

“A STEP FORWARD BEYOND THE TIP OF ICEBERG IN CONFLICTS : AN EMPIRICAL STUDY”

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INTRODUCTION

Steven V. Thulon quotes that “Conflict builds character; crisis defines it”⁹. Conflict is inevitable in life. It became a necessary and healthy part of healthy relationships. Most of us experience conflicts or skirmishes in every walk of our life, starting from home to work place, which is natural and unavoidable. It depends upon individual perspective to face conflict in positive or negative manner.¹

In organization, most of the people resource and people management team and to look at conflicts at one look, and may be due to time constraint or other factor constraint, they don't see beyond one certain level. This article focuses on those areas, which can be seem to be simple, but which in fact causes more problems.

There is a close relationship between conflict and organizational performance. The very mention of the term 'conflict' envisions fights, riots, or war. In fact, on virtually every day of every year one can find dozens of armed combat situations somewhere in the world. During the typical workday, managers encounter more subtle and nonviolent types of opposition such as arguments, criticism, and disagreement². But, there is also belief that, moderate level of conflicts enhances organizational performance. Chun and Mcgginson define conflict as “the struggle between incompatible or opposing needs, wishes, ideas, interests, or people. Conflict arises when individuals or groups encounter goals that both parties cannot obtain satisfactorily”³

Conflicts can lead to search for solutions. Thus, it is instrument of organizational innovation and change². It does impact not only organization, but also individual performance. Conflict can either be bane or boon according to the situation.

This paper helps to take a deeper look into the perspective of, what impact conflict brings into organizational. It does the analysis of whether conflict has positive or negative impact on the organizational performance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out which factor influences largely on conflicts arousal.
2. To study about the association between the team size and post conflict behavior.
3. To study about the association between the age group and post conflict behavior.
- 4 a) To study whether female members are independent of time period.
- 4 b) To study whether female members are independent of time period.
5. To study relationship between compatibility among the members and mental stress caused due to that.
6. To find out whether conflicts has positive or negative effect on the organizational performance and on the individuals

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kirchoff and Adams (1982), there are four distinct conflict conditions, i.e., high stress environments, ambiguous roles and responsibilities, multiple boss situations, and prevalence of advanced technology.⁴

According to Kirchoff and Adams, 1982, Traditional theory says that conflicts are caused by trouble- maker, conflicts are bad, conflicts should be avoided or suppressed, but contemporary theory states that

conflicts are inevitable between human beings, conflicts are often beneficial the natural result of change, conflicts are and should be managed.

Almost 80 percent of workers in Quebec indicated that they have often or occasionally witnessed workplace conflict in the last year. This according to a survey published today by Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines agrees; a Quebec based Human Resource Professional Association.¹⁰

A 2005 UK survey by Roffey Park found that “78% of managers are suffering from work related stress, 52% have experienced harassment, 46% have seen an increase in conflict at work.”

42% of a manager's time is spent addressing conflict in the workplace.⁶

Conflict in the workplace has clear effect on a company's bottom line and more importantly on the happiness of the staff⁶

Conflict resolution absorbs 30-40% of a manager's time in the workplace.

25.8% of Hr personnel spend over 10% of their time per week dealing with conflict. This translates to somewhere between 3.5- 4 hrs lost per Hr employee per week, meaning a loss of 23.5 hrs per year⁷

Different views of values, organizational structural limitations, and historical events are core issues frequently serving as the basis for conflict. The other major basis for conflict is competition for limited resources. Competition arises over tangible resources (e.g., land, money, food, and water) and intangible assets (e.g., power, appreciation, stature, or companionship).⁸

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H₁: Ego issues and miscommunication have significant influence on Conflicts arousal.

- H₂:** Team size is not independent of Post conflict behavior
- H₃:** Age group is not independent of Post conflict behavior
- H₄:** Female members are not independent of Time period.
- H₅:** Male members are not independent of Time period
- H₆:** There is significant correlation between compatibility among members and mental stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The research was conducted in the Months of February 2011 with the help of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed through various methods, such as in person, through mail etc..The primary data collected as a result of the survey has been systematically tabulated and analyzed. The sample size was 100 respondents from IT Industries in Pune. The sampling method was simple random and judgemental. For test of Hypotheses, Chi-square test was used. Other analytical method adopted was Frequency distribution, descriptive statistics.

INTERPRETATION

FOR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

To study the analysis of the factors, which influences on arousal of conflicts in organization.

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION SCORES FOR DIFFERENT FACTORS INFLUENCING CONFLICTS

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ego Issues	100	4.19	.825
Miscommunication	100	3.94	.722
Rejected Feeling	100	3.42	.955
Family Issues	100	2.83	.954
Slang	100	3.07	1.130
Personality	100	3.26	1.211
Valid N (list wise)	100		

INTERPRETATION

Table No.1.0 shows analytical interpretation of the mean and standard deviation score for the different factors influencing conflicts. It is found that, mean value and standard deviation value for ego issues is $\mu = 4.19$ and $\sigma = .825$, Mis communication is $\mu = 3.94$ and $\sigma = .722$. Thus, it is concluded that ego issues and miscommunication are two factors which is the influencing factor behind conflicts.

FOR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

To study association between team size and post conflict behavior.

CHI-SQUARE TEST BETWEEN TEAM SIZE AND POST - CONFLICT BEHAVIOUR

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.885 ^a	16	.752
Likelihood Ratio	11.571	16	.773
Linear-by-Linear Association	.967	1	.325
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 17 cells (68.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.			

INTERPRETATION

The Pearson chi-square value for a two tailed test is .752, which is greater than level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded, that team size is independent of post conflict behavior.

FOR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

To study the association between age group and post conflict behavior

Chi-Square Test between age group and Post conflict behaviour.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.376 ^a	16	.427
Likelihood Ratio	16.215	16	.438
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.119	1	.290
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 17 cells (68.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

INTERPRETATION

The Pearson chi-square value for a two tailed test is .427, which is greater than level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded, that age group is independent of post conflict behavior.

FOR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4

To study association between number of female members in the team and time taken to get back to work.

CHI-SQUARE TEST SHOWING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN NUMBER OF FEMALE MEMBERS IN THE TEAM AND TIME TAKEN TO GET BACK TO WORK AFTER CONFLICTS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.188 ^a	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio	18.512	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.647	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .66

INTERPRETATION

The Pearson chi-square value for a two tailed test is .001 which is less than level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded, that number of female members in the team is not independent of time taken to get back to work after the conflicts.

FOR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 5

To study association between number of male members in the team and time taken to get back to work

CHI-SQUARE TEST SHOWING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN NUMBER OF MALE MEMBERS IN THE TEAM AND TIME TAKEN TO GET BACK TO WORK AFTER CONFLICTS.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.885 ^a	4	.208
Likelihood Ratio	5.945	4	.203
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.454	1	.035
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.44.

INTERPRETATION

The Pearson chi-square value for a two tailed test is .208 which is greater than level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded, that number of male members in the team is independent of time taken to get back to work.

FOR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 6

To study the correlation between compatibility and mental stress.

TABLE SHOWING CORRELATIONS BETWEEN COMPATIBILITY AMONG COLLEAGUES AND MENTAL STRESS.

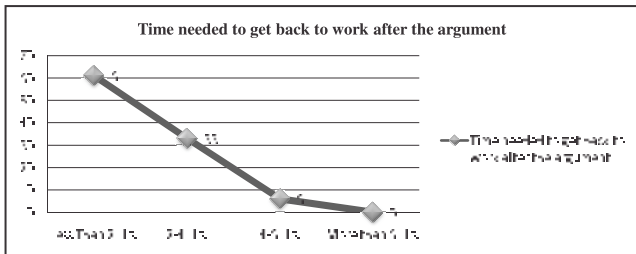
	Compatibility	Mental Stress
Compatibility Pearson Correlation	1	-.172
Sig. (2-tailed)		.088
N	100	100
Mental Stress Pearson Correlation	-.172	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	
N	100	100

INTERPRETATION

The value of r value is -.1, which means that the compatibility and mental stress are negatively correlated. Thus, we reject null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between compatibility between members of the group and mental caused due to incompatibility.

TABLE NO.7

TABLE SHOWING NO OF HOURS TAKEN TO GET BACK TO WORK AFTER THE HEATED ARGUMENTS.

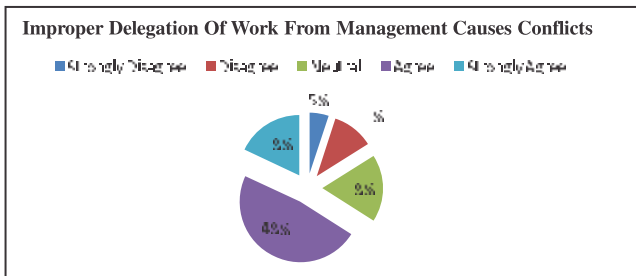


INTERPRETATION

On an average of 33 % spent 2-4 Hrs to get back to work after the heated arguments.

TABLE NO.8

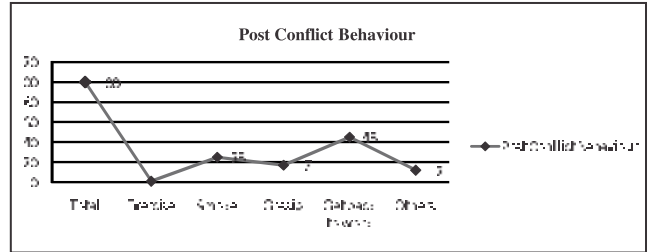
TABLE SHOWING EMPLOYEE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS INFLUENCE OF IMPROPER DELEGATION OF WORK FROM MANAGEMENT



INTERPRETATION

The survey result interprets that 48% accept to the fact, that improper delegation of work from management is one of the reasons that cause conflicts between the employees.

TABLE NO.9 TABLE DEPICTING VARIOUS BEHAVIOUR EMPLOYEES POST CONFLICT

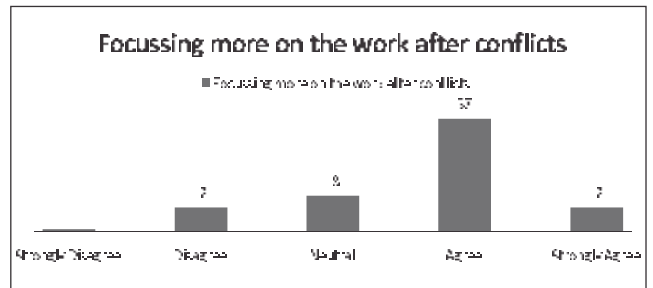


INTERPRETATION

The survey depicts the scenario, which says about 45 % of the employee behavior is not affected post conflict, but at the same time 25% prefer smoking.

TABLE NO.10

TABLE SHOWING EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR ABOUT FOCUS LEVEL



INTERPRETATION

The survey result states that 57 % of the respondents retain more focus level at work after conflicts to prove them.

FINDINGS

Findings of the study can be summarized as follows :

Table No 1 reveals that, ego issues and mis communication among the employees are the main factors which forms as a clout for the conflict arousal in the organization.

Table no 2 reveals that, the size of the team does not have any influence upon the post conflict behaviour of the employees such as

smoking, exercise, gossiping or getting back to work.

Table No 3 reveals that, age group of the employees, doesn't have any influence upon the post conflict behaviour of the employees such as smoking, exercise, gossiping or getting back to work.

Table No 4 & 5, reveals that, the female members in the team take time get back to work after the conflicts, whereas study also states that numbers of male members of the team are not dependent on the time taken to get back to work.

Table No 6 reveals that, mental stress caused after the conflicts doesn't have any correlation with compatibility among the members of the team.

According to table no.7 ,post the conflict, 33 % employees need 2-4 hours to get back to work, which indirectly indicates the time wasted due to conflicts but at the same time 61 % need less than 2 hrs to get back to work.

According to table no.8, apart from ego and miscommunication, 48% of the surveyed employees agreed that, the role of improper delegation of work from the management plays the major in inducing conflicts.

According to table no.9, study shows that 45% of the surveyed employees get back to work after the conflicts, But 25 % prefer smoking after the conflicts.

According to table no.10, conflicts helps in the positive way, 57% of the surveyed employees felt that, they are more focused on their work after the conflict.

Respondents had mixed feeling about, whether conflicts are boon or bane. One felt that conflicts affect the mental stability.

It helps in stimulation of a search for new facts or resolutions and also create an ambience of healthy competition in the

organization, so to some extent it can be present.

SUGGESTION

Employees should learn to channelize the post conflict behaviour in the right manner, which will be a constructive tool.

Smoking as the way adopted after the conflicts suggest the possibility of health hazard in long run. So, the Hr team should interfere and help the employees suppress arguments and conflicts.

Employees prefer exercising after the conflicts, so management can set up a small work out area at the walk able distance so, that employees can de-stress, This helps in behavioral regulation.

Organization should be careful when apportioning work to the employees. Proper channel should be choose, when delegating work to employees, which helps them in understanding the work clearly, which in turn helps avoid conflicts between working members of the team to which the task is given.

For employees, if the conflicts arise between them, it's better to forego the ego and have a face to face communication to clear the matter among them.

If the task assigned to them is not clear, employees should get clarified to avoid miscommunication which helps to curtail conflicts. Unsolved preceding conflicts should be given importance.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a leap frog effect in the minds of the employees about the conflicts. When the individuals and organization handles the conflicts with right attitude, it brings out positive energy among the employees, which in turn helps the individual and the organization for the better performance. In formal working environment, Hr manger should take to

create right ambience to discuss clearly about the goals to be achieved for further growth, strength & weakness of the employees and norms should also be stated in clear manner.

Work place also needs conflicts to build the synergy among the employees, which helps them to bring out their skills.

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