

Exploring The Facets of Conflicts in Organizations: A Qualitative Case Study on Educational Institution

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Abstract

This research explores how commonplace disagreements are in workplaces, recognizing that individuals' varied backgrounds and aspirations make conflicts inevitable. From little disagreements to large disputes, conflicts have two distinct effects: they can either create an environment that is toxic and inhibits growth or promote creativity and productivity. Understanding conflict dynamics, underlying causes, and effects is the goal of this research, which also looks at effective conflict management and resolution techniques. The main topics of the study questions are the disputes that arise between people and teams and how those conflicts affect team dynamics and overall productivity. Ultimately, the research findings are intended to offer guidance for amicable dispute resolution, encouraging a constructive and forward-thinking workplace culture. These are found by conducting qualitative research using interview protocol as the research instrument

Keywords: *Interpersonal conflict, Team dynamics, Conflict resolution, Organizational growth, Resolution techniques*

Introduction

Conflicts in organizations are very common as people with various backgrounds, opinions, and goals work together in a workplace, and it is a process that involves people disagreeing (Rahim, 2023). Researchers have called conflict like the common cold. Everyone knows what it is, but understanding its causes and how to treat it is much more challenging (Wall & Callister, 1995) These conflicts can range from minor to major and can occur at different levels, between individuals, teams, or even different departments on a variety of things like disagreement over an idea, methods of working, ways of communicating or personal issues. Positively, disagreements can foster greater creativity, productivity, and problem-solving abilities (Tjosvold, 2008). They can inspire fresh concepts and make it possible to investigate various facets of a concept.

On the other hand, conflicts can also create a toxic environment, leading to a lack of unity among staff, decreased morale, and hindered growth (Abiodun, 2014). Conflicts can both positively and negatively affect the progress of an organization as they contribute to increased productivity, innovation, and problem-solving skills. New ideas can emerge, and different aspects of an idea can be explored, but at the same time, it can create a toxic environment which can adversely affect the company's progress. Most companies worldwide suffer due to a lack of unity among the staff. An unsupportive, uncooperative team can make an organization obsolete as new ideas face criticism and backlash, which is a major hindrance to its growth. According to (Pearson, 2010), workplace incivility constitutes a significant drain on American companies, resulting in lost time, effort, energy, focus, creativity, loyalty, and commitment.

Conflicts in organizations are becoming more and more common with time, as one is more focused on the intention of their colleague instead of the meaning of what is being said, even small disagreements and interference are taken personally. (Hartwick, 2001) Defined

interpersonal conflict as “a phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals.”

Different types of conflicts in an organization are introduced to create awareness and understanding of different kinds of conflicts and to handle them constructively. Interpersonal conflict has been considered the most common conflict, just between two individuals. Dislike, tension due to differences of opinions on work-related issues as well as non-work topics that could be on hobbies, personal choices, and other factors (Frone, 2000) found that interpersonal conflict with work peers was positively related to poor personal psychological outcomes such as depression, somatic symptoms, and lowered self-esteem. Even the smallest interpersonal conflict negatively impacts the progress of the organization, it is believed that managers should understand the conflicts and step in to resolve them, not only this but making sure to avoid conflicts in the future. Many ways are introduced to resolve and avoid organizational conflicts, creating a healthy and progressive environment.

Organizational conflict results from disagreement that arises when the values, interests, or ambitions of different individuals or groups are incompatible, and those individuals or groups obstruct each other's attempts to achieve their objectives (Ertürk, 2022). A few of the many detrimental effects of conflict include decreased productivity, decreased employee communication, a decline in motivation, and, ultimately, dissatisfied workers. However, a conflict does not always have to be bad. Most conflicts can serve as a great springboard for improving business outcomes as well as an impetus for organizational reform and expansion.

Appropriately identifying and managing conflicts can have several beneficial outcomes, such as fostering innovation and creativity within the organization, encouraging improvements in work quality, and easing tensions that may have arisen, etc. Additionally, if

a conflict results in positive changes, these should be welcomed to build respectful relationships among coworkers.

Research Problem

Understanding the dynamics and consequences of conflicts in organizations is the main research problem related to conflict in organizations (Guerra, 2020). It seeks to explore the root causes of disagreements, how they affect organizational performance, and the strategies for effective management and resolution. Finding ways to use disagreements to promote growth and innovation while reducing the likelihood that they will lead to dysfunction and a drop in productivity is the aim. Investigating the nature, types, and frequencies of conflicts that arise in organizations. This entails investigating how conflicts arise between various organizational structures and how personal histories, beliefs, and objectives influence them—assessing both the positive and negative effects of evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of conflict for an organization's growth, innovation, and productivity. Examining the most prevalent kind of conflict, interpersonal conflict, and how it affects psychological results like self-esteem, physical symptoms, and depression (Frone M., 2000). It's critical to comprehend the connection between conflicts at work and personal well-being.

Purpose Statement

Since employees in organizations have a variety of backgrounds, viewpoints, and objectives, conflicts are inevitable. These conflicts can occur at different levels, such as between individuals, teams, or departments, and can range in severity from small disagreements to large disputes. Conflicts can encourage innovation, productivity, and problem-solving skills, but they can also create a toxic workplace with low morale and stunted growth. The way conflicts are handled is crucial. Disagreements can become opportunities for innovation and organizational growth when they are resolved effectively. To maintain a positive and forward-thinking workplace, managers must be able to recognize and

resolve conflicts constructively. Ultimately, depending on how they are handled, conflicts can either hinder or help an organization advance.

Research Questions

- Why do conflicts occur between teams and individuals in the organization?
- Why can team dynamics and overall productivity be affected?

Research Objectives and Scope

- To explore the conflict between teams and individuals in the organization's
- To understand factors affecting team dynamics and productivity

Within the framework of this qualitative study on conflicts in an organization, we will focus on analyzing interpersonal conflicts in teams, particularly those involving breakdowns when interacting and rivalries over authority. While noting the variances in conflict dynamics, the study will largely examine disputes at the team and departmental levels. Geographically, the emphasis will be on organizations within the Karachi region, and the timeframe will incorporate the last five years. Additionally, it is important to note that external factors leading to further conflicts will not be tackled in detail. To provide a complete picture, a selection of sizes and organizational configurations will be represented by the selected organizations.

Lastly, this research topic is most closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.” SDG 16 aspires to create inclusive, responsible, and peaceful societies, as well as accessible justice and welcoming institutions. Accordingly, the research adds by aligning with the same goal of nurturing peace and resilient, well-functioning organizations.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of previous literature available on the given topic. It describes important research activities already done by different scholars and what research

gaps need to be filled. Conflict between organizations and a theoretical perspective is also discussed.

Christine Allee's research, published in 2023, indicates that self-development training significantly enhances interpersonal conflict management, enhancing conflict effectiveness. It also explains that subjective value interpretation is crucial for positive conflict resolution and that funding training programs can reduce the costly effects of interpersonal conflict at work.

	Author	Year	Topic	Quant/Qual	Region	Finding
01	Christine Allee	2023	Interpersonal conflict in the workplace: The role of self-awareness in constructive versus destructive approaches to conflict	Qualitative & quantitative	Other than Pakistan	Suggests an optimistic link between self-development training and effective control of interpersonal conflicts.
02	Nino Paresashvili	2021	Conflict management impact on employee productivity	Qualitative	Georgia	Inspects the influence of conflict management on employee output.
03	Muhammad Ehsan, Kishwar Ali	2019	The Impact of Work Stress on Employee Productivity: Based in the Banking Sector of Pakistan	Quantitative	Faisalabad	Studies the link between work stress and employee productivity.
04	Karen A. Jehn	2015	A Qualitative Analysis of Conflict Types and Dimensions in Organizational Groups	Qualitative	Other than Pakistan	Investigates everyday conflict in organizational work teams.
05	Bernard Oladosu Omisore	2014	Organizational Conflicts: Causes, Effects and Remedies	Qualitative	Other than Pakistan	Explores the causes, effects, and remedies of organizational conflict.

The Georgian research in 2021, conducted by Nino Paresashvili, highlights the importance of conflict resolution in addressing inefficient division of responsibilities, highlighting the need for effective management participation and addressing issues to increase productivity, despite challenges such as lack of knowledge and indifferent attitudes among employees.

A study conducted in 2019 in Faisalabad, Pakistan, by Muhammad Ehsan and Kishwar Ali found that employee productivity and work stress were significantly linked. Role conflict, role confusion, and work overload are some of the factors that lead to stress. The study suggests addressing workplace stressors and highlights stress's damaging effects on workers' physical and psychological health.

This qualitative research by Karen A. Jehn in 2015 offers a comprehensive analysis of organizational conflicts. Gathering information in different ways produces a generalized conflict model. It categorizes types of conflicts and provides a better understanding of conflict dynamics and suggestions on how it could be reduced or dealt with.

Bernard Oladosu Omisore's 2014 qualitative research investigation looked at the origins, consequences, and solutions of conflict in organizations. It stressed the need for early detection and conversations in resolving disagreements and the probability of both favourable and unfavourable effects.

Conflict is a common phenomenon in organizations, and it has been studied extensively in the literature. Interpersonal conflict in the workplace focuses on the role of self-awareness in managing interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. Allee (2023) contends that self-aware employees can learn positive conflict-resolution techniques. The study (Conflict Management Impact on employee productivity) emphasizes the effect of conflict management on staff productivity. The authors (Paresashvili, 2021) believe that successful conflict resolution can boost staff productivity.

Prior literature studies, conflict and conflict management, the two primary variables, have been studied extensively. According to the literature review articles provided, there is a lack of discussion regarding conflict management and how to resolve conflict. Addressing these research gaps is important for improving our understanding of management conflict and conflict management solutions.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research is conducted to determine the perspective on conflict in education management. The study employee Interview Protocol is the research instrument. For the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews are selected as a data collection tool. For doing so, semi-structured interview protocols is designed to collect data from the respondents in the education sector. The interview questions in the interview protocols is thoroughly validated from reliable sources before conducting the interviews with the university. Qualitative data collected from interviews is assessed and analyzed through the thematic analysis. A purposive sampling method is used for qualitative data collection. The study focused on organizations in Pakistan's education sector. The data is collected from TRC University of Pakistan. The decision of selection of a university will is based on a thorough literature review. The participants of this qualitative study are the management members of TRC University who are currently working in management.

The sample size for qualitative studies as compared to quantitative studies is usually very small (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Vasileiou et al., 2018). The researchers need to reach at a saturation point where no newer information is obtained from the respondents (Boatwright, 2021; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Based on the suggestions provided by different scholars on qualitative sample size, the sample size selected will be selected based on a thorough literature review with a motive to add more participants for the interview until reaching a saturation point (Kumar, 2018). Considering the above facets, the study focuses on a case study method with 3 interviews with management employees.

Trustworthiness and Validity

Multiple sources were involved during the data analysis, including observations, interviews, documents, and artifacts. The role, presumptions, biases, and reflexivity of the researcher were all disclosed in clear and comprehensive detail, as were the research design,

procedures, methods, and analysis. Feedback from participants, instructors, experts, and management was gathered in order to confirm the findings' accuracy, applicability, and usefulness.

Content Analysis

Qualitative methods were used to explore the meaning of the quantitative results. Consequently, the qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis using thematic to find out the themes and patterns in the data (Hycner, 1985). In total 6 interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted until they reached a saturation point (Boatwright, 2021). The collected data from each respondent was recorded with their consent and was transcribed from into manageable data for analysis. For content analysis, three steps were performed to retrieve the themes and patterns. Initially, coding was done on the transcripts to identify the key points. In the second step of sorting, the data was again evaluated to identify the similar codes and patterns based on their frequency in the transcripts. Finally, based on the two steps of coding and sorting, themes were generated in the third step of sifting (Mandal, 2018).

Content Analysis Matrix for Respondents (Sample)

Themes	Mr. A	Ms. B	Ms. C
Reason of Conflict in Organization	Miscommunication. Personality clashes, cultural clashes. When overburdened, individuals are more likely to get aggressive towards different situations. Lack of appreciation and motivation. Dominating personalities. Controlling environment. Resource allocation. Toxic culture in an organization. Bad leadership skills.	Cultural differences. Gap in way of thinking. Difference of opinion. Different interests. Undermining others. Disrespect. Trust issues. Lack of appreciation, recognition and motivation. Insecurities. Abuse of power. Not valuing hard work.	Discrimination on basis of gender, caste or color. No boundaries on jokes, no space kept between. Blurriness of consequences of crossing boundaries or invading space. Lack of understanding. Any kind of differences.

Team Dynamics because of Conflict	Conflicts in a team negatively impact team dynamics by disrupting workflows, causing project delays, and hindering achievements. The resulting low motivation leads to slacking, uncompleted tasks, and a lack of engagement in professional development, potentially stagnating careers. Persistent conflicts contribute to high absenteeism as employees may avoid a workplace with such issues. Indirectly, conflicts damage the organization's reputation and erode employee morale and trust, further affecting team dynamics.	The overall productivity and performance is everybody's collaborative approach. If the conflicts occurs within a team, the organization faces loss, challenges and obstacles and the team might underperform, play the blame game, have laidback attitude, rely on others, show casualness and not being on the same page.	Due to conflict the work comes on pause even if it small or big the whole week there's distraction and gossips which impacts organization's reputation. Big Conflicts lead to big loss and productivity and performance of the organization lacks.
Emerging Theme (Unique Point) , Blurriness of consequences: Outcomes are not clearly defined.			

Reasons for Conflict in an Organization

Conflict is something which is unavoidable in an organization as people of different mindsets and backgrounds come together under one roof. In an organization, conflicts can arise due to numerous factors, which can be small, like differences of opinion, or big scale, leading to the firing of employees, ultimately affecting the organization's productivity and performance. Organizations should understand the reason behind the conflict, communicate the issue and develop the best solutions to resolve it.

Team Dynamics Because of Conflicts

The success of an organization is not a one-man show; team dynamics play a crucial role in this regard. However, conflicts can adversely affect these dynamics, leading to decreased collaboration and communication and declining the overall productivity of the organization as the disturbed relationship within a team creates hurdles. Understanding and communication are essential for effective conflict resolution, which would also boost confidence and enhance productivity.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

The current research is conducted to identify the fundamental causes of conflicts and develop management and resolution techniques. Since employees in organizations have a variety of backgrounds, viewpoints, and objectives, conflicts are inevitable. These conflicts can occur at different levels, such as between individuals, teams, or departments, and can range in severity from small disagreements to large disputes. Conflicts can encourage innovation, productivity, and problem-solving skills but can also create a toxic workplace with low morale and stunted growth. The way conflicts are handled is crucial. Disagreements can become opportunities for innovation and organizational growth when resolved effectively. To maintain a positive and forward-thinking workplace, managers must be able to recognize and resolve conflicts constructively. Ultimately, depending on how they are handled, conflicts can either hinder or help an organization advance.

The first objective was to explore the conflict between teams and individuals in the organization. The results concluded that conflict is unavoidable in an organization as people of different mindsets and backgrounds come together under one roof. In an organization, conflicts can arise due to numerous factors, which can be small, like differences of opinion to big scale, leading to the firing of employees, ultimately affecting the organization's productivity and

performance. Organizations should understand the reason behind the conflict, communicate the issue and develop the best solutions to resolve it.

The second objective was to understand factors affecting team dynamics and productivity. The results concluded that an organization's success is not a one-man show; team dynamics play a crucial role in this regard. However, conflicts can adversely affect these dynamics, leading to decreased collaboration and communication and declining overall productivity of the organization as the disturbed relationship within a team creates hurdles. Understanding and communication are essential for effective conflict resolution, which would also boost their confidence and enhance productivity.

Recommendations

The current study recommends that data be collected over an extended period of time, if possible, to capture the dynamics of conflicts over time. This longitudinal approach can reveal the evolution of conflict and the efficacy of intervention.

It is recommended in the current study to create interview protocols with a mix of open-ended and focused questions. This approach allows participants to share their experiences and perspectives while ensuring that key topics related to conflicts are addressed.

Encourage open and honest communication among team members; this would help clear misunderstandings and clarify expectations. Also, accepting differences of opinion and taking criticism positively can help reduce conflicts on minor issues.

Organizations should monitor early signs of pressure or discontent among their employees. Consequently, they should address these issues at their earliest stages to prevent them from intensifying into major conflicts.

limitations

This research will benefit multiple associations in noticeable ways.

First, a deeper comprehension of the causes, dynamics, and resolutions of conflicts will develop as researchers and students in the field of organizational behavior acquire insightful knowledge about their complex aspects. This broadens the body of academic knowledge and enables researchers to expand and improve upon current hypotheses.

Moreover, gaining useful and situation-specific advice on handling workplace conflicts would benefit professionals and organizational leaders. The results of this qualitative research and in-depth interviews can provide real-world examples and a deep understanding of how various companies handle and navigate conflicts. This can help with the creation of conflict resolution plans that work well in particular organizational settings, which will ultimately lead to better working relationships and happier employees.

Furthermore, being aware of these factors might enable employees within the organization to have more fruitful conversations and support a positive workplace culture.

Future Directions

Future researchers can investigate conflicts that arise in digital and remote learning environments, particularly given the increased use of technology in education. Investigate how virtual communication and educational technology influence the nature and resolution of conflicts. Future researchers can combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand conflicts in educational institutions better. They can use statistical analysis or surveys to complement qualitative findings and identify patterns at a large scale.

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