

Impact of Conflict and Conflict Management on Personality Development of Employees

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Abstract

Developing a personality of individuals is always a challenging factor for the organization and emerging employees. To sustain the growth and exploration of employees and business, it is must to tackle and resolve the issues. This paper tries to analyze the concept of conflict and its levels of influence on individuals and the ways to resolve them for their effective personality development. This paper is developed to know the cause and effect of conflict and provide insights on concepts, strategies and execution of methodology of conflict management for comprehensive development of individuals.

Key words: *Conflict, Impact of Conflict, Managing of Conflicts, Personality Development of Employees.*

Introduction

In the present business scenario, mutual understanding is the main factor of an individual to win or gain the competitive advantage. Undoubtedly, overall development of the individuals is the core element to lead a successful life. Although, conflict may ruin the whole image and self efficacy among the individuals. A conflict is lack of consistency between the two or more persons. The main objective of the study is to find out the impact of conflict on the personality development of employees. In the study of Apollo Space Program, expertise managers of different fields, arguable roles and debatable goals, limited authority provided to managers all are the sources of conflict. (Wilemon ,1971). Schedules, priorities, limited resources, technical

issues, poor managerial system, cost pressures, and personalities are also sources of conflict (Thamhain and Wilemon, 1974). In a study, different conflict management approaches were applied between the efficient and inefficient managers in Matrix organization. The team included the individuals related to different departments of the same organization. Project managers played the vital role as they were said to design the duties and tasks for the completion of the project, allocation of the members and group activities as earlier their duties were limited only up to planning and scheduling of tools and techniques used for the completion of project but this time the main focus was on team goals and team spirit and stressed to have a better and capable management to handle the conflict. (Baker and Wilemon, 1977; O'Brien, 1977).

Conflict: Conflict is the variation and discrepancies between the ideas of two or more persons.

The word conflict which is derived from the Latin 'Conflingere' means to come together for a war. It arises because of unassociated and unconnected ideas, beliefs or values among persons. Sometimes, it can be coupled with mental struggle due to incompatibility of views. It is an approach in which one party seems that there is something against their interest or opposite to their belief by the other person.

The concept of conflict is controversial as sociologists & psychologists have given different opinions.

Nature of conflicts:

1. Conflict is headway as it contains series of actions which is always started with misconceptions then it is followed by different interests, values and viewpoints.
2. It is inescapable because it is found everywhere.
3. It is based on discernment.
4. There is presence of antagonism.
5. There is reciprocal influence from others.
6. Conflict is multifaceted.

Classification of Conflict: Conflict can be divided as follows:

- **Intrapersonal Conflict:** It is the conflict which arises because of the disagreement with the thoughts and ideas of oneself with his own mind. It is a kind of psychological conflict

which makes a person sometimes to feel isolated, depressed and helpless. Although the key to solve the situation is within the hands of oneself.

- **Interpersonal Conflict:** This conflict is between the two different persons which is quite natural because of differentiating thoughts, beliefs and opinions. Consequently, one feels jealous and unkind sometimes.
- **Intragroup Conflict:** It takes place when there is misconception and disputation among the members within the group. There might be the situation when team members feel the chances of biased behavior or subjectivity between them.
- **Intergroup Conflict:** In this conflict, there is clash between the different group members of the same company. The conflict arises due to inaccurate distribution of resources or different goal settings etc.

Causes of conflict: A conflict may arise due to variant reasons which are specified as follows:

- **Differentiating human nature:** Every person belongs to different family backgrounds, different nurturing, unique learning and experiences of his life which makes him a recognized personality different from others. This is the root cause that each individual has unlike personality from others. Ergo, difference in judgment leads to cold war between them.
- **Erratic distribution of resources between members:** Uneven distribution of resources like money, material, men, machine and methods leads to dispute and sense of jealous among the members of the organization.
- **Bullying and Intimate Harassment:** Various employees face disrespect or vulgar phase by some of the colleagues. Although women are more victimized of intimate harassment by the males in the office which ends up at court case or resignation from the job which creates great havoc on the minds of employees. In the organization an employee may be provoked by the group of employees or by the superior resulting they feel really very stressed. (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2003a)
- **Disproportion of Authority and Responsibility:** Sometimes, there is uneven distribution of Authority and responsibility which hinders an individual to take initiative of doing something creative and unique because they may lack the equal proportion but is

also possible that there are some persons who do not deserve but they are having more power. So, there is lack of firmness and barriers to effective communication leads to clash between persons.

- **Altercation in goals:** Dissimilarity in goals of persons and groups create clash between them. Suppose one functional department wants supreme quality and other demands for the reduction in cost, consequently creates altercation in their visions.
- **Credence on each other:** Dependency on each other might lead to delay in work or sometimes non completion of tasks creates inter group conflicts among the members.

Effects of Conflict: Conflict among employees or between teams may create constructive or destructive domains (Ayoko, Callan, & Härtel, 2008) on them scrutinized as follows

- **Constructive Impacts:**

Conflicts accelerate productive change among the employees as it boost up their inner morale to solve the edgy situations with brilliant ideas which consequently end up at brainstorming approach. Individuals become more conscious, Creative and innovative. This segment not only constructs their confidence but also promote the wellness of the organization. They are more studious about their vision and escalate their cohesiveness with other team members. They become progressive and stellar decision maker who tackle every circumstance promptly. The Meta –analysis was done by various researches to evaluate the analysis on constructive approach of conflict management. Previous research has explained the positive influence of emotional intelligence with collaboratively resolve the conflict (e.g., Jordan & Troth, 2002a); Constructive conflict management is the main element to influence the development of leadership skills. As leadership skills privilege an individual to think out of the box so as to develop the strategies and grapple with situation .Even in Goleman’s model, one of the dimension is self maintenance and self regulatory approach assist an individual to be keep troublesome emotions while maintaining benchmark of honesty, calm and reliable. Ergo, emotional intelligence is one of the strong constructive approaches for handling conflict.

- **Destructive Impacts:** Organizational employees may concentrate more on irrelevant issues rather than their main focus on their goal. They might squander their maximum time on inapplicable focal point. The output of the concern would be decreased causing so many

issues and problems unsolved. As a result, money, status and reputation of the company may fiddle away. In case of severe situation, members may go to the intense level of violence which not only disrupt that employees but also adversely affect the quality of working life. Along with that individuals start getting absent from their jobs and eventually labor turnover rate escalates. The situation embarks on infirmity. To cite an example- Depression, Migraine, Insomnia, Isolation, Intense heart rate etc. As a result, poor professional life as well as personal life of employees. Both family and work life conflict creates so many issues that it negatively influences the job performance and job satisfaction of an employee. The other main factor can be explained as cultural diversity which has also the negative impact on the neuro system of employees. In the organization, everyone thinks about the demographic features like education, gender, culture, belief etc. are the predominant ones (Pelled, 1996; Tsui et al., 1992). These characteristics are often raised because of prejudices, subjectivity and stereotypes, a source of social pressure (Milliken & Martins, 1996). Research in the west had been done to evaluate the impact of avoidance of conflict in the productivity of task and consequences were parallel as it showed that individuals were cooperative to their relationship and on the same time they were seeking to take the revenge from their opponents so it can be concluded that conflict at lower level can be avoided but open conflict should be resolved quickly for healthy environment.

Conflict Management

A conflict creates when there is difference in opinion, view and thought process of individuals. A strong opposition creates dilemma for the others and provoke them to be rigid on their own statements and individuals are not willing to obtain the mid way for its resolution. Therefore, it can be cured and managed and sometimes can be prevented by the partners.

Before initiating any conflict one should diagnose the pros and cons of that dispute and evaluate the gain and loss arrives from that situation. Nothing valuable and worthwhile comes out of conflict .It is mere a wastage of time, sparkle, enthusiasm of an individual. So conflict can be managed with two different approaches:

1. Preventive approach

2. Curative Approach:

1. Preventive approach : Some of the preventive approaches an individual can take to overcome the conflict are jot down as follows:

- **Be a good and stoical listener:** Listening to the other person carefully and patiently is not only the remedy to conflict solution but it also prescribes the rational personality of an individual. Whether the person speaks truth or he is lying, listening calmly gives you the opportunity to think some possible solution and tackle the person. On the other side, the other person also feels relaxed and satisfied that he discuss the situation with politely. Taking decision and jumping to the conclusion directly adds to the anxiety and stress to both the persons .Therefore stepping in to shoes of others before any judgment is the best alternate.
- **Follow a Versatile approach:** Being a flexible and easy going is another precaution to avoid the conflict. Never be so fixed and rigid as it only ends up the person with autocratic personality. Having a biddable talk facilitates to find out some alternatives for the solution. This approach is a part of Structural model, as four variables are studied based on interdepartmental conflict (Thomas, Walton and Dutton, 1972; Walton, Dutton and Cafferty, 1969; Thomas, 1971). ‘Behavior Predispositions’ is the style which expresses the habit and the way of an individual to handle the situation.
- **Be a clear and translucent:** Communication must not be misunderstanding to others. It has to be specific so that words and content of the topic remains the same to the other persons. Cross checking with the speaker should be done to avoid any kind of misconception.
- **Effective Divulgence with everyone:** For the effective divulgence it is must that there should be trust and loyalty between the members so that a healthy and open communication is entertained by everyone. They should be free from any pressure and hesitation to discuss their issues but the condition imposed is the biasness must be curtailed. The judgment must be free from subjectivity and fair decision must be taken by the authorities in order to protect the interest of the members.
- **Organize Ubiquitous intent:** The major reason of the conflict is uncommon vision for the future of the organization. This concept is clear between the individuals and group

members to oppose each other to get maximum credit for themselves. Although achieving organizational goal is the group activity so the members can't quarrel with each other to get their credits. Establishing compatible intent helps them to work together to organize and cooperate with each other.

- **Interchange of Manpower:** It is crystal clear that more the members retain in same group, more conflicts will arise. The groups and teams should be revised in frequent intervals as they will get less time to talk on irrelevant matters. They will indulge their maximum time in productive work which eventually helps for developing their personality.

2. **Curative Approach:** This approach is followed when conflict is not resolved by the members themselves and the organization is adversely affected by the influence of conflicts. Since conflict in the business is a very natural phenomenon and people who work there know the best way to resolve the conflict own their own. In this cut throat competition, everyone is struggling to show their latent skills and talent to hold a particular position and recognition in the organization and this phenomenon leads to conflict between the members.

The Thomas-Kilmann model was designed by two psychologists, Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann, to illustrate the options we have when handling conflict. There are two dimensions in the model. The first dimension, the vertical axis, is concerned with conflict responses based on our attempt to get what we want. Thomas and Kilmann call these the Assertiveness options. The other dimension, the horizontal axis, is concerned with responses based on helping others get what they want. Thomas and Kilmann call these the Co-cooperativeness options. This creates 5 basic types of response.

This could be explained with the help of following figure:

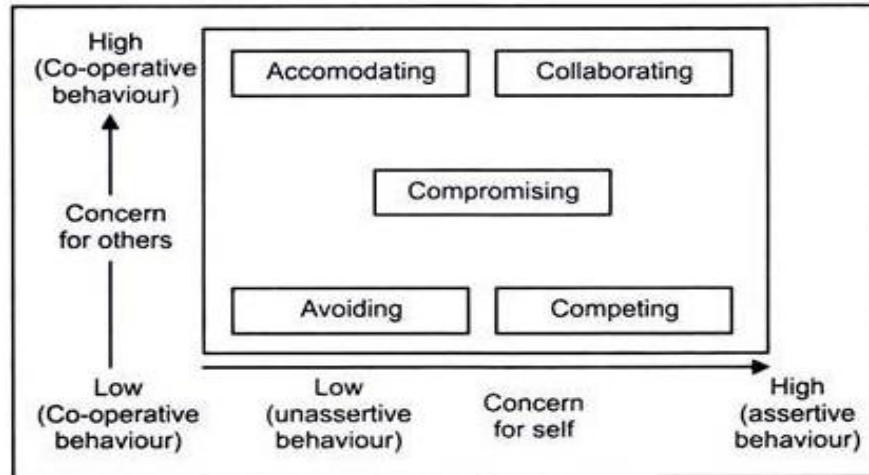


Figure 1. Two-dimensional taxonomy of conflict handling modes (adapted from Thomas and Kilman, 1974, p. 11).

- Accommodating:** It is high in cooperativeness and low in assertiveness. It means a person shows very less importance to his personal goals as he is less assertive to his own concern and on the other hand he is very cooperative to others and concerns the other persons very well. The other person works against his goals and ambitions to fulfill the aim of the other person and sometimes may lose his recognition and position in the organization. It also concludes that he is doubtful on his own judgment and believes on the faith of the other person's decision. The accommodating style is suitable to use in the situation when the person shows he is peace loving, wants to uplift his reputation, ability of abdication, obey orders and potential of surrender.

Excessive usage of accommodating style leads to adverse affects on the personality of an individual. The person might get mere attention, limited influence over others. He might loss his participation in managerial decision making and lost his chaos. Over usage also reflects loss of interest and concern in the issue and demonstrates agitation and nervousness over forecasting risks.

There may be the symptoms that the person wants to keep the same situation and therefore he gives no space to his own beliefs and values. He thinks he must be helpful to the others and give them chance to solve and execute their plans so that in future he can get privilege for being so humble, nice and cooperative to others.

In case, a person under-use the accommodating style it means he might display less enthusiasm and yielding nuances and references for the solution.

Applicability of Accommodating style:

- This style is appropriate when one think he might be wrong due to less experience and knowledge and others have better alternatives to resolve the same situation.
 - When the matter is more relevant to others as compared to oneself so in order to satisfy the need of others and build up healthy relationship, it is suitable.
 - To establish the social credits to discuss the issues later on which are more relevant to an individual.
 - When continuously conflict issues are losing your reasonable causes.
 - When peace and harmony is the sole objective of the given situation.
 - To support the employees in brain storming for the development of their personality.
- **Avoidance:** Avoidance appearing no worth as a method of resolving the conflict. As the name suggests the conflict is avoided in this style. Concern for self and concern for others both are low in the style. Avoiding might take the form of evading an issue, adjourning the conflict until the right time and situation arrives. This type of conflict is not supported the other members nor the manager self but it works like a wonder for the flimsy issues or when the manager has no chance of winning the game.

Applicability of Avoidance style:

- Suitable in situation when the person confronting you is in great stress and anxiety. In order to cool down him this approach is appropriate. This technique helps that individual to get back their composure and perspective.
- When a lot of information is required to make a stellar decision.
- When the arbitrary can give the better solution to the problem and avoidance is the sole solution in that mean time.
- If there are chances of potential loss occurrence and outweighing the privilege from that conflict.
- When one perceives no satisfaction from his side then avoiding the conflict is the better option.

- **Collaboration:** It is a win –win approach that would benefit both the parties’ interest. Concern for self and concern for others both are high in this approach. It is an Endeavour to work with person to find out the solution which satisfies both the persons. The approach follows the core value of synergy and unity in handling the conflict. The ideas are integrated by the persons. The idea behind is to find out the solution which is acceptable to every person. Though, collaboration is really very helpful as it integrates the persons and tackles the difficult situation very generously. The approach is significant in the situations when decision making needs quick and prompt actions.

Applicability of collaborating style:

- When making a decision is so significant that both the parties has to compromise and collaborate with each other to take the decision jointly and agree on the same.
- If the objective is to apply own hypothesis to check its relevancy and test and it is stage when one is learning something new and wants to apply his experience and intelligence.
- If the idea behind is to introduce brain storming among individuals to get different ideas and conceptual view points for taking good and better decision.
- Where the vision of the company is to work with integration to attain organizational goal rather than defeating each other for their personal grudges.

- **Competing:** A competing style is high on authoritative and low on cooperativeness. This approach follows win –lost strategy because one person believes on his potentiality. The approach has both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, this approach is authentic when prompt decisive action is required .On the down side, a competitor conquer and overpower other parties into conflict. A person has a very high concern for himself and low concern for others. The competitive mode of handling a dispute resolves the situation with the winner and loser team. This style is highly assertive and less cooperative where the main goal is to win and the person is confident that he is right and gives the genuine facts to make his point valid and authentic. To adopt this style one must develop the quality of extrovert personality, ability to negotiate and stand on grounds.

Over usage of this style leads to anxiety, frustration and outburst of stress and violent temper. This also leads to too many errors committed by an individual in his given task, distractions in his work and continuously interruptions and so on. Under use of the competing style leads to a lowered level of influence, indecisiveness, slow action and withheld contributions.

Applicability of competing style:

- When quick decision making is the main demand of the situation.
- When a new and unique method has to be applied for discipline, rules or for cost reduction.
- When company's well-being is more important and one knows that he is arguing for right

• **Compromising:** Compromise is a very genuine and practical approach to face the reality.

A person has medium level of concern for self and for others. To some extent it advocates, weakness and lack of promises and commitments to a position. A compromising style results in each conflict participant sharing in some degree of winning and losing. It is a approach when two equally strong and competitive parties negotiate with each other to come at an agreement for the solution to the problem. They both present their views based on reasonable grounds to work out a solution. This style finds out the midway to solve the situation with moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperativeness. This approach finds out temporary solution with mutual understanding and intelligence of the teams specially when time is the main concern and they also planned for the backup if the situation does not cooperate.

Overuse of style leads to lack of trust, ignorance of long term vision, extinction of firm's values and beliefs. Under use leads to unnecessary confrontations, frequent power struggles and ineffective negotiating.

Applicability of compromising style:

- When goals and objective is moderately relevant
- When the persons has to solve the situation for the given time.
- When both the parties have to take decision jointly to fulfill the mutual interest like labor-management negotiation.

Impact of conflict on Personality Development of employee

Personality development plays prominent role in accelerating one's overall development. It helps an individual to develop a wider outlook and brighter perspective about a life. At work place it guides an individual about work and how to interact with the fellow workers. Personality development helps in embellishing and grooming of an individual which facilitates in making them an efficient resource of the organization. As the workers are the asset of the organization so their hone and maintenance is must for the smooth functioning of the organization and for employees themselves as well. Personality development teaches an individual about his required behavior and attitude in the work place. One should never mix his personal issues with professional life. It facilitates an individual to lower his stress levels and anxiety because it helps them to manage and combat with issues properly.

Differences in opinions and views often lead to conflicts and arguments among employees. Employees with different attitudes and mindsets find it extremely difficult to adjust with each other and work in unison. Personality development sessions motivate an individual to think positively and eventually reduce stress at the workplace. Individuals as a result of personality development tend to behave in a mature way; making the organization a much better place to work. Personality development is essential to bring a change in an individual's attitude, thinking, behavior and mindsets. It also strengthens the relationship among co workers.

Conflict and stress at workplace sometimes makes a person forgets to smile. Personality development in that situation really helps to tackle the situation and brings back that smile of an individual. Personality development sessions guide the individual to take the problems positively and start struggling to end up with a relevant solution. It adds not only the experience to solve the problem but also brings the synergy and intelligence in individual. It motivates one to put his/her best foot ahead and strive hard to perform beyond conjecture. Personality development encourages an individual to use his skills and abilities to the extreme. An individual with a pleasing personality is liked and honored by all.

The impact can be studied with the relationship of different personality factors and their influence on handling inters personal conflict. These main factors are: Sociable, Disciplined, Creative, Affirmativeness and emotional stability and the five conflict styles are: integrating,

dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising. Each factor has its positive and negative impact on the conflicting style. For instance, a person who is sociable, disciplined, creative, affirmative has the positive relation with integrating and negative relation with avoiding and dominating. Whereas affirmativeness and emotional stability has the positive relation with avoiding and negative relation with the dominating. Different kinds of Hypothesis are also applied to check the reliability of these relationships. A sample of 351 under graduate business students of Midwest University participated in this study and the managers of the same university took participation and filled the questionnaire. The research of this study showed that along with selection, promotion and training individuals also sent to coaching for improvement. Coaching helped them to relate their preference for particular style of conflict. This eventually boosted their self confidence, morale their understanding power which helped them to accept the particular behavior required in the organization. The study also has some of the limitations as the use of the same source leads to common method variance. Although the study was designed to control the common method said by Podsakoff and Organ (1986). Another limitation was that some of the values were not supported for the hypothesis related to these styles.

There is the study where personality factors are related to the response to interpersonal conflict. Two elements were evaluated in this study: Personality measures vs. conflict styles and consistency of response style vs. targets. 153 college students completed the research form where different personality needs were studied. Some conflict responses were corresponding to the personality needs. Consequently, both personality and target factors in understanding the response to interpersonal factors was the main concern. But there was some inconsistency in personality and conflict relationship beyond targets.

Undoubtedly, any kind of conflict whether it is personal or professional, it has adverse impact on the neuroticism of the workforce. Although, it is common that there might be clashes and differences in the thoughts and ideas presented by the employees so they should be trained enough to tackle that situation calmly and with affirmativeness. Conflict at minimal level should always be there in the work place as it makes an individual to think intelligently and adds in his experience to solve it appropriately without affecting his own and organizational interest. The level makes a pressure on the mind of an employee to work hard and smart which improves his efficiency and accelerates the organizational development as well. Minutest conflict facilitates an

individual to be stellar decision maker and explore the vision of his own life along with the organizational goal. Littlest conflict has a positive impact on his personality as mentioned above. Moreover, it improves employee performance, motivation and morale and helps to respond to change. An employee becomes innovative, creative to every situation. He becomes emotionally stable, dominant, enthusiastic, conscientious, compulsive and socially bold.

On the other side, if the level of conflict arises from modest to hugest then circumstances should be definitely controlled otherwise; it may create havoc in the organization as well as in his personal life. One may lost the productivity and focus on his work which not only ruin the profitability of an organization but also his self recognition. Furthermore, it messes up with your relationships either personal or professional. Physical and Mental health issues were emerged. Due to anger there might be chances that one may sabotage the property of the organization and shows the violent behavior due to aggression. There would be loss of customers and sales or other marketing gimmicks. The rate of absenteeism and labor turnover would increase. Overall, person becomes apathetic, bossy, discourteous, thoughtless, and obnoxious.

Conclusion

The research paper revealed that there are various causes and effects on the personality development of employees. Different impacts are discussed about the conflict, its elements, variability and consistency of responses and vision of the organization. The conflict at minimum level is suitable for the growth and exploration of individual and organization as well. The study indicates that conflict enhances the power of thoughts and intelligence among the workforce and accelerates the creativity response and challenging mode of personality. Although, the conflict at highest level spoil the whole journey of personal and working life as it dominates the individuals to focus on conflict and self-conceit to get over victory whether he gains or losses. At this situation, it is required to solve the conflict promptly with effective strategies so that to have a better control or focus on the working life. Overall, fewest level of conflict should be there to get the wider perspective of life and to have the crown of success in one's life.

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