A Descriptive Study on the Causes and Effects of Work Place Conflict and Present-Day Strategies to Curb IT

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ABSTRACT
Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive. Therefore, it is essential to understand the sources causing conflicts so that we can work to maximize productive outcomes and minimize destructive ones. The aim of this study is to investigate the common sources of conflicts and its impact over the organization and the general strategies to minimize the conflicts.

Key words --- Conflict, Sources, Causes, Effects, Strategies to minimize conflicts

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict in a workplace setting can be a normal part of doing business. Handling and resolving conflicts that arise in the workplace is one of the biggest challenges managers and employees face. Conflict is a normal and natural part of any workplace. When it occurs, there is a tendency for morale to be lowered, an increase in absenteeism and decreased productivity. It has been estimated that managers spend at least 25 percent of their time resolving workplace conflicts – causing lowered office performance. Companies have to learn to deal with conflict on a daily basis. In this article, we throw light on the various sources initiating and inducing conflicts, its ultimate cause and effect inside an organization and the ways to minimize and resolve the same.

II. CONFLICT

Conflict in the workplace is a normal occurrence in most organizations. Conflict is nothing but a misunderstanding/opposition between two or more people resulting from actual or perceived differences or incompatibilities. While organizational conflict, or workplace conflict, is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between people working together.

III. SOURCES OF CONFLICTS

Anytime people work together, conflict is a part of ‘doing business’. As conflict occurs when there is a perception of incompatible interests between workplace participants, the management should be effective in understanding the nature and sources of conflict in the workplace. Conflict, however, might not be so easily noticed. So the management should be keenly observing, to avoid the conflicts. The sources of conflicts include many aspects like poor communication, differing values and interests, scarce resources, personality and perception differences, competition for supremacy, aggressiveness, stubbornness etc. Added, there are many variety of sources of workplace conflict which includes interpersonal, organizational, change related and external factors.

IV. TYPES OF CONFLICTS

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS:
Interpersonal conflict is the most apparent form of conflict for workplace participants. It is easy enough to observe the results of office politics, gossip, and rumors. In many workplaces there are strong ethno-cultural and racial sources of conflict as well as gender conflict. This may lead to charges of harassment and discrimination or at least
the feeling that such things exist. People often bring their stresses from home into the office leading to further conflict. An additional source of workplace conflict can be found in varying ideas about personal success.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS:**

There are a number of organizational sources of conflict. Those relating to hierarchy and the inability to resolve conflicting interests are quite predominant in most workplaces. Labour/management and supervisor/employee tensions are heightened by power differences. Differences in supervisory styles between departments can be a cause of conflict. Conflict can arise over resource allocation, the distribution of duties, workload and benefits, different levels of tolerance for risk taking, and varying views on accountability. In addition, conflict can arise where there are perceived or actual differences in treatment between departments or groups of employees.

**PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES:**

Though the workplace brings together a wide array of personalities, Personality, quirky grab bag of traits, tics, reactions, and beliefs that distinguish one person's projected self from another's and which acts as the wild card of the workplace. Sometimes the differences in the workplace go way beyond personalities in terms of different backgrounds, genders, cultures, political and religious beliefs. Usually, the personality clashes in the workplace are often unavoidable, but when left unchecked they can cause considerable psychological stress and can lead to problems of anxiety and depression for those involved.

**TASK CONFLICT**

In a business or organization, task conflict occurs when two parties are unable to move forward on a task due to differing needs, behaviors or attitudes. It can be conflict over organizational policies and procedures, distribution of resources, or the method or means of completing a task.

**V. CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT**

One of the most common causes of workplace conflict is the personality clash. Individuals all have different values and beliefs, which affect the way they approach work and problem-solving. Clashes occur when workers have difficulty understanding or accepting others’ methods. Other causes include conflicting needs, poor communication that causes misunderstandings, scarcity of resources that results in competition between workers and poor performance by some employees that causes additional workload for others. However, conflict can have both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, conflict can result in greater creativity or better decisions. On the other hand, conflict can be dysfunctional if it is excessive or involves personal attacks or underhanded tactics.

Unresolved conflict in the workplace leads to miscommunication resulting in confusion or refusal to cooperate, quality problems, missed deadlines or delays, increased stress among employees, reduced creative collaboration and team problem solving, disruption to work flow, decreased customer satisfaction, distrust, split camps, and gossip.

**VI. STRATEGIES TO CURTAIL CONFLICTS**

Individual management use different styles to address workplace conflicts. Workplace conflict can be prevented from arising by hiring staff with balanced personality types and by fostering a company culture based on shared values and beliefs. Spotting the initial signs of conflict can sometimes be difficult. While some personality clashes will flare up into public confrontations and arguments, others may manifest themselves in more subtle ways, such as one employee withdrawing from their colleagues, or taking increasing amounts of time off sick. Other symptoms can include decreasing motivation, reduced social interaction or a drop in performance. Understanding the root cause of any personality clash can be first step towards resolving it. Management and heads can play a vital role in spotting problematic clashes early on, addressing the underlying issues and resolving them. Counseling is another method proven to be a helpful antidote in resolving the conflicts.

**VII. CONCLUSION**

Conflict has a bad reputation. Most often, conflict is associated with raised voices, heated debates, and high frustration. The famous adage, “two heads are better than one” is precisely about the advantages of conflict. Knowing the essence and causes of conflicts, managers can avoid them, or, when necessary, they can guide in carrying out of conflicts within controllable limits. Conflict also lead to the motivation of solving problems that otherwise go unnoticed, being able to lead to creative behavior. In the future it is necessary for the managers to have more knowledge about the possibilities of constructive settlement of conflicting situations.

There are a variety of ways to uncover such sources of conflict, including the use of personality testing instruments like Myers-Briggs, Thomas-Kilman, FIRO-B, and Personality Dynamics Profiles. In addition to this, confidential surveys, interviews and focus groups can be a good way of uncovering the conflicts.

**REFERENCES**