



## An Evaluative Study Focusing on Workplace Conflict Resolution Strategies from a Leadership Perspective

Mr. K.K. Bajaj<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>RNB Global University-Bikaner

**\*Corresponding Author:** Mr. K.K. Bajaj

*\*RNB Global University-Bikaner*

<p>Received: 04<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022</p> <p>Revised: 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022</p> <p>Accepted: 04<sup>th</sup> March 2022</p> <p>CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>Organizational conflict, also known as workplace conflict, arises from the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values, and interests among individuals collaborating within an organization. Conflict is inevitable in organizations, stemming from differences in formal authority, power dynamics, and the varying needs and goals of individuals and groups. Sources of conflict include disputes over revenue distribution, workload allocation, working conditions, jurisdictional boundaries among individuals and departments, and tensions between unions and management. Additionally, conflicts may manifest in subtler forms such as rivalries, jealousies, personality clashes, ambiguous role definitions, and power struggles. Individuals often face internal conflicts as they balance competing needs and demands. Within work groups, conflicts often arise from struggles for control, status, and access to limited resources. Similarly, conflicts between different groups within organizations typically stem from similar sources. Constructive resolution of conflicts can typically be achieved through a rational problem-solving approach, accompanied by a willingness to explore issues and alternatives, as well as a commitment to active listening and mutual understanding.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Conflict; Resolution; Leader; Strategy; Intra ; Interpersonal; Organisational; Motive; Anger; Anxiety</i></p>
--	---

### Objectives of the Study:

- (i) To learn the importance of conflict management as a leader
- (ii) To analyse the various factors leading to conflicts in an organisation
- (iii) To evaluate the reasons for the direct and indirect relationship of conflicts due to leadership issues
- (iv) To learn from better practices and techniques to arrest or avoid conflicts in organisations.

### Review of Literature:

Conflict can be described as actions taken by individuals or groups with the intention of hindering the achievement of goals by others (Gray & Starke, 1984). Riggio (2003) identifies four main types of conflict in

organizations. The first type is intraindividual conflict, which occurs when a person is confronted with two different decisions. An example could be a manager deciding whether to ignore a star performer's late arrival to work or to discipline them like any other employee. This conflict arises within the mind of the manager.

According to Ruble and Thomas (1976), employees can deal with conflict in five different ways. Depending on the attitude and behavior of the employee, a department may exhibit traits of all five conflict modes.

Nurses, for example, often deal with conflict through avoidance, attempting to maintain the status quo and preserve relationships (Baltimore, 2006). Ruble and Thomas' (1976) model highlights various approaches to managing conflict, including problem-solving, avoidance, competition, compromise, and smoothing.

Historically, conflict management philosophies by managers can be categorized into three distinct approaches: traditionalist, behaviorist, and interactionist (Robbins, 1978). Each philosophy offers a different perspective on conflict resolution, with some emphasizing the importance of finding a single right answer while others recognize the value of stimulating conflict to drive innovation.

Robbins (1978) suggests that conflict can be functional or dysfunctional based on its impact on organizational performance. Conflict management styles can influence employee attitudes and behaviors, with workload, unethical behavior, social exclusion, and other factors contributing to workplace stress (Bright & Jones, 2001). The Job Characteristics Model proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) identifies five key areas that impact job satisfaction, including skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Managers play a significant role in shaping these factors within the workplace.

Conflict management researchers suggest that conflict is a multidimensional construct with both positive and negative consequences (Jehn, 1992; Pinkley, 1990). Open-minded discussion and collaboration between departments can effectively manage conflict and capitalize on its potential positive outcomes (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Tetlock, Armor, & Peterson, 1994).

In summary, conflict arises from differences in values, opinions, needs, and interests among individuals or groups within an organization. Effective conflict management strategies involve understanding the nature of the conflict, identifying appropriate approaches to resolution, and promoting open communication and collaboration.

Conflict typically progresses through five phases. The first phase, known as the Prelude to Conflict, involves factors preceding conflict such as lack of coordination, differing interests, and cultural or educational differences, which can contribute to its emergence. The Triggering Event, the second phase, is an intervening event that sets off the conflict, such as disagreements between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Initiation Phase marks the beginning of the conflict, characterized by heated arguments, verbal disagreements, and other signs indicating the onset of conflict. The Differentiation Phase follows, during which individuals express their differences and conflicts become more defined. The final phase, Resolution Phase, involves efforts to compromise and resolve the conflict, exploring various options for reconciliation.

Conflicts can manifest in various forms, including verbal, religious, emotional, social, personal, organizational, and community conflicts. However, engaging in conflict and fighting rarely lead to satisfactory conclusions. Discussion and communication are preferable alternatives to resolve differences.

Personal conflicts may arise from personality differences, substance abuse, childcare issues, or disagreements over organizational values and management decisions. Social conflicts can occur at interpersonal, intragroup, or intergroup levels, often stemming from competition, poor communication, or differing values.

Intragroup conflicts arise within groups due to scarcity of resources or struggles for power and recognition. Intergroup conflicts involve competition between different departments or hierarchical levels within an organization.

Role conflict occurs when individuals face conflicting demands from their various roles within an organization. Passive-aggressive behavior, where workers sabotage projects or hinder team unity, can also contribute to conflict.

While conflict can be stressful, it is not always detrimental. Group conflict can lead to more creative solutions and problem-solving, provided it is managed effectively.

To manage conflicts, organizations can establish common goals, clarify roles and responsibilities, improve communication, and implement changes to policies and reward systems. Conflict resolution strategies such as mediation or counseling may also be employed to address interpersonal or intergroup disputes.

Ultimately, conflicts that persist and negatively impact work and relationships must be resolved through intervention by supervisors or management, fostering a collaborative and solution-oriented approach.

**To effectively and successfully resolve conflicts:**

1. Address the conflict directly instead of avoiding it, as unresolved conflicts can escalate and negatively impact the work environment.
2. Avoid meeting separately with the conflicting parties, as this can polarize their positions and make resolution more difficult.
3. Recognize that the effects of conflict extend beyond the individuals involved, impacting other employees and the organization as a whole.
4. Mediate the conflict by bringing the antagonists together and allowing each party to express their perspectives without interruption.
5. Encourage each participant to suggest specific actions the other party can take to resolve the differences, focusing on what they can do more, less, stop, or start.
6. Facilitate a discussion where all participants commit to making the necessary changes to resolve the conflict.
7. Acknowledge and appreciate any positive changes made by the other party, no matter how small.
8. Differentiate between reasonable disagreements over issues and plans and personality conflicts that affect the workplace dynamics.
9. Ensure both parties have confidence in their ability to resolve their differences and contribute positively to the organization's success.

Facilitation is a process that involves guiding individuals or groups towards achieving their goals or objectives. It can be used in various settings such as meetings, team building sessions, or training events to ensure that participants stay focused, collaborate effectively, and accomplish their intended outcomes. A facilitator, the person leading the facilitation process, plays a crucial role in keeping the group on track, encouraging participation from all members, and facilitating decision-making.

In group facilitation, both internal and external facilitators can present information, design processes, and provide structures to help the group achieve its objectives. They promote shared responsibility among participants for the meeting's outcomes and encourage active engagement to find solutions to problems or make decisions. Similarly, individual facilitation involves providing support and guidance to individual employees to help them resolve issues and reach mutually satisfactory solutions. Skilled facilitators ensure that the necessary structure, content, and processes are in place to facilitate effective communication and problem-solving.

Effective facilitation involves using various strategies, including nonverbal communication cues to signal opportunities for participation, intervening with probing questions to stimulate discussion, and establishing group signals to maintain order and focus during meetings. By employing these techniques, facilitators can create an environment conducive to collaboration and productivity.

**The culminators of Conflict in an organisation due to Leader's Bad Practices Contributing to Conflict in organisation:**

Leaders sometimes lack awareness of their actions, which can negatively impact their relationships with employees. Employees expect leaders to provide the guidance needed for success and to demonstrate an understanding of the organization's goals. When leaders provide inaccurate information or interpret data incorrectly, it erodes trust and leads to conflict.

Disrespectful treatment from leaders damages employees' self-esteem and leads to feelings of resentment. Behaviors such as talking over employees, ignoring their input, and criticizing unfairly create a hostile work environment and breed conflict.

When leaders make themselves the focal point and fail to acknowledge employee contributions, it undermines morale and fosters resentment. Employees feel undervalued when their efforts are not recognized, leading to conflict and dissatisfaction.

Unreasonable, selfish, or manipulative behavior from leaders creates tension and conflict in the workplace. Micromanaging smart employees stifles creativity and productivity, while a lack of understanding about employees' work can lead to poor decision-making and frustration.

Leaders who fail to acknowledge employees' personal lives and impose unrealistic demands create stress and conflict. Flexibility and understanding are essential for maintaining employee morale and preventing conflict. Taking credit for employees' ideas and accomplishments undermines morale and fosters resentment. Employees appreciate recognition for their hard work and become disillusioned when their contributions go unnoticed.

Throwing employees under the bus to appease senior managers damages trust and leads to conflict. Blaming employees publicly for failures erodes morale and destroys loyalty.

Bullying behavior from leaders, such as yelling or intimidating employees, creates a toxic work environment and fuels conflict. Employees feel intimidated and disrespected, leading to resentment and low morale. Overall, leaders must be aware of how their actions impact their employees and strive to create a positive and respectful work environment to avoid conflict and promote productivity.

### Conclusions and Suggestions:

Firstly, it's better to prevent conflicts than to deal with them after they arise, and one way to do this is by building a trust relationship over time. Trust is established and maintained through consistent small actions over a period. Establishing team norms or relationship guidelines can help shape the interactions among team members and with external employees. These norms are typically developed during early team meetings and are used to guide behavior and assess interaction quality.

Team norms cover various aspects such as team member equality, respectful communication, effective meeting participation, leadership rotation, and communication with other employees and managers. These norms ensure that team members are respectful, committed, and engaged in problem-solving, conflict resolution, and decision-making processes.

Effective team norms should be written and posted where team members can regularly see them to remind them of their commitments. With well-established norms, teams can focus on their business objectives without being hindered by ineffective relationships or interactions.

The role and job description of a manager vary across organizations but generally involve overseeing and leading the work of a group of people. Managers are responsible for the performance of their team or department and may have reporting employees for whom they provide leadership.

In larger organizations, there may be senior managers or managers of managers who report to higher-level executives like directors or vice presidents. Regardless of organizational size, a manager's primary responsibility is to ensure the performance of their team or functional area.

In summary, a manager's role involves not only leading people but also overseeing a segment of work or functional area within the organization. They are responsible for guiding their team towards achieving organizational goals and objectives.

### References.

1. Richard Arvid Johnson (1976). Management, systems, and society : an introduction. Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Pub. Co. pp. 148–142. ISBN 9780876205402. OCLC 2299496.
2. "Conflict Resolution Principles 150". Supervisor Essentials Training. TOOLINGU. Retrieved 1 December 2012.
3. "Workplace Conflict". Faculty and Staff Assistance. Boston University. Retrieved 1 December 2012.
4. Resolving Workplace Conflict, University of Colorado–Boulder.
5. Party-Directed Mediation: Facilitating Dialogue Between Individuals (on-line 3rd Edition, 2014) by Gregorio Billikopf, University of California
6. Chris Argyris (1957). Personality and organization; the conflict between system and the individual. New York: Harper & Row. pp. 47–54. OCLC 243920.
7. Theodore M Mills (1967). The Sociology of Small Groups. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. pp. 14–17. OCLC 255221.
8. Daniel Katz; Robert Louis Kahn (1966). The social psychology of organizations. New York: Wiley. pp. 18–33. OCLC 255184.
9. John E Jones; J William Pfeiffer (1973). The 1973 annual handbook for group facilitators. San Diego, Calif.: University Associates. pp. 106–109. ISBN 9780883900819. OCLC 9160197.
10. Henry P Knowles; Börje O Saxberg (1971). Personality and leadership behavior. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co. pp. Chapter 8. OCLC 118832.
11. De Angelis, Paula: Blindsided: Recognizing and Dealing with Passive-Aggressive Leadership in the Workplace, (Kindle Edition - Jun 22,2008)
12. [http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/02/14/BU144015.DTL Dangerous love: An Office romance could cost you your job, Julie N. Lynem, San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 14, 2003.

18. When an Office Romance Sours, Working.com
19. Workplace Coach: Companies pay the price when managers avoid dealing with conflict, Maureen, Moriarty, Seattlepi, Oct. 28, 2007.
20. Keenan, A., & Newton, T. (1985). Stressful events, stressors and psychological strains in young professional engineers. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 6(2), 151-156.
21. Liu, C., Spector, P. E., & Shi, L. (2007). Cross-National Job Stress: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28(2), 209-239.
22. Bowling, N. A., & Beehr, T. A. (2006). Workplace harassment from the victim's perspective: A theoretical model and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 998- 1012.
23. [1] Conflict and dispute management system design: overview.
24. Conflict Management, FAO Corporate Document Repository.
25. Patrick J. Montana (2008). *Management*. New York: Barron's Educational Series. p. 265. ISBN 0-7641-3931-2.
26. Lindred Greer, *Managing Conflict in Teams* (8-min video). Stanford Graduate School of Business. Professor Lindred Greer gives tips for managing conflicts, which left unchecked, can go viral, hurt productivity, and create employee turnover.
27. Kenneth Kaye (1994). *Workplace Wars and How to End Them: Turning Personal Conflict into Productive Teamwork*. New York: AMACOM. ISBN 0-8144-0215-1.
28. Party-Directed Mediation: Facilitating Dialogue Between Individuals (on-line 3rd Edition, 2014) by Gregorio Billikopf, University of California
29. Alfred W Clark (1976). *Experimenting with organizational life: the action research approach*. New York: Plenum Press. ISBN 9780306308796. OCLC 1976875
30. Thompson|The evolution of Frenco German rivalry|
31. D. Katz and R.L. Kahn, —The Social Psychology of Organizations| (2nd ed.; New York: Wiley, 1976) and K.E. Boulding, "Organizations and Conflict", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1 (2, 1957), 122-134. [5]
32. V. Aubert, "Competition and Dissensus", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 7 (1,1963), 26- 42. [6]
33. M. Deutsch,"Conflicts: Productive and Destructive", *Journal of Social Issues*, 25 (1, 1969), 7-42. [7]
34. .K.£.Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). [8]
35. J.S. Brown, "Principles of Intrapersonal Conflict", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1 (2, 1967), 135-154 and R.N. Sanford, "Individual Conflict and Organizational Interaction in Power and Conflict in Organizations|, ed. by Kahn andBoulding, pp. 95- 104. [9].
36. M. Deutsch(1994,July) —Constructive Conflict Resolution: Principles, Training, and Research|[online]50(1),pp 13-32 [10]J.M. Dutton and R.E. Walton, "Interdepartmental Conflict and Cooperation:Two Contrasting Studies", *Human Organization*, 25 (2, 1966), 207-220. [11] 32. R.E.Walton and J.M. Dutton, "The Management of Interdepartmental Conflict: A Model and Review"*Administrative Science Quarterly*, 14 (1, 1969), 73-84;
37. R.E.. Walton, R.E. et al. "OrganizationalContext and Interdepartmental Conflict", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 14 (4, 1969), 522-542;and R.G. Corwin, "Patterns of Organizational Conflict", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 14 (4,1969),507-520). [12]
38. Eisenhardt, K. M., Jean L. Kahwajy, & Bourgeois, L .J. III (1997). —How management teams can have a good fight|. *Harvard Business Review*, 75(4), 77–85. [13] Finkelstein, S. (2003).| Why smart executives fail.New York: Portfoliol.
39. Thomas, K. W., & Schmidt, W. H. (1976).|A survey of managerial interests with respect to conflict.*Academy of Management Review*|, 19(2), 315–318. [14]
40. Welch, J. (2001). *Jack:| Straight from the gut*. New York: Warner Business Books. [15] W.Johnson —Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs in Elementary and Secondary Schools: A Review of the Research| [online] 83(4).
41. Žugaj, M, Šehanović, J., Cingula, M. (2004): Organizacija, TIVA TiskaraVaraždin,
42. Varaždin 14 *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)* (2014) Volume 14, No 1, pp 1-15 [19]
43. Poljak, N., Šehić-Relić, L., (2006): Upravljanjesukobom u Organizacija, Centar zamir, nenasiljeiljudskaprava Osijek, Osijek [20] HuczynskiA.,
44. Buchanan D. (2001): — *Organizational Behavior*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow| [21]
45. Whetten, D.A., Cameron, K.S (2007.).| *Developing Management Skills*|, 7th edition,
46. Pears Education, Inc. Prentice Hall, New Jersey