization has been mainly segmented into four strata, where operational level respondents were more keen to reveal and share there opinions on the research concerned. The income status of the respondents were also categorized into four parts, where respondents falling in the



range of monthly income from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 were more inclined to portray their substantive thoughts on the research subject. Even experience of the respondents were also taken as the key basis of the research analysis, where respondents carrying the experience ranging from 1 to 5 years were more inclined to share their comments on the research questionnaire.

Figure 1.1: Kind of organizational conflict in relation to its frequency of occurrence

Kind of organizational conflict	Frequency of occurrence				
	Frequent	Rare	Never	T.W.S#	Rank
Intrapersonal	26	32	42	184	II
Interpersonal	30	44	26	204	I
Intergroup	18	40	42	176	III

#Total Weight-age Score: $26*3+32*2+42*1=184$ (Source: Author's own computation from field survey (2013))

Figure 1.1 indicates that the interpersonal conflicts were mainly observed to be dominant in the organization under study. Further, it was observed that largely it was due to non-agreed actions; expression of hostility towards one another, exaggerating the weaknesses of others and public criticism or people not wanting to work together.

Figure 1.2: Degree Level of organizational conflict

Kind of organization conflict	Degree of organizational conflict			T.W.S#	Rank
	High(3)	Medium(2)	Low(1)		
Peer Group	30	60	10	220	I
Employee to Employee	30	42	28	202	II
Employee to Administrative	14	46	40	162	IV
Department to Organization	26	30	44	182	III
Organization to Industry	6	36	58	148	VI
Industry to Government/ Society	18	24	58	160	V

#Total Weight-age Score: $30*3+60*2+10*1=220$; Source: Author's own computation from field survey (2013)

Figure 1.2 indicates that the 'peer group' conflict was the most frequent form of organizational conflict. It indicates the relevance of similar interests, needs and related aspects of the members belonging to a particular peer group. The next level is of employee to employee conflict; followed by department to organization; organization to industry and industry to society/government conflict.



Figure 1.3: Factors of organizational conflict

Factors of Organizational Conflict	Frequency of occurrence			T.W.S#	Rank
	Frequent	Rare	Never		
Task Interdependence	40	52	8	232	II
Scarce resources	22	60	18	204	VII
Contrasting perceptions	34	44	22	212	V
Personality Differences	40	42	18	222	IV
Ineffective Communication	42	42	16	226	III
Ambiguity of rules/Roles & procedures	32	46	22	210	VI
Non – Reliability	20	54	26	194	VIII
Workplace incivility	20	38	42	178	IX
Personal stress	52	30	18	234	I

#Total Weight-age Score: $40*3+52*2+8*1=232$; (Source: Author's own computation from field survey

(2013)

Inference:

In reference to factors raising the organizational conflicts, Figure 1.3 indicates that the personal stress followed by task interdependence and ineffective communication; were the major reasons for conflict in the organization. The other significant reason as reported by majority of respondents was personality differences, contrasting perceptions, ambiguity of roles/rules/procedures, scarce resources and non reliability. However, there were few respondents who reported workplace incivility as one of the main reason for conflict in the organization.

Figure 1.4: Conflict resolution strategies practiced in organization

Conflict resolution strategies	Number of respondents	Percentage
Accommodation	32	32%
Collaboration	41	41%
Compromise	14	14%
Avoidance	8	8%
Competition	5	5%

(Source: Author's own computation from field survey (2013)

As far as conflict resolution strategies practiced in organization are concerned, Figure 1.4 indicates that the collaboration strategy; followed by accommodation and compromising; were the most preferred strategies by the organizational employees; for conflict management. Collaboration involves face to face confrontation to accomplish the



common interest of all the parties. It is also evident that conflict management strategies utilized less of competing and avoiding behavior.

Figure 1.5: Major challenge for managing conflict resolution in organization

Major challenge for managing Conflict	Number of respondents	Percentage
Cooperation	46	46%
Organizational quality decisions	22	22%
Conflict management skills	18	18%
Individual development	14	14%

(Source: Author's own computation from field survey (2013))

Figure 1.5 indicates that the major challenge involved in organizational conflict management is 'cooperation'. It is because until and unless each and every single individual puts his/her best efforts in the attainment of organizational goals; in line with personal goals as well; any resolution strategy would dwindle there and then or would not work that best as it could if supported by all and hence strengthened. It is followed by organizational quality decision, conflict management skills and lastly individual development.

Figure 1.6: Problems caused by organizational conflict along with associated level

Problems	Level of conflict			T.W.S#	Rank
	High	Moderate	Low		
Wastivity	22	40	38	184	I
Productivity reduced	6	36	58	148	III
Interfering organizational operations	22	30	48	174	II
Cooperation & cohesion deterioration	18	38	44	174	II

#Total Weight-age Score: $22*3+40*2+38*1=184$; ; (Source: Author's own computation from field survey (2013))

Figure 1.6 indicates that the conflict of any form; at this particular organization has resulted maximum in 'Wastivity'; followed by cohesion deterioration and interfering organizational operations both on an equal level, and lastly by reduced productivity. Thus it seems that the conflict at the organization in concern; has resulted mostly in Wastivity, either in terms of material, resources, financial resources or human resource.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the sources of conflict examined, it was significant to find out that the personal stress was a major source of organizational strife. One can owe this reason to the fact that life is running faster than life. Task interdependence and ineffective communication were the other major factors of organizational conflict, while workplace inactivity and non-



reliability have been mentioned as the reason for conflict by relatively lesser proportion of respondents.

In context to the conflict resolution strategy, it was found that most of the respondents viewed collaboration as the most appropriate strategy, among all the other conflict management styles. It seems that a problem solving approach where various opinion are confronted and hence resolved through agreed upon goals and action; was considered to be the best approach, in the organization concerned, a middle ground search through compromising and smoothing were the other preferred strategies, also it is pertinent to note that avoidance was found to be the least appropriate strategy which indicates that respondents believed relatively lesser in leaving things to chance by withdrawal and hence making them to smolder.

So far as the problem caused by the organizational conflict are concerned, Wastivity was found to be dominant one, followed by deterioration in cohesion, interference with organizational operation and hence reduction in productivity. An organization stands for a vision but when conflict is an inevitable figureelement of organizational setting, it definitely affects the organization. In the concerned firm, this effect was found to be pronounced in the form of wastivity either in terms of material resources, financial resources or human resources.

It was further observed the major challenge involved in managing organizational conflict through any of five resolution strategies was cooperation. It was noticed that a collective effort was a challenge of utmost importance to the respondents. The possible reason could be that no strategy would work best as it could if it lacks conformity of all, if not all then a major fraction of those involved. The other challenges were quality decision, conflict management skills and individual development.

REFERENCES

1. Carsten, K. W., Dreu, D. and Vliert, E.V.D., 1997. Using Conflict in Organizations. Sage Publications: London, pp:193.
2. Cowan, D., 2003. Taking Charge of Organizational Conflict: A Guide to Managing Anger and Confrontation, Personhood Press: California, US. pp: 16.
3. Dwividi, R.S. (2010); Human Relations and Organizational Behavior, Macmillan India Limited Publications, New Delhi



4. Hocker, M. and Wilmot, A. (1985); *Interpersonal Conflict and Understanding Human Behavior at Work*; 16(2-5).
5. Lisa and Tromley (2005); *Developing Managerial Skills In Organizing Behavior*, Prantice Hall Publications.
6. Mc Grath E.H. (1998); *Basic Management Skills for All*, Prantice Hall Publications.
7. Newstrom, J.W. (2007); *Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work*, Mc Graw-Hill Publications.
8. Ongroi, H. (2009); *Research Journal of Business Management*, Vol 2(1), pp16-24.
9. Pantela, H. (2007); *A Framework for Understanding Conflicts in Global Virtual Alliances*, vol 3, pp 52-56.
10. Rahim, M.A., 2011. *Managing Conflict in Organizations*. Transaction Publishers: New Jersey, US. pp: 11.
11. Robinson, J. (1974); *Conflict Management in Community Groups*, vol 2, pp 142-146.
12. Robbins, S.P., Judge, T.A. and Sanghi, S. 2010. *Essentials Of Organizational Behavior*, 10/E . Pearson Education Inc.: New Delhi., pp-225-226
13. Sayeed, O.B. and H.B. Mathur (1980); *Conflicts in the Organizational Settings*, vol.5, pp 32-41.
14. Sudha, G.S. (2003); *Management Concepts and Organizational Behavior*, RBSA Publishers.
15. Van Gramberg, B. (2003); *Journal of Dispute Resolution*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp 233-242.