

How Styles of Conflict Management Apply by Managers at Workplace? With Concerns of Different Theories and Views

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Abstract

Recognizing the workplace and its atmosphere can be more imperative part in organizational and industrial psychology, also this fact in most of the management fields area considered, comprehensively. Examining effective factors that increase or decrease the level of work outcomes and change the feeling and performance of staff and managers at the workplace assumed more critical. Likewise, distinguishing operative factors that help and support managers at work to cope with issues and difficulties that maybe occur during work, is valuable and crucial. Conflict be situated as one of these important factors that can appear in any workplaces, and it's avoidable. In this regard, recognizing the conflict as one of the main organizational factors and the ways of control and solve it, is very important. Furthermore, in the present literature review, the researcher endeavoured to clarify the conflict and applying styles of its management via managers at the workplace. These styles comprised Accommodating, Avoidance, Collaboration, Competing, and Compromising that have practical applications in the management area. The literature review has likewise shown that various theories and views towards a conflict that have been explained in dissimilar decades through diverse theorists, psychologists and sociologist. In conclusion, based on exploring various styles of conflict management in a diverse situation; similarly, applying and considering different methods, the researcher explained that we cannot ignore or reject any styles of conflict management because each of them is beneficial, if managers improve their knowledge and identify the exact situation, they can apply the correct style. Moreover, through using precise style, managers and staff can observe a peaceful work environment and high level of work outcomes in work duration.

Keyword: *Accommodating, Avoidance, Collaboration, Competing, Compromising, Conflict Management Styles, Managers, Workplace.*

Introduction

Modern society attempts to cope with any difficulties that may happen in various segments; this reaction likewise occurred for a organizational section. Managers try to find an acceptable solution way to control and decrease problems and issues (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). So, one of these unusual issues is the presence of conflict that can appear in many types of workplaces, undoubtedly. By the way, the present investigation focused on conflict and applying styles of its management by managers at the workplace via considering different views and theories.

Management

Management assumed as an organizational factor that has deep antiquity. In this case, the management should be investigated from the family as a basic and first step; subsequently, it will be linked to society and the workplace. Management as a critical factor also has been deliberated in every place and determined as the main factor in any organization or workplace (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). On other words, management documented as an essential factor for a wide range of social sciences that should be formed very regular; with this explanation, a manager must know lots of strategies and methods in that field. A manager truly should emphasize on the main principle of management such as organizing, planning, and correct conducting. Consequently, management has been known as one science and art that included organizing and leading different groups for achieving one unique aim (Rees, 1991).

What is Conflict?

At the first step of knowing conflict recognizes and obtaining more information regards culture and society that every manager plans to start his or her work (because without any information toward culture and society, a manager cannot handle the strategies and aims of the workplace, correctly). One of the imperative factors that has been regarded about conflict is understanding and fully knowing from both side of conflict and disagreement (sometimes maybe the perceived conflict is not true.). There are many reasons for appearing of conflict such as income or salary, job or career, power, etc., but the main point in the conflict is a real understanding, that should be considered, cautiously (when one side of conflict tries to stop the other one, for achieving his or her goal, the conflict will appear) (Rezaeian, 2016).

The conflict has a disorganized structure and has been changed in during a time; in fact, it appears when there is disagreement. The conflict can be described as an agreement between two or more groups that following some types of disagreement and incompatibility. In actual fact, conflict can be appearing in any organization or workplaces; incidentally, it can effect on feeling and attitudes of individuals or in vast figure it has been appeared in huge structure or plane of individuals in any project; furthermore, the individuals experienced conflict and presence of issue based on their position at a workplace. According to psychologists' view conflict assumed as internal contradictions; likewise, based on sociologists' opinions the conflict has been referred to

disagreement between individuals and groups. Additionally, conflict described as inconsistency to obtain any golden goal, that can be cause of dissatisfaction amongst individuals (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Generally, the conflict has deeply meaning in every culture and society that majority of them described it as controversial, annoying one another and have a difference. Conflict likewise has unstable structure and has been changed in time duration. The main point that should be considers carefully is the conflict references. This factor appears based on human activity and influences on his or her behaviour, and in some cases can be creating some special behaviour. These behaviours usually satisfy an individual’s requirement in every condition. But there is one negative point that should be reminding, this point is that individual for receiving or satisfying their desire maybe do any uncommon and abnormal performance that lead to numerous issues (Maslow, 1943; Harigopal, 1995). In continue, Figure 1 shows Maslow theory that has been draw based on researcher's study.

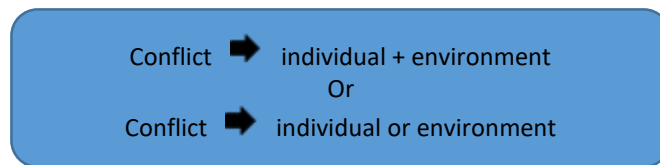


Figure 1: Maslow theory based on the researcher's study

Overall, the amount of conflict in any workplace has direct relation with its group size, professionals and activities (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Based on McNamara (2008) study, managers usually pass 20 percentages of their time to solving conflict at a workplace, and they believe it should be solving as soon as possible. The conflict can be appearing in different conditions such as: 1) high level of difficulties, 2) conducting performance in the negative way to abstaining some advantages, 3) helping people (as real form), and 4) helping people to recognizing contradictions.

Conflict Management

According to the presentation of conflict at a workplace, the way of facing and managing it from managers is super essential; moreover, a manager can play as instructor and defender (Bahmani, 2009). Based on conflict presentation in a numerous environment and situations specifying certain position for this factor can be hard.

Conflict Management Styles

According to common presence of conflict at a workplace, considering and applying different styles of management to decreasing, controlling, and in most of the time solving it in various situations is crucially important. In following Figure 2 shows styles of conflict management and in continue each of these factors has been explained, comprehensively.

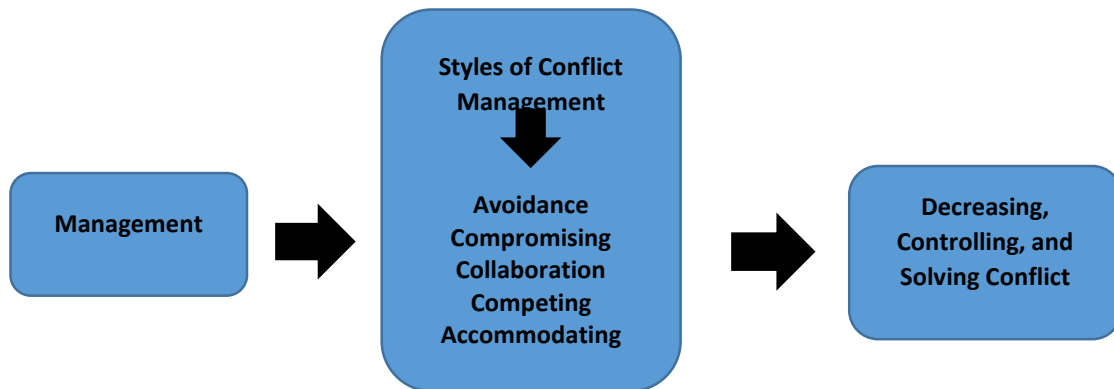


Figure 2: Conflict Management Styles

Competing

In this managing style, managers apply official power to solving the conflict and issues at a workplace; in reality, in competing style the manager in both status (he/she as one side of conflict, or as third person) endeavours to decrease or solving the conflict without any noises and attraction. In most of the time, managers in this style use threatening and aggressive behaviours such as staff temporary expulsion. The competing style has some different types that has been mentioned based on various view and studies of Weber. These types included personal competition (applying official power), coalition (creating a union with different groups for suppressing an individual via authority), and majority (leading to majority's authority to solving conflict). According to Fisher and Urey's studies, presence of hardening that has been appeared based on competing style has some disadvantages, such as: 1) flexibility (the individual showing some unreal flexibility regarding situation that is not satisfying), 2) spending time (The individual attempts to deceiving other people to endorsing his/her legitimacy; furthermore, achieving agreement needs more time), and 3) Blurry relations that referred to positioning which leads to inappropriate relation between individuals or groups (Farhangi, 2008).

Accommodating

Another style of conflict management is accommodating that can know it as smoothing behaviour in front of consistency. Reality, in this style one side of conflict efforts to satisfy other requirements although his/her benefits will be ignored (Kuzan, 1989). In point of fact, in this style managers endeavour to keep work environment quiet and peaceful without any tension and negative emotion, just only to achieve both side goals at a workplace (Luthans, 1992). Accommodating style has different aspects that can be refer to friendly behaviour, avoiding any violence and aggression, covering or disappearing faults, confirming positive behaviour and rejecting weakness, discussing toward agreeable subjects between individuals or groups, postponing solving conflict just only to decreasing any tension, forgetting inconvenient opportunities which appeared by individuals or groups, etc. , in overall, these managers try to cover issues and difficulties at a workplace (Farhangi, 2008).

Avoiding

In Avoiding style managers attempt to rejecting or neglecting conflict. In fact, the managers discard the whole benefits (both side of conflict). In other hand, managers do not mention any explanation or expressing regards their opinions and showing themselves neutral (Farhangi, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Compromising

In compromising style considered on benefits of both side of conflict or disagreement. Truly, the conflict condition managing in the positive way and the whole individuals or groups obtain benefits and more advantages. In actual fact, the parties believe to retreat for obtaining benefits for another side (each of them discards their requirements and winner or loser does not have any meaning in this management style). There are some methods for running this style. The “*middle way solution*”: as one of these methods referring to using appropriate solution in conflict situation, another method is “*scarifying*”: one individual ignore his or her requirement just for others benefits, “*separation between the parties*”: consider on separation those individuals who have problem together, “*relying on social roles*”: using traditional methods, and “*use of the third party*”: resorting to a mediator (Farhangi, 2008).

Collaboration

One of the effective and most favourable management styles is collaboration which has been known as unification. In this style the issue or conflict has been mentioned and examined deeply. In truth, the managers let individuals to express their words and opinions freely without any limitation, then the problems solve, and they reach a deal (Kuzan, 1998).

Conflict Management Theories and Views

There are several views toward management and conflict management that can mention them as principle and basic managerial structure in conflict field; these views included *Traditional View*, *Bureaucratic Theory*, *Collaboration Theory*, *Behavioural Theory*, *Classical Theory*.

In *Traditional View*, conflict recognized as negative factor, and the investigators believed the nature of conflict is destructive. This view was super considered in two decades (between 1930-1940) and shown that the consequence of conflict presentation is harmful and destructive. Besides, the traditional view emphasized on individuals who create conflict should be considered by others specifically managers, significantly. Despite many studies emphases towards traditional view, in exact duration, still this view has been remained as obsolete classic view (Kirchoff & Adams, 1982).

Bureaucratic Theory referred to exact execution based on an expert and stability, also coordination between groups and staff. In effect, the Bureaucratic Theory discussed work condition with presence of bureaucratic and mastering the official spirit without any kind or enemy (individuals appeared as impassive staff at a workplace) (Alaghe Band, 2017).

Collaboration Theory Collaboration Theory emphasized more on conflict and it believed that conflict assumed as natural issue between individuals at a workplace. Furthermore, in collaboration theory struggling and facing with conflict determined as specific states of a workplace and managers particularly those who have high position at work (Koklan, 1979).

Behavioural Theory, after Fordis studies, has been appeared and focused on obvious contradiction between individuals and title. In behavioural theory has been given emphasis on important presence and effect of staff in whole positions for solving issue and conflict at a workplace. In this

theory considered on conflict and ways of facing with this factor that should be organized positively; actually, in this theory highlights to listen various ideas then regarding opinions that expressed freely by the individuals, the changes appear. In this type of work environment, individuals showing more corporations and there are more rights equality at work, absolutely (Ghorbani, 2000).

Classical Theory has been emphasized by Tilor (father of scientific management), referred to disadvantages of conflict. In truth, the conflict recognized as negative issue that should be avoided and ignore by individuals. The Classical theory was matched with Traditional theory (1930-1940). Also, **Human Relations View** has been considered on conflict as natural phenomenon, the theorists believed that conflict is unavoidable issue in all groups and organizations. In Human Relations View proposed to managers learning to live with conflict; likewise, this view emphasized on advantage of conflict on individuals' efficiency levels. The Human Relations View has been started its investigation approximately at the end of 1940 decades, and it was considered till to middle of the 1970s. **Interactive Conflict View** considered on effective influence of conflict on individuals' efficiency in various organizations or workplaces. Also, in Interactive Conflict View encouraged and motivated leaders to keeping conflict (in appropriate level) for having creative groups at a workplace (Rezaiean, 2006).

Conclusion

Truly, the Competing style suppresses conflict, but the main issue or conflict will not be solved, and the problems and disagreements remain, and it only disappears temporary; in addition, this style decreases level of individual and groups performance at a workplace. Applying competing style in comparing with other styles likewise can be useful; in the meantime, all methods or styles lead to fail, or the manager does not have enough time to using other styles to solving the conflict, and he/she faces with emergency case; furthermore, he should use competing style to decrease the conflict at least (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Generally, accommodating style is not as effective factor to solving conflict at a workplace, because the reasons of conflict are not recognized via managers, and they only attempt to create peaceful atmosphere without any problems. Another factor also emphasizes this style is not appropriate for applying is that the high amount of cheating and backbiting amongst individuals

(usually, a manager does not prefer to solve problems or conflicts, so the individuals mention their problems to others such as colleagues); also, in this style the issues will be remained obscure. And lack of improving leadership that drives from a manager, because the manager does not have any contribution in coping with problems and conflicts. But then again, the positive point of this style is manager emphasizes more on friendly relationship at a workplace. Overall, the accommodating style has been used in a temporary situation or individuals and groups that faced with conflict only follow one vital aim.

The avoiding style will be applied in simple situation to circumventing and decreasing conflict (Luthans, 1992). Similarly, this style has been used in 1) less importance corporation and presence of significance issues, 2) more imperative of contact consequences compare with solution benefits, 3) keeping peaceful environment and decreasing tension, 4) collecting information to avoiding any immediate decisions, 5) solving conflict by other individuals as effective factor, and 5) presence of some factors that determined as prelude factors truly (Farhangi, 2008).

According to the important role of parties in ignoring their needs in compromising style, but still this style is limiter (the number of experiences and studies are limited.); as well, in this style creativity will be limited and finding any logical solution for parties' benefits is super difficult. We can apply this style only we believe it is the best choice to solving conflict (when both parties have same authority) (Terence & Larson, 1998). This style has been used to obtaining importance aims at a workplace, similarity and equality in parties' authority, solving difficulties in a hard situation, lack of time and high level of pressure, and receive support (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Consuming collaboration style has been confirmed and emphasized more and more because of its nature. As a matter of fact, in this style endeavours to find issues and difficulties deeply and solving them completely. Collaboration as an effective organizational factor is super vital and both parties determined as winner; in fact, this style recognized as winner-winner strategy (Kuzan, 1998).

Generally, there is not specific method or style to solving or decreasing conflict and issue at a workplace; furthermore, managers based on work condition recognize which style can be effective to controlling a situation and can play as solvent.

Recommendation & Limitation

In the present literature review, focused more on a role of managers at workplace to recognizing conflict styles management, and how to apply these styles in the correct situation. But the researcher suggested for the future studies also make a brilliant role of staff to recognizing style of conflict management and knowing different types of issues or problems that maybe occur during of work by offering some seminars or workshop that propose by managers, organizations, workplaces, or governments. Because it can be super helpful for controlling work environment at problematic condition, also it can be supportive for staff, because they became familiar with those difficulties and they are ready to cope with them.

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