

A Study On Conflict Management Style In Public And Private Enterprises In Kerala

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Abstract

Studies revealed that, organization conflicts can negatively impact an organization in significant ways. This conflict will reduce productivity, harm morale, and diminish an organization's stated goal of hiring and retaining the best qualified and most competent employees. Hence various techniques are increasingly being utilized by organizations to manage the challenges presented by organizational conflicts. Organizational conflict is an element of organizational life. Hence effective management of organization conflict requires the indulgent of the concept of conflict. Here there is an attempt has been made to manage conflict in Public and Private Enterprises in Kerala. This study looks into the influence of the styles managed in the conflict on the Public and Private companies in Kerala.

Key words: *conflict, Organizational conflict, conflict Management.*

Introduction

Conflict is a mental fight resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, and external or internal demands. Where there are people, there is conflict. Conflict is the process by which parties with inconsistent wishes each believe that the other will act or is acting against them, and engage in behaviour seeking to damage the other party. While conflict is often seen as negative, some types of conflict, in certain settings, can have a positive outcome. It is a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interest or concerns. Conflict can occur in any situation in which two or more parties feel themselves in opposition. Hence it is an interpersonal process that arises from disagreements over the goals to attain or the methods to be used to accomplish those goals. Conflict can occur within an employee, between individual and groups and across organizations as they compete.

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of hiring and retaining the best qualified and most competent employees. Hence various techniques are increasingly being utilized by organizations to manage the challenges presented by organizational conflicts. Organizational conflict is a part of organizational life. Hence effective management of organization conflict requires the understanding of the concept of conflict.

Organizational Conflict: Wherever there is human factor as a social input, arguments and conflicts among persons are unavoidable as a result of individual differences especially in today's environment of intense globalization and competition. Every person may adopt and protect different feelings, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, preferences, etc depending on individual differences leads to organizational conflict.

Conflict Management

It is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting. The word conflict management is wider than the term conflict resolution. In other words, conflict resolution expresses reconciliation of conflict while conflict management includes both reconciliation of conflict and directing destructive conflicts towards constructive results. Conflict management may be expressed as a process that involves stages of analysis of the conflict, determining its density, defining appropriate intervention methods through an assessment of this intensity with regard to its effects and monitoring its outcome.

The success of organization in conflict management is analytic of an organizational structure that enables constructive dealings with individuals and groups. In such organizations, majority of employees consist of individuals who are satisfactorily knowledgeable, experienced and ready to accept different standards of judgment. Persons show a genuine, honest and determined attitude in an attempt to find a solution for the conflict by virtue of trust between the members of organization, by loyalty to the work group and organization, and motivation for cooperation. There is a prominent preference to find a constructive solution rather than carrying on the conflict. The solutions found are often reasonably creative and are better than the resolution proposed by the conflicting parties.

Conflict management styles:

Individuals differ in their styles of handling conflicts. In fact, employees may resort to different styles of conflict management depending on the situation. The choice of style is influenced by a variety of factors, such as what has worked for the individual in the past, the style of their adversary, and norms surrounding the conflict situation. Several models of conflict styles have been proposed over time. For example, Morton Deutsch proposed a two-style model in which individuals engage in a competitive or cooperative style. Others have posited a three-style model of conflict management that includes non confrontation, solution orientation, and control. Four-style models have also received attention

Five Styles of Conflict Management

The five styles of conflict can be mapped in to two-dimensional conceptualisation that includes concern for self and concern for others. Kenneth W. Thomas, Robert R. Blake, and Jane S. Mouton, have also introduced similar conceptualizations. The five styles of conflict management are as follows.

1. Avoiding;

An individual may deny the existence of conflict or be non committal in a conflicting situation.

2. Obliging.

An individual using an obliging style shows low concern for self and high concern for others. In quintessence, the individual chooses to surrender his or her concerns to accommodate the welfare of others. This style is also known as yielding in other five-style models

3. Dominating.

A dominating style is one in which the individual shows a high degree of concern for self and low concern for others. This style may be pigeonholed by assertive, competitive, and forcing behaviours.

4. Integrating;

Individual who displays high concern for self and others engages in an integrating conflict management style. This style focuses on achieving a solution that maximises the satisfaction of both parties and emphasis problem solving.

Review of Literature

Leslie A Dechurch (2001): This work points out the influence of group conflict management on group effectiveness as well as moderating role of group conflict management on task conflict.-group outcome relationships. Result of a field survey of 96 business school project groups indicated that the use of agreeable conflict management in response to task conflict was associated with group satisfaction.

Deon Tjosvold (2002); “Understanding conflict avoidance: Relationship, Motivations, Actions and consequences”. Study identified that avoiding conflict is one of the best strategy in conflict management.

Shazia Khalid and et.al(2011)Public bank managers are using integrating, compromising and avoiding conflict management styles, private banks are using integrating and dominating conflict

management style whereas multinational bank managers exhibited greater use of dominating conflict management style.

Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Kassim(2014)The styles used by employees in this study are integrating, compromising and dominating. The results demonstrated that employees are more committed towards the organization through the use of integrating style in resolving conflict. On the other hand, employees perceived dominating and avoiding styles as lowering the sense of organizational commitment

Objectives of the Study

The study is conducted with following specific objective.

1. To examine the influence of the styles managed in the conflict on the category of companies.

Hypothesis

1. There is no effect in the category of companies on the different styles managed in the conflict.

Research Methodology

The study is analytical in nature. Data for the study is collected from among the employees of Public and Private Companies functioning in Kerala.

Methodology

This paper A Study on conflict management style in Public and Private Enterprises in Kerala is prepared on basis of study conducted by researcher in leading Public and Private companies. As part of the study data were collected from 600 employees (300 each from Public and Private Companies) using a structured questionnaire. Judgment Sampling was adapted to identifying the sample respondents. Brown-Forsythe Robust test, Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients, Cox & Snell R Square, Nagelkerke R Square were used for the analysis of the data

Sample Profile

The study is conducted in Public and Private Companies in Kerala. Data were collected from 600 sample respondents (300 from Public company and 300 from private company) sample

respondents consists of employees from Lower level(417), Middle Level(117) Upper Level (66) from these companies.

Table -1

Styles adopted in managing the conflict

Styles adopted		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Competing					
I argue my case with peers, colleagues, and co workers to demonstrate the merits of the position I take.	Private	300	2.85*	.953	.055
	Public	300	3.39*	1.487	.086
	Total	600	3.12*	1.276	.052
I am firm in my resolves when it comes to defending my side of the issue	Private	300	3.09*	1.142	.066
	Public	300	3.63**	1.256	.073
	Total	600	3.36*	1.230	.050
I uphold my solutions to problems	Private	300	3.16*	1.168	.067
	Public	300	3.56**	1.259	.073
	Total	600	3.36*	1.230	.050
Collaborating					
I seeks to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable	Private	300	3.32*	1.271	.073
	Public	300	4.28***	.574	.033
	Total	600	3.80**	1.096	.045
I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together	Private	300	4.01***	1.112	.064
	Public	300	4.23***	.845	.049
	Total	600	4.12***	.994	.041
I seeks to bring everyone's concerns out in to the open in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way	Private	300	4.16***	.866	.050
	Public	300	4.64***	.508	.029
	Total	600	4.40***	.749	.031
Avoiding					
I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others to myself	Private	300	3.70**	1.206	.070
	Public	300	3.82***	1.340	.077
	Total	600	3.76**	1.275	.052
I avoid discussing my difference with others.	Private	300	3.09*	1.337	.077
	Public	300	2.91*	1.486	.086
	Total	600	3.00*	1.415	.058
I avoid hard feeling by keeping my disagreements with others to myself	Private	300	3.16*	1.413	.082
	Public	300	3.48**	1.265	.073
	Total	600	3.32*	1.349	.055
Accommodating					
I attempt to meet the expectation of others	Private	300	3.48**	1.013	.058
	Public	300	4.20***	.764	.044
	Total	600	3.84***	.967	.039
I try to accommodate the wishes of my peers and colleagues	Private	300	3.55**	.850	.049
	Public	300	4.05***	.772	.045
	Total	600	3.80**	.849	.035

I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers and coworkers.	Private	300	3.62**	.746	.043
	Public	300	4.22***	.734	.042
	Total	600	3.92***	.797	.033
Compromising					
I try to reach compromise through negotiation	Private	300	3.40**	1.085	.063
	Public	300	3.80**	1.144	.066
	Total	600	3.60**	1.132	.046
I compromise in order to reach solutions	Private	300	3.62**	1.009	.058
	Public	300	4.06***	.961	.055
	Total	600	3.84**	1.008	.041
I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks	Private	300	3.17*	.960	.055
	Public	300	3.55**	1.309	.076
	Total	600	3.36*	1.163	.047

Source: - Primary data ; *-Low, **-Moderate and ***-High

With reference to the style competing the mean value of the statements 'I argue my case with peers, colleagues, and co workers to demonstrate the merits of the position I take' got low score awarded by employees of private and public sector. Equally, the score awarded for the statement 'I am firm in my resolves when it comes to defending my side of the issue' and 'I uphold my solutions to problems' is low for the private sector employees and moderate for the public sector employees.

With reference to the style collaborating the mean value of the statements 'I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together' and 'I seeks to bring everyone's concerns out in to the open in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way' got high score awarded by employees of private and public sector. Equally, the score awarded for the statement 'I seeks to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable' and 'I uphold my solutions to problems' is low for the private sector employees and high for the public sector employees.

With reference to the style avoiding the mean value of the statement 'I avoid discussed my difference with others' got low score awarded by employees of private and public sector. Equally, the score awarded for the statement 'I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others to myself' is low for the private sector employees and high for the public sector employees. Likewise, the score awarded for the statement 'I avoid hard feeling by keeping my disagreements with others to myself' is low for the private sector employees and moderate for the public sector employees.

With reference to the style accommodating the mean value of the statements 'I attempt to meet the expectation of others', 'I try to accommodate the wishes of my peers and colleagues' and 'I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers and coworkers' is moderate for the private sector employees and high for the public sector employees.

With reference to the style compromising the mean value of the statements ‘I try to reach compromise through negotiation’ got moderate score awarded by employees of private and public sector. Equally, the score awarded for the statement ‘I compromise in order to reach solutions’ is moderate for the private sector employees and high for the public sector employees. Likewise, the score awarded for the statement ‘I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks’ is low for the private sector employees and moderate for the public sector employees.

Table 2

Styles adopted in managing the conflict - Brown-Forsythe Robust Tests of Equality of Means

Styles adopted in managing the conflict		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
I argue my case with peers, colleagues, and co workers to demonstrate the merits of the position I take.	Brown-Forsythe	27.356	1	509.159	.000*
I am firm in my resolves when it comes to defending my side of the issue	Brown-Forsythe	31.119	1	592.640	.000*
I uphold my solutions to problems	Brown-Forsythe	16.830	1	594.650	.000*
I seeks to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable	Brown-Forsythe	142.099	1	415.999	.000*
I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together	Brown-Forsythe	7.896	1	557.975	.005*
I seeks to bring everyone’s concerns out in to the open in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way	Brown-Forsythe	68.561	1	482.858	.000*
I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others to myself	Brown-Forsythe	1.186	1	591.440	.277
I avoid discussing my difference with others.	Brown-Forsythe	2.432	1	591.426	.119
I avoid hard feeling by keeping my disagreements with others to myself	Brown-Forsythe	8.186	1	590.872	.004*
I attempt to meet the expectation of others	Brown-Forsythe	98.385	1	556.047	.000*

I try to accommodate the wishes of my peers and colleagues	Brown-Forsythe	56.844	1	592.503	.000*
I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers and coworkers.	Brown-Forsythe	96.466	1	597.830	.000*
I try to reach compromise through negotiation	Brown-Forsythe	19.960	1	596.307	.000*
I compromise in order to reach solutions	Brown-Forsythe	29.017	1	596.572	.000*
I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks	Brown-Forsythe	17.023	1	548.572	.000*
a. Asymptotically F distributed.					

Source: - Primary data ; *-Significant

The Employees' opinion about styles adopted to manage the conflict at public and private sector companies in Kerala was further tested with the support of Brown-Forsythe Test. There is significant difference between the opinion of private and public sector employees on the statements like 'I argue my case with peers, colleagues, and co workers to demonstrate the merits of the position I take -Significant value 0.000'; 'I am firm in my resolves when it comes to defending my side of the issue -Significant value 0.000'; 'I uphold my solutions to problems -Significant value 0.000'; 'I seeks to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable -Significant value 0.000'; 'I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together -Significant value 0.005';

'I seeks to bring everyone's concerns out in to the open in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way -Significant value 0.000'; 'I avoid hard feeling by keeping my disagreements with others to myself – Significant value 0.004'; 'I attempt to meet the expectation of others -Significant value 0.000'; 'I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers and coworkers -Significant value 0.000', 'I try to reach compromise through negotiation -Significant value 0.000', 'I compromise in order to reach solutions -Significant value 0.000' and 'I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks -Significant value 0.000'. all other relations are not significant.

Table 3

Styles adopted to manage the conflict -Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	209.530	5	.000
	Block	209.530	5	.000
	Model	209.530	5	.000

Source: - Primary data

From the above table for the Logistic Regression it is clear that there is an association of independent variable with the dependent variable as the significant value is less than the level of significance (5%). In the present analysis the independent variables are Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising. The dependent variable is category of the companies (Private and Public).

Table 4

Styles adopted to manage the conflict -Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	622.246 ^a	.295	.393

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Source: - Primary data

-2 Log likelihood is used to compare the model Styles adopted to manage the conflict . Here it is 622.246 A fairly high value showed the overall fit of the model. The coefficient value of Cox & Snell R Square is 29.5% and that of Nagelkerke R Square is 39.3%. This implies the Styles adopted to manage the conflict namely Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising can explain between 29.5% and 39.3% variance in the category of the companies (Private and Public).

Table 5

Styles adopted to manage the conflict -Classification Table

	Observed		Predicted		
			Nature of the company		Percentage
			Private	Public	Correct
Step 1	Nature of the company	Private	206	94	68.7
		Public	34	266	88.7
	Overall Percentage				78.7
a. The cut value is .500					

Source: - Primary data

Classification Table summarizes the results of prediction in the category of the companies (Private and Public) based on the Styles adopted to manage the conflict namely Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising. It can be concluded that the Logistic Regression

can correctly predict 68.7% of the private sector companies and 88.7% of the public sector companies. Overall, the Logistic Regression predicts 78.7% of the companies in Kerala correctly.

Table 6

Styles adopted to manage the conflict -Variables in the Equation

Styles adopted to manage the conflict		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Competing	.735	.102	52.003	1	.000	2.085
	Collaborating	1.397	.221	39.952	1	.000	4.042
	Avoiding	-.466	.116	16.064	1	.000	.627
	Accommodating	2.531	.298	72.016	1	.000	12.569
	Compromising	-2.161	.288	56.277	1	.000	.115
	Constant	-8.684	.863	101.364	1	.000	.000
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: namely Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising.							

Source: - Primary data

Prediction in the category of the companies (Private and Public) based on the Styles adopted to manage the conflict namely Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising is based on the following OLS equation.

Category of the companies (Private and Public) = -8.684 + Competing (0.735) + Collaborating (1.397) + Avoiding (-0.466) + Accommodating (2.531) + Compromising (-2.161). The significant values of all the independent variables are significant as it is lower than the level of significance (5%).

Findings

1. According to the competing style adopted in managing the conflict, the influence is high for sharing of the important information with others and seeks to bring everyone's concerns in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way. The influence is low for the argument with the peers, colleagues and co workers, be bold on decision taken and espouses the solutions to problems.
2. According to the collaborating style adopted in managing the conflict, the influence is moderate for investigating the issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable among the employees of public and private sector companies in Kerala.

3. According to the avoiding style adopted in managing the conflict, the influence is moderate for avoidance of unnecessary quarrels with others. The influence is low for discussing difference with others and avoids hard feeling by keeping the disagreements with others.
4. According to the accommodating style adopted in managing the conflict, the influence is high for ascend the occasion as per the expectation of others and accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers and coworkers. The influence is moderate for accommodating the wishes of peers and colleagues.
5. According to the compromising style adopted in managing the conflict, the influence is moderate for compromising through negotiation and reach solutions. The influence is low for forwarding the middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks.
6. The Styles adopted to manage the conflict namely Competing, Collaborating, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising can explain between 29.5% and 39.3% variance in the category of the companies (Private and Public) and it can correctly predict 68.7% of the private sector companies and 88.7% of the public sector companies. Overall, the prediction accuracy is 78.7% of the companies in Kerala.

Conclusion

All the category of the employees (Administrative, Technical and Ministerial) in private sector companies in Kerala is supporting the effectiveness of conflict management system in their companies. Similarly, Administrative cadre employees in public sector companies in Kerala are supporting the effectiveness of conflict management system in their companies, but it is partially supported by the Technical employees and Ministerial employees in Public companies in Kerala. The reason is that without inter-dependency; it is very difficult to manage the routine activities of Technical staff of the public sector companies in Kerala. There is an association between the companies with the Designation and the effectiveness of conflict management system. Thus it is concluded that there is dependency relationship between the companies with the designation and the effectiveness of conflict management system.

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