DO CONFLİCT TYPES DETERMİNE CONFLİCT MANAGEMENT STYLES?

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ABSTRACT

It is commonly accepted that the most important source for businesses is their employees. Since employees are human beings, it is also normal to observe certain conflicts among them in the organizations. This research paper focused on the relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles. A survey was conducted in finance sector in Hargeisa, Somalia, and received 395 valid responses. Based on data analysis, it was found out that certain conflict management styles determine certain conflict management styles in organizations. For instance, when the type of conflict is about relationship tension, disagreements within work group about the task of the project, disagreement about resource allocation, or disagreements about the optimal amount of time to spend on different parts of group work; the preferred conflict management style is voting.

KEYWORDS: Conflict types, conflict management styles, finance sector, Hargeisa, Somalia

1. INTRODUCTİON

Conflict may occur between family members, colleagues, supervisors and also workers in organizations. As we have different interests, goals and perceptions in life we may not agree on issues but it doesn't mean we are at deadly conflict. As a nature of human being, it is normal that colleagues or employees face conflicts in any type of organizations. Similarly, conflicts may occur in finance sector, too. Therefore this research focused on finance sector to investigate the conflict subject. There are various studies about conflicts in organizations, in the literature. However, there are limited number of researches targeting conflict subject in finance sector. We have not come across any studies searching the relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles in finance sector in Hargeisa, Somalia. So, the objective of this study is to find out the relationship between conflict management styles and conflict types in organizations.

2. LİTERATURE REVİEW

2.1 Conflict

Conflict is not always negative, sometimes the energy from conflict can create innovative solutions; however, conflict left unchecked can result in negative outcomes. Conflict management is a method incorporated to facilitate a positive or at least an agreeable outcome (Neely, 2005).It is possible to run into conflicts in every place where there are people. Surely, there will be disaccord, discrepancy and disagreement between people. Conflict will come into being as long as there are differences among interests, beliefs, values, and desires in choices of people (Sepehri et al., 2014).Organizational conflict occurs, as actors engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other organizations, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization (Spaho, 2013).

2.2 Conflict types

Recent research has emphasized that the types of conflict can contribute to group failure or success (Tjosvold et al., 2006). Two types of conflict have been identified in groups: task conflict and relationship conflict (Zhang and Zhang, 2012). But recent studies have identified a third unique type of conflict, labelled process conflict. Itis defined as an awareness of controversies about aspects of how task accomplishment will proceed (Jehn and Mannix, 2001). People tend to approach conflict more constructively when they perceive the conflict to be more about the task than about relationships. Task conflicts, such as discussions of opposing positions about a decision, are useful, whereas relational conflicts, such as interpersonal frustration and personality differences, may frustrate group productivity (Tjosvold et al., 2006).Scholars have long held that task conflict is beneficial to group performance and decision

making quality because it facilitates the exchange of information among members; conversely, relationship conflict is detrimental to groups because it produces tension and hostility that obstruct members from performing the task (Zhang and Zhang, 2012).

2.3   Conflict management styles

Conflict management is something that converts conflict into an advantage. It is necessary to manage the conflicts to make them functional. While functional conflicts can bring dynamism, non-functional conflicts can cause decrease of performance in the business (Sepehri et al., 2014).Conflict management involves ''designing effective strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and maximize the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization (Yuan, 2010). Conflict resolution style theorists opine that collaborative or integrative style, where there is high concern for task and people are considered to give positive individual and organizational outcomes, while the withdrawing /avoidance style and forcing / dominating style are considered to be ineffective in managing conflict (Mukundan and Zakkariya, 2013). Voting: In the voting category, for example, there were ideas about using voting to address process problems versus resolving impasses on task debates (Behfar et al., 2008). Compromising (sharing): When compromise is used, attempts are made to resolve conflict through assertive give-and-take concessions. With compromise, there is no distinct winner or loser (Bwowe, 2002). Discussing or debating: Cluster ideas ranged from debating ideas with evidence-driven discussion to debating about controversial team process issues (Behfar et al., 2008). The open communication: Cluster contained ideas about the affective tone of discussion, ranging from ego-invested to amicable (Behfar et al., 2008). The idiosyncratic solutions:

Cluster contained ideas about how teams punished or prevented conflicts, ranging from creating rules, to making threats or direct confrontations, to empowering 1 person as a mediator (Behfar et al., 2008). Avoiding: It is expected that individuals will more likely use the avoiding style with superiors than peers and more with peers than subordinates (Rahim, 1983). Because ignoring or avoiding a problem does not make it go away, a supervisor may want to try a more direct approach to ending a conflict. One possibility is to force a solution (Kazimoto, 2013).All the styles converge with the same orientation. Concern for task and concern for people it is difficult to say which the best style is, though managers have typical preferences in the styles followed it need not necessarily be that managers follow the same style always (Mukundan and Zakkariya, 2013).

2.4   Financial Institutions in Hargeisa, Somalia

Since the civil war, the Somaliland economy has been based on a deregulated free market. The major domestic contribution to Gross National Product (GNP) draws on commercialisation of the traditional system of pastoralism. Livestock exports (primarily goats and camels) through Berbera may gross \$150 - \$200 million a year (Barry and Bruyas, 2007). A remittance company is basically a company that enables people to transfer money to and out of their homeland. In Somaliland, remittance companies are called "xawilaado" in Somali language. The xawilaad system is informal in the sense of not being under government control and of managing transfers between people who know or are related to each other (Hansen, 2004). Remittances play a central role in the livelihoods and welfare, including education, of many families in Hargeisa (Maimbo, 2006).

3.   THEORETİCAL MODEL, HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTİON

The research is trying to answer: 'Is there a relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles?' which is the main research's question. To figure out the real answer of the above mentioned research's question, we have conducted and figured out with the aim of proving this, the following hypothesis has been created.

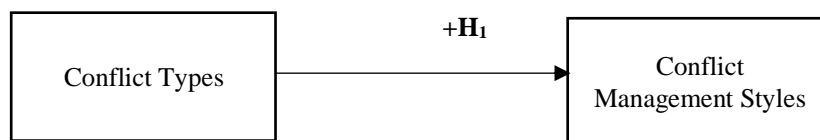H1: There is a positive relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles.

Fig. 1: Theoretical Model

The hypothesis of the research holds that there are a positive relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles. With this hypothesis, we aimed to find out whether conflict types determine conflict management styles.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Organizations usually have conflicts on daily basis. It's all about personal interests but conflict cannot be ignored. Conflict is a part of the organization's life, since the way of thinking differentiates employees, colleagues, or employers. Conflicts have both positive and negative influences, as soon as conflict arise it needs to be resolved so this research can help people, companies, communities to refer their daily life.The objective of this study is to find out the relationship between conflict management styles and conflict types in organizations. Organisations can take as exemplary reference on our reality based research. Therefore finance sector can use this research as a written reference and utilize at times of need.

4.1 Data collection tool and measurement

The quantitative design method was used in this research. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires. The adopted questionnaire that was used in this research has been developed by the researches of Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim (2008), and Behfar, Mannix, Peterson and Trochim (2011).

4.2 Population and sample

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents from the entire population, thus ensuring all finance companies' employees were given an equal chance of being selected into the study sample. The target population for this study comprised of department managers, operational managers, and subordinate staff working finance sector in Hargeisa. We received 395 valid responses from finance organizations in Hargeisa Somalia.

4.3 Constrains of this study

Since this research was conducted in Hargeisa Somalia, its sampling is limited to this region. There is a lack of written and well-kept references about the research subject especially in Somalia. So we couldn't get up-to-date and reliable secondary data about finance institutions operating in Somalia. We reached all possible finance organizations like banks, transfer offices (remittances), etc. with easy to access method.

5. DATA ANALYSİS AND FİNDİNGS

This study investigated the relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles. Table 1 depicts the results of the demographic findings and discusses the results. Table 1 shows that 69.9% of the respondents were male, 52.9% were single, 42.5% were at 25-30 age range, 70.9% have bachelor's degree, 30.9 % worked for 1-3 years, and 60.0% were at employee status. It is also depicted on the table that 23.5% of the surveyed organizations were at micro level and 20.0% of respondents were working at customer care department.Linear regression analysis was conducted to reveal the causal relationship between conflict types and conflict management styles. Table 2 depicts statistically significant causal relationships as a list.

Voting preferred as a conflict management style for these conflict types: Relationship tension ($p < 0.001$), disagreements within work group about the task of the project ($p < 0.05$), disagreement about resource allocation ($p < 0.05$), and disagreements about the optimal amount of time to spend on different parts of group work ($p < 0.05$). Idiosyncratic solutions preferred for these conflict type (significant at $p < 0.05$ for all relations) : People get angry while working, conflict of ideas, group members discuss evidence for alternative viewpoints, disagreements about the optimal amount of time to spend on different parts of group work, and tension in group caused by member(s) arriving late to group meetings.

Table 1: Demographic Findings (n =395)

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	276	69.9
	Female	118	29.9
Marital Status	Married	167	42.3
	Single	209	52.9
	Divorced	15	3.8
	Widowed	4	1.0
Age	Under 18	2	0.5
	18-24	86	21.8
	25-30	168	42.5
	31-36	76	19.2
	37-43	26	6.6
	44-50	13	3.3
	51-57	5	1.3
	58-64	2	0.5
	65 and above	8	2.0
Education Level	Informal	2	0.5
	Primary	1	0.3
	Intermediate	4	1.0
	High school	58	14.7
	Bachelor Degree	280	70.9
	Master	46	11.6
	PhD	4	1.0
Years working with organization	Less than 1 year	62	15.7
	1-3 years	122	30.9
	4-6 years	91	23.0
	7-9 years	57	14.4
	10-12 years	43	10.9
	13-15 years	11	2.8
	16-18 years	2	0.5
	25- 27 years	2	0.5
Position	Owner / Shareholder	15	3.8
	Genel Manager/Vice General Manager	42	10.6
	Department head	69	17.5
	Supervisor/Foreman	27	6.8
	Employee	237	60.0
	Other (Specify)	5	1.3
Number of staff	10 and less	93	23.5
	10–49	76	19.2
	50–99	46	11.6
	100 – 249	61	15.4
	250-499	32	8.1
	500-999	30	7.6
	1000-1999	35	8.9
	2000 and above	18	4.6
Your work unit	Finance Department	73	18.5
	Operations / Logistics Department	16	4.1
	Human Resources Department	62	15.7
	Sales Department	68	17.2
	Customer Care Department	79	20.0
	Information Technology Department	29	7.3

Marketing Department	29	7.3
Production Department	28	7.1
Other (Specify)	11	2.8

Open communication preferred for these conflict type (significant at $p < 0.05$ for all relations): Group members discuss evidence for alternative viewpoints, group members disagree about the optimal amount of time to spend in meetings, and tension in group caused by member(s) arriving late to group meetings. Discuss or debate preferred for these conflict type (significant at $p < 0.05$ for all relations): Conflict in group about task responsibilities, group members discuss evidence for alternative viewpoints, disagreements about the optimal amount of time to spend on different parts of group work. Compromise or consensus preferred for these conflict type (significant at $p < 0.05$ for all relations): Conflict in group about task responsibilities, conflict in group about task responsibilities, and group members disagree about the optimal amount of time to spend in meetings. Avoided or ignored preferred for these conflict type (significant at $p < 0.05$ for all relations): Conflicting opinions about the project, and disagreement about resource allocation.

Finding suggested that the research hypothesis (H1) is supported with the data available.

Table 2: Causal Relationship Between Conflict Types And Conflict Management Styles

Conflict types	Conflict management Styles	Significance Level
Relationship tension	Voting	0,000
People get angry while working	Idiosyncratic solutions	0,028
Conflict of ideas	Idiosyncratic solutions	0,014
Disagreements within work group about the task of the project	Voting	0,031
Conflicting opinions about the project	Avoided or ignored	0,026
Conflict in group about task responsibilities	Compromise or consensus	0,040
	Discuss or debate	0,001
Disagreement about resource allocation	Voting	0,001
	Compromise or consensus	0,008
	Avoided or ignored	0,002
Group members discuss evidence for alternative viewpoints	Discuss or debate	0,042
	Open communication	0,001
	Idiosyncratic solutions	0,020
Disagreements about the optimal amount of time to spend on different parts of group work	Voting	0,021

	Discuss or debate	0,006
	Idiosyncratic solutions	0,036
Group members disagree about the optimal amount of time to spend in meetings	Compromise or consensus	0,030
	Open communication	0,040
Tension in group caused by member(s) arriving late to group meetings	Open communication	0,022
	Idiosyncratic solutions	0,013

6.   DİSCUSSİON

Data analysis and results revealed that there is a positive relationship between conflict types and management styles. Previous researches have similar findings. Zhang (2012) indicates in his research that task conflict is beneficial to group performance and decision making quality because it facilitates the exchange of information among members; conversely, relationship conflict is detrimental to groups because it produces tension and hostility that obstruct members from performing the task.Mukundan and Zakkariya (2013) indicate in their research that conflict resolution style theorists opine that collaborative or integrative style, where there is high concern for task and people is considered to give positive individual and organizational outcomes, while the withdrawing /avoidance style and forcing / dominating style are considered to be ineffective in managing conflict.

7.   CONCLUSİON

Research findings revealed that the conflict management style, named idiosyncratic solutions, is the most preferred one in the organizations. That can be interpreted that conflicts in organizations differ in its nature, i.e. unique. Therefore, instead of defining pre-defined management styles, situations, nature and conditions of the conflict determines the conflict management style. So, management in organizations suggested to eliminate all possible conflicts and sources of conflict.Voting is the other widely preferred conflict management style. That is an expected result, since voting enables to get agreement without deteriorating conflicting parties. Here, majority rule works. For organizations, when possible, voting method may be preferred more to get into agreement in a short time. Open communication is another widely preferred conflict management style. Open communication enables conflicting parties to express themselves. Expressing oneself may even satisfy himself or herself and solve the problem. So people can be given to express their ideas freely, and management in organizations should provide such freedom conditions properly.Owners, managers and decision makers of the finance sector in Hargeisa should be aware of the conflict types and conflict management styles. So they can control and handle the conflicts properly and wisely. They can create open discussions, debates, panels, etc. So they can advise and deal with their different ideas.

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