

Relationship between Age, Gender and Conflict management styles and its effect on employee performance in the major universities of Quetta City

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Abstract

The issue of conflict has gained much importance in current period due to the clashes and disagreements among people of different culture working together at one place. This study was intended to look into the belief that may prevail between gender, age and conflict management styles. Particularly, the objective of the study is to match the conflict management styles prefer by male and female and by age diverse groups in major universities of Quetta and also to inspect the impact of each conflict management style on employee performance. The standardized self-administered adapted questionnaire by Thomas and Kilman (1974) was used to evaluate the conflict management styles of 300 participants (157 males, 143 females) selected at random from 4 major universities of Quetta i.e, university of Balochistan, Sardar Bahadur Khan women's University, BUITEMS and Al-Hammd University. Outcome of this study showed that, female, when compared with their male counterparts are more prone to use the compromising conflict management style and male utilize the avoiding style more often. One –way ANOVA showed that only the first group 25-35 is significantly related with compromising whereas the rest of the styles showed no difference. According to the results of Pearson's correlation competitive and avoiding are negatively significantly correlated with employee performance whereas collaborating, compromising and accommodating are positively correlated with employee performance

.Keywords: Conflict management styles, gender, compromising, avoiding, competition, collaborating and accommodating.

Introduction

Conflict a controversial term on which theorist themselves have conflict, appears in mind in a negative sense that doubles the difficulties of a job. But in a broader sense some level of conflict has a blessing of positive outcome. If managed correctly, can kindle progress in ways harmony often cannot.

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Conflicts that are managed poorly cause both direct and indirect cost to the organization among which losing of customers and capable employees is the worst another is the loss of time spent on resolving conflicts rather than on fulfilling work and attaining objectives. There are number of factors responsible for conflict such as Personality characteristics, organizational structure (Brewer et al., 2002), interpersonal needs, individual behavior (Visser et al., 2001) etc. Now the organizations are diversifying in terms of age, gender, education, culture, religion, race and on ethnic basis. Each affects the conflict handling techniques but this study focus on the age and gender differences. There are five Conflict Management techniques used either by one or both parties to cope with a conflict these techniques are competing, cooperating, accommodating, compromising and collaborating according to studies done by several researchers gender and age diverse groups have their own criteria of selecting the conflict management styles. Each style is useful in some situations and each style has its drawbacks. The skill is to analyze the situation and then determine the appropriate action.

According to (Awan & Kaleemullah, 2015) conflicts if managed properly has the potential to promote open communication, participative decision making, regular feedback which enhance the flow of new ideas and build up work relationship that ultimately boost the morale of employees whereas poorly managed conflicts hamper the employee performance.

Literature Review

Conflict

No matter who we are or from where we belong to if we are in direct contact with other people then we are likely to be involved in some form of conflict whether it be a minor friction or tremendous one (McConnon & McConnon, 2011). (Kazimoto, 2013) believed that at workplace conflict is the existence of disagreement among workforce due to incompatible goals, interest and values that frustrate each other's in attempting to achieve objective. According to (Rahim, 2002) organizational conflicts occur due to engagement of certain actors in behavior that are contrary with those of co-workers within organizations, employees of other institutes or individuals who employ the products and services of organization.

Certain tactics are involved in managing conflicts such as enhancing conflict handling skills through learning and giving awareness about conflict management styles and establishing a structure for management of conflict (Robbins & Judge, 2011). Organizational conflicts have become more intensifies as before as the organizations are moving towards more flatter and decentralized structures (Aula & Siira, 2010).

Preez V (1998) said conflicts are neither bad nor good, wrong or right it is the parties involved in conflict who perceive conflict differently and attach value to the established meaning. People feelings, beliefs and values attached with those involve in conflict determine the conflict results.

Number of positive outcomes are associated with conflict such as innovation, creativity, less organizational stagnation, higher performance and motivation, and the growth of individuals.

(Harvey & Brown, 1988) recommended that conflict cannot be constructive if it is personality-oriented rather than issue oriented, conflicts are said to be healthy when it sharpens people's through process, when it is appropriate to the goals of the group and when possible winners and losers are not produce through the process of conflict.

Blake & Mouton dual dimensional managerial Grid provided base for the development of conflict management style model with two dimensions assertiveness and cooperativeness (Rahim & Bonoma,1979). (Rahim,1979) suggested that people with low apprehension for themselves and low concern for others most often use avoiding conflict management style means such people avoid the conflict altogether. Parties which show high self-interest and high interest for others means they would prefer collaborating style in order to reach to a solution that is acceptable for the conflicting parties involved. (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) further added that people with high apprehension for themselves but are less concerned for other would prefer to use competitive style. An individual with little concern for self but are highly concerned for others would use the accommodating style and finally individuals with mediocre concern for self and with the same middle level interest in others prefer compromising style.

Age

Age is an important determinant of workplace diversity, it encourages the multi-generational workforce with distinct skills to work together for achieving the organization's corporate goal (McQuerrey, 2017). Elimination of discrimination on the basis of age enables the manager to attract, retain and motivate the competent employees as well as to provide opportunities for their growth and development. As age diversity brings in people having wide diverse knowledge and wide range experience (Gellner & Veen, 2013).

The important component of business success is diversity that brings in quality decision –making, adaptability, flexibility and innovation as important for global competition Age diversity is based on the assumption that people working in same organization have grew up in different time periods and they

possess different skills, abilities, experience, views, values and expectations etc (Glass, 2007).

Gender

A feminist-sociological analysis maintains that the idea of “gender” refers to the culturally and socially constructed dimensions of one’s biological sex. According to (Alexander & Anderson, 1993) “In social context Gender functions as similar to class and race-ethnicity that measures our life chances and directs our social links with others”.

In the words of (Scott, 1986), gender refers to the qualitative divergence and divisions between women and men (for example, their gender roles and gendered identities), as well as the quantitative power disparity that signifies the social connection between men and women.

Gender roles vary with each society’s culture and beliefs depending on the values and parameters located by each society (Blackstone, 2003).

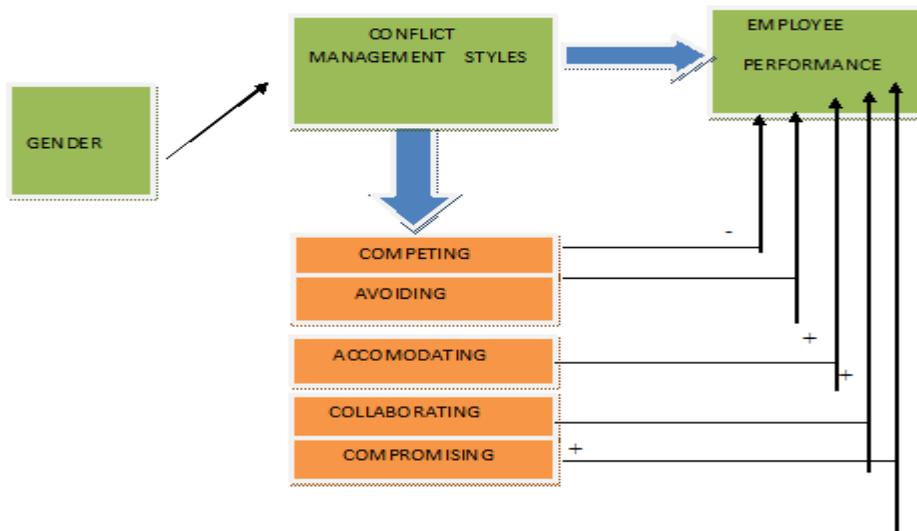
Performance

According to (Vosloban, 2012) When talking about the company’s internal marketing the performance is considered as one of the important aspect. Reaching performance to the highest-level leads company to the continuous development and also brings continuous increase in the market standards but becomes more and more a challenging for a company.

Today organization are facing dynamic environment and edge-cutting competition, in such uncertain situations business has to meet certain standards by improving their performance otherwise the organizations have to face lots of troubles including the threat to shut down the business the performance relate to the individual and firm level, employees are the most important resource in obtaining the organizational objectives (Muda et al., 2014).

According to (Campbell, 1990) performance is defined as behavior of employee and not outcome However outcomes is the result of employee performance and the outcomes are effected by certain other external factors. Certain methods can be employed to evaluate employees as well as organizational performance (Wong & Wong, 2007:Vosloban, 2012).

Theoretical Framework



HYPOTHESIS:

H₁. There is a relationship between age diversity and Conflict management styles.

H₂: Gender and conflict management styles are correlated.

H₃: There is a significant correlation among conflict management styles and employee performance.

H_{3a}: Competitive conflict management style and employee performance are negatively correlated.

H_{3b}: Avoiding conflict management style and employee performance are negatively correlated.

H_{3c}: There is positive correlation between compromising style of conflict management and employee performance.

H_{3d}: Collaborative style of conflict management and employee performance are positively correlated.

H_{3e}: Accommodating style of conflict management is positively and negatively correlated with employee performance,

Methodology

The research methodology of the study incorporated with the execution of a non-experimental research design. Study is deductive, empirical, cross-sectional and quantitative in nature. Primary data will be collected by distributing the self-administered questionnaires among the faculty and non-faculty staff of four major universities 350. Questionnaires will be distributed among subjects for data collection. Convenience sampling technique will be employed that is a type of non-probability sampling in which the questionnaires are distributed among subjects on the basis of easy accessibility to the researcher. The data will be tested by using the SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) Version 20 (Nie et al, 2000). For testing the reliability of scale Cronbach Alpha will be applied. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient will be used to identify the relationship between the conflict management styles and employee performance. Independent t-test and one-way ANOVA will be used to test the variance between the age and gender diversity and conflict management styles.

Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	Beta
1.Employee performance	5.5444	0.90930	1						
2.Competition	2.6493	0.91233	-.670**	1					-.670
3.Avoiding	3.5320	1.15775	-.215**	.250**	1				-.215
4.Collaborating	5.3267	0.91899	.591**	-.661**	-.325**	1			.591
5.Accomodating	5.2167	0.98490	.538**	-.616**	-.323**	.947**	1		.538
6.Compromising	4.5883	0.87657	.350**	-.319**	-.317**	.367**	.367**	1	.350

Results and Discussion

To identify the correlation of independent variable with dependent variables the Pearson correlation analysis was applied. Competition one of the conflict handling approach is negatively correlated with employee performance with a correlated coefficient of -0.670 with $p=0.000$ where $p < 0.05$ hence shows significant results . Avoiding style of conflict management shows the negative correlation ($r= -.0215, p < 0.05$, two tailed) . Collaboration the third conflict handling style is positively correlated with employee performance with $r= 0.591, p < 0.05$, two tailed. The results showed that accommodating and compromising conflict management style was significantly and positively correlated with employee performance ($r= 0.538, p < 0.05$, two tailed) and ($r= 0.350, p < 0.05$, two tailed) respectively. Independent t-test was applied to identify the gender differences regarding the preference of conflict

management style. the result showed that male are more avoiding whereas female are more compromising, no gender differences are found regarding the compromising, competing and accommodating conflict handling styles. One-way ANOVA was applied to identify the preference of conflict management styles by different age groups. The results showed no difference regarding the use of conflict management style except the age group 25-35 that showed significant relation with compromising conflict management style.

The objective of the research was to examine the relationship between age, gender differences and conflict management styles and to study its effect on employee performance within the major universities of Quetta. The present study results are in agreement with the previous research findings and further replicate preceding empirical studies done by Uchedu, Anijaobi and Odigwe (2013); Tseveendorj (2008) and Ikeda, Veludo and Campomar (2005) on causative factors of workplace conflict (Obi & Obasan, 2011). It appears that although a small number of research have been conducted on the correlation between conflict management styles and gender roles, Researchers who have studied revealed that male individuals most probably adopts a dominating style (Portello & Long, 1994; Brewer et al., 2002) whereas females an avoiding conflict-handling style (Brewer et al., 2002). But the results of current study do not support stereotype image of gender it suggested that male are avoiding and female are compromising whereas regarding the accommodating, competing and collaborating no difference exist between male and female preference. according to the study done by (Aqeel et.al, 2015) there exist significant relationship between age diversity and conflict management styles. The current study showed significant result between age group 25-35 and compromising conflict management style. The findings of the current study are in alignment with those of Comboh (2014) and Mugal and Khan (2013) on organization performance and conflict management. As the previous studies indicated negative correlation between competitive and avoiding conflict management styles and employee performance and positive correlation between collaborative, accommodating and compromising conflict management styles the current study supported the results of previous research

Conclusion

Organizations are social entities divided into hierarchies of individuals and departments. Conflict is universal feature at each organizational level. Since conflict may have productive as well as destructive outcomes, Conflicts can be converted to positive outcomes by “group thinking” or into negative outcomes due to lack of communication. It is therefore essential that managers find out a blend of various methods and techniques of conflict management. Harmonized efforts and creative achievements can take place only due to effective conflict

management. Managers need to understand their own style in order to take advantage of positive aspects of conflicts or even capitalize on it, and reduce negatives.

According to my study people prefer different conflict management strategies at the workplace depending upon their demographic characteristics. The demographic characteristics investigated in this research study are age and gender. The results revealed that age diversity is significantly correlated with compromising conflict management styles that means there exist difference in age groups regarding the adoption of compromising conflict management style results showed the group 25-35 most frequently uses the compromising style when confronted with conflicting situation. Further the findings revealed significant differences between the gender group and avoiding and compromising conflict management strategies showing that male are more avoiding and female are more compromising whereas rest of the styles are adopted by both male and female equally depending upon the prevailing situation and personality characteristics.

Conflict management styles have significant bearing on employee performance. The results of my study revealed that avoiding and competing are strongly negatively correlated with employee performance. Collaborative, accommodating and compromising conflict management styles have strong positive relation with employee performance.

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