CONFLICT THEORIES, FAULT LINES, AND ESCALATION MANAGEMENT IN MODERN ORGANIZATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

While disputes are unavoidable in human existence wherever there are activities and interactions, they must be minimized for the proper operation of any organization and the general well-being of society. The goals of this study are to create a thorough synthesis, look at theories, management, and conflict as well as fault lines in workgroups, conflict management, and conflict escalation management in organizations. Since there was no fieldwork, a conceptual approach was used, although the body of existing literature was reviewed. This study, which was informed by previous research, concentrated on reviewing the body of existing literature from a variety of online journals in addition to the manual text of studies on conflict theories, origins, functions, faultlines, and. This study provides a sufficient overview of conflict in organizations generally through the use of a descriptive layout. According to this study, there are a wide range of conflict theories that explain how different conflict theories relate to the demographics of employees. Conflict faultlines, escalation in organizations, denial averment, causes, sources, and theories. This paper concluded that conflict escalation requires suitable management based on the body of existing literature. According to this study, there are no standards for handling conflict; nevertheless, this is also dependent on how well a company is able to implement participative management.

Keywords: Conflict, fault lines, escalation, negation averment, demographic characteristics, workplace

Introduction

Organizational behavior studies conducted recently have focused on how people interact with one another in groups and as individuals when facing conflict. Occurring in most scientific areas, such as communication studies, behavioral sciences, and science, conflict is a multifaceted phenomenon that affects individuals, groups, and cultures. As such, research on conflict is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. De Dreu and Carnevale (2005) note that while theories and approaches differ within different areas. Critical theoretical inquiry phenomena, decision-making words, antecedents, methods, and consequences, as well as how individuals and groups manage them, were profoundly questioned. Many disciplines have taken an interest in these academic investigations. Reviews of studies on group composition have identified conflict as a primary group process influenced by member variety (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Lau & Murnighan, 1998). To put it plainly, organizational actions raise the

possibility of conflict. This entwined complexity has been recognized by every school of thinking, including Weber bureaucracy, scientific management, human relations, cooperative systems, and open systems theory. Organizational developments have made the already complicated link between conflict, workers, and workplace procedures even more intricate. Firstly, conflict is more likely to arise as a result of change management, adaptation, innovation, and creativity when there are concurrent increases in workload, job instability, artificial intelligence adaption, and misunderstandings (Janssen, 2003, Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Second, firms now deal with a workforce that is incredibly diverse as a result of globalization (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Omoyebagbe & Omofowa, 2023). Third, the increasing e-transaction and Internet usage, which prevents employees from working and interacting in person (Friedman & Currall, 2003, Omofowa et al, 2021). Fourth, teleworking has been ushered in by the COVID-19 epidemic and the New Normal. Thus, by investigating conflict theories about employee demographics and their impact on several outcomes, this study seeks to close this important research gap. This motivation stems from the intricate nature of conflict and how theories conceptualized under the conflict paradigm interact with an awareness of demographic variables. This study adds to the realm of conflict management in businesses by examining this important conceptualization and provides additional insight on negation assertion that may need to be improved. Understanding how conflict theories are conceptualized in relation to employee demographics, conflict dynamics and origins, faultlines, and managing escalation in an organization is the main study question.

Thus, the following are the research objectives:

i. Analyze conflicting hypotheses on employee demographics.
ii. Investigate negation and conflict at several analytical levels.
iii. Determine the workgroups' dispute faultlines.
iv. Examine how the organization handles the escalation of conflicts.

Isomomorphism of conflict in terms of causes and effects is greatly facilitated by the conceptualization of conflict theories. In an effort to address methodological shortcomings and provide novelty to the field, we looked into workgroup faultlines as a means of facilitating team dispute resolution. advancing fresh understanding on how to manage conflict theories within an organization. For organizations looking to resolve conflicts and maximize negation assets, its consequences are far-reaching. The study emphasizes how important conflict is. Conflict stands out from other "dark-side" conflict conceptions, such as aggression, rudeness, deviance, and bullying. This study emphasizes how negative processes, such as incoordination and cohesiveness, are brought on by relationship conflict and how these sap motivation to finish tasks and unite behind shared objectives. Decision-makers can benefit from this understanding, which can help them navigate potential conflicts; the research focuses on conflict, its causes, dynamics, antecedents, repercussions, and management. Even though the study was carried out in Edo State organizations, its implications transcend regional borders; the results provide lessons for organizations worldwide, illuminating the ways in which conflict mitigates many aspects of human connections, groups, and individual. In order to review the body of existing literature from a variety of peer-reviewed, high-quality online journals, such as those indexed in scope-based databases, the Web of Science, the Index Copernicus (ICV:qu,96), CNK: (China), and Google Scholar, is a necessary step in the qualitative investigation regarding narrative tools. In addition to using storytelling as a technique for faultlines and conflict resolution, the narrative tool also addresses the historical theories of conflict viewpoint that aim to support, settle, and spread alternative dispute settlement. Teams and workgroups are the main emphasis of this tool. It discusses faultlines, conflictescalation management in Edo State, conflict theories, causes, and negative affirmation. The literature review, methods, results and

discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for additional research are all included in the paper's framework.

Research Methods

This essay focuses on the several theories of conflict that address workplace conflict, faultlines in workgroups, employee demographics, and conflict escalation in companies. In order to provide the study with a clear understanding of the understudy concept, the researchers conducted an extensive review of existing literature from a variety of online databased publications, including APA, Psycnet, research gate, Google Scholar, jstor, Sage, Taylor and Francis, Emerald publication, Springer, and Science Direct. The aforementioned work has to be qualitatively contextualized and peer-reviewed in English between 1988 and 2023. Subsequently, the Iranian database, pub/med/Medline, Embase, ISI/web of Science Scopus, and ISI/web of Science were also searched. Grey literature was also looked up using Google Scholar. Title, abstract, and literature review were the criteria used to filter the research. A three-point quality rating system was used to score each study: poor, medium, and high. Every readable author incorporated studies.

Theoretical Foundation

Workplace conflict can take many different forms, but it is important to look at a broad and inclusive definition of conflict. As a process, conflict arises when people or groups sense antagonism and differences regarding resources or behaviors that are important to them. This process view has its roots in Pondy's (1967) original research, which distinguished between latent and visible conflict. Internal or intragroup conflict is referred to as latent conflict. Manifest conflict as violent outbursts, constructive talks, or dynamics between individuals or organizations. The process is contingent upon how the parties handle their disputes or take action, as well as the outcome. Two forms of conflicts—relationship and task conflicts—related to group composition have received the majority of attention in research on organizational conflict (Pelled, 1996; Jehn Northcraft and Neale, 1999). which are grounded on substantive/affective and cognitive/emotional characteristics. Disagreement or incompatibility problems that are not personal difficulties pertaining to tasks are what cause relationship troubles. Social gatherings, rumors, fashion choices, political opinions, and pastimes are among the relationship issues that are commonly mentioned (Jehn, 1997). Anger and irritation among members of the group are frequently linked to this kind of dispute (Pelled, 1996). Relationship problems can lead to very detrimental process issues, including cooperation, cohesiveness, and lack of coordination (Brewer, 1995; Labianca, Brass, and Gray, 1998).. This reduced the amount of energy and effort necessary to finish and consolidate the task. Relationship conflict has been demonstrated to have detrimental effects and to be the cause of a number of outcomes, including low commitment, poor objective performance, high absenteeism rates, low levels of perceived performance, and low levels of creativity (Pelled, 1996, Simons and Peterson, 2000, De-Dreu and Weingart, 2003). Disagreements about tasks, such as the organization's present strategic stance or the data to report, can result in task conflicts. Problems with task conflict can improve the caliber of performance (Jehn et al., 1999). When members engage in critical debate and open discussion about work challenges, for instance, group performance can be enhanced because they are more likely to present and assess different alternatives, leading to the best possible decisions (Amason, 1996, Cosier and Rose, 1997). All dispute, though, has the potential to produce an uneasy atmosphere that lowers people's perceptions of satisfaction and teamwork (Amason and Schweiger, 1997).

In light of this, recent studies by Jehn and Mannix (2001) and Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, and Trochin (2005) investigated process conflict as a distinct conflict type from task conflict. Process conflicts arise from disagreements over who is in charge of what, how things should

be delegated, and how tasks should be completed within the work unit (Jehn, 1997). Based on the results of an ethnographic study of work groups, Jehn (1997) distinguished between task and process conflict. Task conflict is related to strategy and accomplishment; both are linked to performance and satisfaction. In view of this, process conflict was examined as a separate conflict type from task conflict in recent studies by Jehn and Mannix (2001) and Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, and Trochin (2005). Disagreements about who should do what, how to assign responsibilities, and how tasks should be finished within the work unit are the root causes of process conflicts (Jehn, 1997). Jehn (1997) made a distinction between task and process conflict based on the findings of an ethnographic study of work groups. Strategy and accomplishment—both of which are connected to performance and satisfaction—are related to task conflict.

Conflict Dispersion Theories in Group Composition

Dispersion-based group composition study examines the distribution of individual traits within a group (McGrath, 1998; Milliken and Martins, 1996). Heterogeneity study, for instance, looks at how different demographic traits and results are distributed. Through mechanisms that are explained by the similarity attraction paradigm, self-categorization theory, social identity theory, and a cognitive resource viewpoint, dispersion theories have been able to anticipate conflict processes. The distribution of individual attributes within a group is examined by dispersion-based group composition studies (McGrath, 1998; Milliken and Martins, 1996). For example, a heterogeneity research examines the distribution of various demographic characteristics and outcomes. Dispersion theories have been able to predict conflict processes through mechanisms that are explained by the similarity attraction paradigm, self-categorization theory, social identity theory, and a cognitive resource viewpoint. Dispersion theories of group composition in conflict issues are based on predictions of group processes and outcomes on the degree to which members are different based on demographic characteristics, but they fall short of taking into account the interdependence features in conflict management. The similarity attraction paradigm suggests that people will apply negative assumptions to those with whom they are dissimilar (Byrne, 1971).

Theory of Conflict Resolution for Peace Building.

This theory of conflict management explains the effort on genuine responsibility, ownership, and participating process in promoting peace bringing into practice organization supportive culture based on synergy and team spirit to prevent conflict escalation. Another major proponent advocated for sustainable peace initiative, the role of mediator as a third party intervention to strengthen the process (Longpoe, 2020, Adeniyi et al, 2021). This theory proposes inventive and creative ways of resolving protracted conflict situations. It is firmly rooted in the writings of John Paul Lederach. But even with all of the positive angles it offers to address the systemic and social problems, it falters in the peace implementation agreement.

Pluralist Theory of Conflict

According to pluralists, conflict is unavoidable because of staff diversity and demographic characteristics. In order to attain equitable interest in industrial relations, the idea promoted trade unionism, collective bargaining, and collective accountability as means of settling labor disputes and promoting successful management. The creation, application, and research of policies always improve employee morale. The main focus of pluralist theory is recognizing, addressing, and identifying the emergence of diversity. It also opposes the idea that workers should be treated like economic agents in order to achieve management philosophy, as this may result in conflicts of interest. Ultimately, the theory promotes participatory management. The theory's failure to recognize staff diversity is one of its main

flaws.

The Social Action Theory of Conflicts

Max Weber developed the idea in 1964, and it is predicated on the behaviors a person exhibits with regard to the past, present, and future (Trueman, 2015). Every action that is taken by people or staff is always translated into a meaning. Nonetheless, the Web distinguishes four categories of social action:

- Conventional action that is determined by the actor's and other personalities' feelings.
- In order to support a rational choice, rational behavior corresponds to an individual's anticipation of the dominant activity of others, which can lead the individual to act irrationally or rationally.
- Norms, ethics, values, and beliefs that are unrelated to success expectations are the subject of evaluative action.
- According to the social action theory, every human behavior is caused by externalities.

Conflict in the Workplace

To investigate the issue of conflict in the workplace or its origin.

There are many variables that influence conflict at various levels, but there are three main causes of conflict in organizations: a lack of resources, people's self-esteem when it comes to conflict and the need to maintain views and perspectives that are validated. When organizational interests are not aligned, resources are limited and scarce, and one of the main causes of conflict is access to the distribution of these scarce resources, scarcity resource conflicts arise. Team members bargain over time off, and workers ask for a larger portion of the team bonus because they believe their contributions are more valuable than those of certain teammates. It is helpful to use interdependence theory as a starting point in order to recognize and comprehend resource conflicts (Kelly and Thibaut, 1978, Rusbult and Van Lange, 2003). The theory incorporates significant ideas from realistic conflict theory (Sheriff and Sheriff, 1953), the theory of cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1949, 1973), and work on negotiation and bargaining (Pruitt, 1981). It is based on rational choice theories developed by economists and mathematicians in the late 1940s and early 1950s. By extending theory, we can thus understand the causes and predict the extent of escalation. Essentially, interdependence theory assumes that participants depend on one another to obtain positive outcomes and to avoid negative outcomes. The way participants are perceived to relate has implications for behavioral choices, the emerging interaction patterns, and their desired end-state. This study demonstrates that resource conflict is the root cause of individual stress and dissatisfaction (Spector and Jex, 1998), the basis of negative attitudes and competitiveness and escalation (Pruitt, 1981), and the relationship between unionism and management (Friedman and Currall, 2003). When it comes to social identity value and relationship conflict, an individual's self-esteem—an attitude toward oneself that is associated with multiple self-beliefs about the self as a whole or to its specific attributes—reflects their habitual ability or inability to satisfy the self-enhancement motive (Sedikidies and Strube, 1997). Development and preserving a positive identity lead to an ideologically and morally charged conflict. Ideological conflicts arise when one or more sides represent – or believe in – fundamental ideological principles. These conflicts usually involve societal issues such as poverty, gender parity, the environment, or civil rights. Right or wrong conflicts are those in which one or more parties protect or advance their personal or group identity in terms of moral issues, social standings, and reputation. Values-related conflicts are those involving morality (Jehn, 1994). Resource conflicts can be distinguished from ideological and value-related conflicts in a number of ways, the most significant of which is that the parties involved may feel that mutually beneficial

outcomes necessitate concessions and trade-offs that go against their fundamental beliefs (Druckman and Zechmeister, 1973, Harinck and De-Dreu, 2004). According to our earlier research, conflict starts when one party feels that another party is hurting, opposing, or opposing its interests, beliefs, and viewpoints. We contend that in professional environments, conflict may emerge as a result of mixed-motive interdependence (resource conflict, conflicts of interest), the need to establish and preserve a positive identity in relation to others (value conflict), and the requirement to establish and uphold consistency and socially validated, mutually understood understanding. In an organization, conflict serves a number of purposes and has a wide range of connected effects. The participant either gains or loses this outcome utility. Poor arguments or inability to agree leave parties unhappy, cause frustration and annoyance, disrupt social order, drive new conflict, and fuel disharmony. The quality of agreement that results from dispute resolution has a variety of important influences on subsequent interaction processes and performance-related issues (De-Dreu et al, 2006). In addition to these indirect effects, workplace conflict can also have more direct effects that aren't always mediated by the caliber of the negotiated agreement. Some of these direct effects include health, well-being, relationship commitment, job/life satisfaction, community values, justice, etc. The temporal horizon of short-versus long-term effect becomes crucial when researching further implications of conflict and conflict management (Thomas, 1992).

Workgroup Conflict Faultlines

According to Lau and Murninghan (1998), faultlines are the alignments of diversity attributes within a varied group that result in homogenous sub-groups. According to Meyer et al. (2014), faultlines hinder intra-team social integration and coordination, which increases the risk of intergroup bias between subgroups. Immediately demographic faultlines increase conflict and reduce cohesion, thereby impairing team viability and performance. Faultlines are generally associated with negative group processes, such as low productive energy (Kunze and Bruch, 2010), high emotional conflict (Pearsall et al, 2008), and faultlines. It forecasts that groups with different social integration traits will probably feel irritated, uneasy, hostile, and anxious, which might lead to increased levels of interpersonal conflict (Jehn, 1997). This is based on the dispersion theories. Research has demonstrated, for instance, that relational conflict among groups is heightened by numerous social category traits (Jehn, 1997, Pelled, 1996). Specifically, Jehn et al. (1997) looked at individual demographic disparities in a study of project teams and discovered that members of apparently varied groups experience more relationship difficulties than members of visibly similar groups. Moreover, attempts to disseminate opinions across demographic borders may be impeded, distorting communications and perhaps leading to conflict (Cox, 1993). Research has also shown that differences in sex and ethnicity are associated with increased interpersonal conflict, decreased levels of friendliness, and decreased levels of satisfaction (Wievsema and Bird, 1993). As previously discussed, relationship conflict will be high as a result of social category characteristics, but the effects of social category faultlines on relationship conflict will be more pronounced. Because they identify more with their subgroups, members of groups with social category faultlines may also show more intragroup bias. Individuals in groups with social category faultlines may be more prone to negative stereotyping and enmity due to intragroup bias than individuals in groups with varied social category traits.

Conflict Escalation in Organizations

When one party in a dispute starts using a combative strategy or more aggressive dispute resolution techniques than before, this is known as escalation. Conflict is a mental state characterized by a perceived disagreement of opinion, a perceived divergence of interest, or a sense of dissatisfaction with party behavior; escalation must be distinguished from conflict

(Fruitt and Kim, 2004). One strategy for resolving conflict is to escalate it; other strategies include finding solutions, giving in, and being silent. Escalation might take valid forms that have no source or be very subtle. Escalation can be a divisive reaction to irritation or a kind of revenge. It promotes any logrolling solutions by highlighting the significance of each party to issues and has favorable effects on organizations' selective escalation. Furthermore, the shock value can instill anxiety in management and promote information collecting, problem-solving, and reconsideration of flawed practices or policies. Escalation can occur in legitimate ways that are extremely subtle or lack a source. Escalation can be a divisive response to annoyance or a form of retaliation. By emphasizing the importance of each party to issues, it supports any logrolling solutions and has positive effects on organizations' selective escalation. Additionally, the shock value might make managers anxious and encourage information gathering, problem-solving, and reevaluating bad practices or policies. Bilateral and unilateral escalation sequences are the two different varieties. Bilateral sequence escalation occurs when there are multiple instances of retribution, counterretaliation, and counterdefense; for example, when management policy talks to the press without authorization, prompting disciplinary action. Unilateral sequence escalation occurs when only one party escalates. Avoiding situations that lead to escalation is a good way to manage it. Employees should also be in a solid position, and those who exhibit aggressive behavior should be excluded from negotiations. It is not appropriate to negotiate treaties using the principles of the Trojan War. Legitimacy, or fairness, should be based on merit and fair procedures when actions that are likely to cause conflict (such as criticism, discipline, or the firing of a well-liked employee) are done. This would promote uniform standards and guard against biased decision-making.

Study Selection

The following assumption led to the acceptance of studies. Original research on conflict theories encompasses all earlier studies that demonstrate the significance of conflict, source, and negation assertions at various levels of analysis. Workgroup faultlines and conflict escalation management in organizations are also important considerations. Any differences in agreement over the intricacy of the concept's explanation were settled by consensus, supported by sufficient literature. The chosen studies have dependable and valid content.

Discussion

All organizational systems experience conflict as a dynamic phenomenon. In an effort to comprehend its use, this paper aims to shed light on the several ideas that have been applied to conflict studies. The study examines conflict theories ranging from basic to sophisticated, including source, conflict, and negation, conflict faultlines, and conflict escalation management. Regardless of the philosophy underlying any of the aforementioned, conflict needs to be successfully handled to reduce its widespread occurrence in organizations. The advantage should spark a fruitful strategy that includes organizing and carrying out efficient tactics to reduce the negative effects and increase the positive ones in order to promote productivity, learning, and creativity. There are five methods to handle conflict: first, combine values to find a fair solution; second, be honest; and third, make sure that information is shared consistently. Secondly, this strategy is obliging; it closes the ranks between managers and their subordinates. Third, dominating means pushing behavior in order to benefit the winning party. Fourth, avoidance entails retreating from conflict and, lastly, compromise entails making a sacrifice in order to arrive at a fair resolution. Counter-production work behavior would vanish from any organization that successfully implemented and followed these procedures, and interpersonal and organizational deviance would cease to exist.

Conclusion

According to the idea of conflict, although conflict was once seen as harmful and should be avoided, its positive consequences on an organization have led to the eventual acceptance of respectful conflict. It damaged the organization overtly, covertly, or in a mysterious way. It is a deliberate behavior that transgresses and endangers the rules or ideals of the organization. Faultlines and escalation to a substantial content are linked to remedies for detrimental outcomes in this context. Taking this research into account, it can be said that conflict management techniques can aid in lowering escalation, and therefore it is worthwhile to gain from the management techniques covered above. Nevertheless, when handling dispute, managers should refrain from using obliging and avoiding. Despite the fact that each of the conflict theories has advantages and disadvantages, research on the many theories mentioned above has shown that theory is helpful in providing conceptual clarity. To minimize escalation, these factors should be carefully analyzed in relation to particular theories, faultlines, and action plans. Nevertheless, this study accomplishes its goals by limiting conflict to employees/participants, demographic disposition, behavioral choice, and relational/interaction in workgroups. Furthermore, lack of resources, self-esteem, and ideological disagreements lead to negative conflict. Faultlines have been linked to specific imagery or vapor that has no bearing on the matter; instead, managers should be well-prepared and trained in alternative dispute resolution procedures to prevent further escalation of conflict.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion literature, we recommend;

- That in order to determine which theory to research and use, it is important to understand the conflict's origin, the objection, the individuals involved, and its scope.
- The theory ought to be included in the body of existing academic literature in order to offer a unique perspective and practical application in addressing conflict situations and problem-solving.

Limitations and Potential Paths for Additional Study

A few limitations of the study offer avenues for future investigation. This is a qualitative study with a narrative tool's focus. This reduces the results' generalizability and our confidence in identifying the root causes and consequences of conflict, fault lines, and escalation management. The authors did, however, employ a robust theoretical framework. Nevertheless, empirical research can offer profound understanding of the issue. Alternative conflict resolution is one tool that academics can use to stop the escalation. This study also looks closely at conflict theories and how managers can reduce and find a way out of any unexpected situation. Future research on the effects of social inequality, diversity, and inclusion on pertinent outcomes will alter the dynamics of workplace practices with regard to conflict, faultlines, and escalation management. This study gives voice to organization behavior and human resource management scholarship and practices by connecting conflict, faultlines, and escalation management literature, despite the aforementioned constraints.

Contribution to Knowledge

First, the study advances knowledge by illuminating the most important component of an organization's management strategy: preventing and managing conflict escalation Second, this study reveals the demographic characteristics of workers and connects them to the particular theory and strategies for reducing conflict.

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