Effect of Conflict Handling Approaches on Team Performance: A Study on Higher Educational Institutes of Pakistan

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Abstract

Educational Institutions intend to undergo multiple transformational alterations, hence, it is important to recognize and hold a grip specifically on those organizational factors that impact an employee's performance. The purpose of this study is to develop a model of conflict handling approaches and its impact on team performance. By specifically focusing on education sector employees of Pakistan, the present study attempts to analyze the how team members mingle with the conflict through appropriate conflict handling approach and how the particular approach employed by team members effect the overall team performance. Data and individuals' opinions collected from 240 employees in public and private education sector of Pakistan were analyzed. The sampling technique used is available sample approach. Findings show that conflict handling approaches in public and private education sector has a great influence on team performance and it shakes the performance of employees at a significant level.

Key Words: Conflict Handling approaches, Team Performance, Higher Educational Institutes.

1. Introduction

After a paradigm shift and internationalization of businesses, multinationals and more organizations are approaching to have diverse teams to cope up with the diverse culture and competitive working environment. The teams comprising of individuals from different backgrounds face conflicts regarding task, process and relationship which in turn can affect the team performance. So, the use of appropriate conflict handling approach plays a vital role and can paved way for employees performance along with organizational   performance .Conflict is taken as a process where one group of people assumes that their interests are being disparate or are affected pessimistically by other group of people (Wall &Callister, 1995) and Rahim (1992) defined conflict as an interactive process exhibited in compatibility, disagreement, or difference within or between social entities.

Conflict Management, is the capability to handle conflict successfully; conflict management refers to the methods applied by either or both parties to deal with a conflict (Gordon, 2003, p. 7-8). Investigating the form of conflict exclusive of the appropriate techniques to mingle with conflict only determine half of the issue. Similarly, the competence of a meticulous conflict handling style has to be judged in line to actually gain from this area of study.

De Dreu and Weingart (2003) recommended that more value be put on probing how members handle their conflicts; the way teams manage their conflicts can be significant for their team efficacy. Conflict management styles (CMSs) have been explained as "specific behavioral prototypes that individuals choose to take up when coping with conflict". An earlier study divided CMSs into five styles: assimilating, cooperating, governing, evading, and negotiating (Rahim, 1983). Research advocates that there is an inclination for individuals to take an account the integrating style and the compromising style when facing conflicts (Trubisky et al., 1991; Lee, 2003). Gross and Guerrero (2000) proposed that the integrating style was a more helpful form of conflict management style when evaluated with other CMSs. Even though integrating and compromising styles are more probable to be used, few studies have scrutinized the predecessors of these CMSs (Terhune, 1970; Antonioni, 1998).

2. Literature Review

2.1 ConflicT

In an organization conflict serves as a component of doing, thinking, following and leading. Conflict is unavoidable in organizations because individuals with diverse attitude, responsibilities and training seek to

synchronize. Conflict is consequently invasive that it has been tricky to describe. There is an immense controversy about conflict amongst social scientists regarding how conflict can be explained in best manner (Tjosvold, 1991 p. 33).

2.2 Conflict Handling Approaches

Conflict Management, is the capability to handle conflict efficiently; conflict handling refers to the methods used by any one or mutually groups to deal with conflict (Gordon, 2003, p. 7-8).

Conflict handling approaches, means the different techniques of conflict, probing the means in which individuals handled conflict. The expression conflict handling approaches is applied to explain any act taken by an opponent or a intermediary to seek to handle or resolve a conflict. According to Rahim (2002) these strategies are as follows: Integrating entails cooperation and problem solving wherein both groups Share knowledge and rummage around for ways to persuade each other. Compromising involves splitting problems down the central point to determine conflict. Obliging style connotes that an individual care about the desires of others by rebuffing His or her own wants. Avoiding style involves an individual restraining or moving back from conflict .Dominating style involves a person forcing problems to fulfill his or her wants congregate at the cost of another (Rahim, 2002).

Exclusively, the integrating style is illustrated by individuals who have a high concern for themselves and for others, while those using an obliging style have a low anxiety for self and high anxiety for others. Those employ a dominating style have a high apprehension for self and low apprehension for others, whereas the avoiding style is described by a low worry for self and others. The compromising style has a medium apprehension for self and others (Rahim et al., 2002).

2.3 Conflict Handling Approaches and Team Performance

Conflict adds to a team performance but most teams and organizations try to eradicate it (Robbins, 1991, p. 431). The consent of philosophers explains a reasonable presence of clash is essential so as to accomplish optimal efficiency of firm.Numerous conflict handling researchers (Amason, 1996; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999) have recommended that conflict handling approaches engage acknowledgment of the following: definite style of conflicts, which might have unconstructive effects on individual and team performance, possibly will have to be condensed. These conflicts are in general caused by the pessimistic responses of team members (e.g., individual assaults of team members). There are other styles of conflicts that might have encouraging effects on the individual and team performance. These conflicts narrate to differences concerning to jobs, strategies, and other organizational problems. Conflict handling approaches entail creation and upholding of a reasonable amount of these conflicts. Team members while cooperating with each other will be involved to cope up with their incongruities fruitfully. This describes learning how to employ different conflict-management approaches to deal with a range of circumstances efficiently (Rahim, 2002).

H1: There is significant relationship between integrating conflict management style and team performance.
H2: There is significant relationship between obliging conflict management style and team performance.
H3: There is significant relationship between dominating conflict management style and team performance.
H4: There is significant relationship between avoiding conflict management style and team performance.
H5: There is significant relationship between compromising conflict management style and team performance.
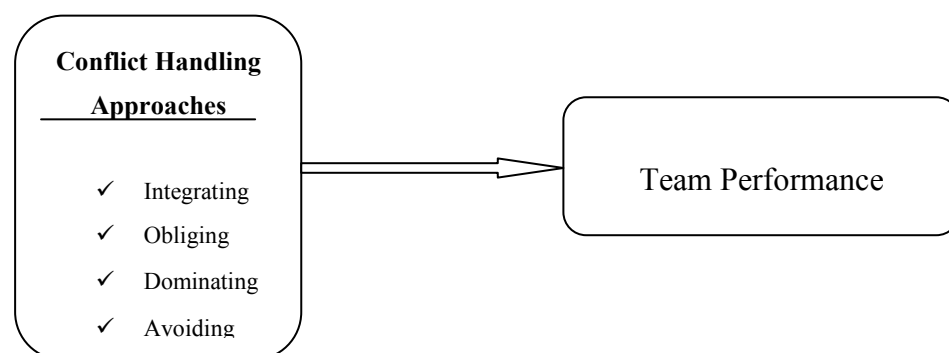
3. Methodology

3.1 Population

The population for this study has been all the faculty members and non-faculty (Admin) employees of public and private higher educational sector in Islamabad. This research has focused upon university professors and employees dealing with administration matters of higher educational institutions. Data has been collected from

five major public and private universities of Islamabad, NUST, IIUI, AIOU, ZSABIST and MAJU respectively. As the aim of this study is to analyze conflict handling approaches, therefore public and private higher educational sector of Pakistan have been selected as population as it will give a very clear picture about conflict handling styles.

3.2   Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Sample size for this study is 240 respondents doing their jobs in public and private higher educational sector of Pakistan. Respondents have been selected at random basis to minimize any chances of biasness/ discrimination i.e. gender, age, religion or size of organization. The haphazard sampling was used. The no. of respondents are from major universities of Islamabad.

3.3   Instrumentation

Data has been collected using questionnaire. Questionnaires were dispersed in different departments of NUST, IIUI, AIOU, ZSABIST and MAJU and have been filled under personal supervision. Scale used for data collection has been in the following order; Conflict Management styles will be measured by 28 statements proposed by Rahim (1983). In the questionnaire, styles denoted to the following items: 1, 5, 12, 22, 23, 28 for integrating style; items 2, 11, 13, 19, 24 for obliging style; items 8, 9, 18, 21, 25 for dominating style; items 3, 6,16, 17, 26, 27 for avoiding style; items 4, 7, 10, 14, 15, 20 for compromising style. The teams Performance will be measured by six items, these items were designed by Ancona &Caldwell (1992).

Statistical tests have been applied upon data using very famous software SPSS version 15 and AMOS version 16. Reliability analysis has been done to check the reliability of variables. Chi-square has been applied in order to check the significance level and relationship between variables through SPSS. Model has been tested through AMOS

Cronbach alpha coefficient used to evaluate the inter item reliability and consistency among responses which has been concluded from a survey questionnaire. For this study total items were 34 exclusive of personal information whose consistency has to be determined. Cronbach's alpha for all items was 0.671.Conflict Management styles will be measured by 28 statements proposed by Rahim (1983).   Whereas the value of cronbach alpha for Integrating Style is 0.677, for obliging Style is 0.732, for dominating Style is 0.727, for avoiding style is 0.731 while for compromising style is 0.656. The reliability of the adapted scale for team performance of (Ancona & Caldwell (1992). was 0.813 which is again between the acceptable ranges which is according to the accepted range all around the world. (See Table 4.1). Hence, the internal consistency and reliability of the measures used in this study was considered as satisfactory for further statistical analyses.

Table 4.1 shows the values of Cronbach Alpha for each variable of this study. In order to determine validity of the factors, or constructs, the cronbach alpha of every variable should be above 0.6, although loadings of 0.5 and above are acceptable for larger samples or for exploratory analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998).

4. Results And Analysis

Descriptive statistics of the sample has been shown in table 1. and Amoss Path analysis is basically a continuity of regression analysis used to test the researchers' model. Path analysis need normal assumptions of regression test; it is specifically related to the model sensitivity. Path analysis has been applied in this study to check the model fit. The model has been built in AMOS which has been described in figure 4.1 and 4.2 with both un-standardized and standardized statistics, (Table) Frequency distribution has been carried after splitting the variables on the basis of demographics gender, age, highest qualification, experience in the relevant field and the department for which you work.

4.1 Path Analysis
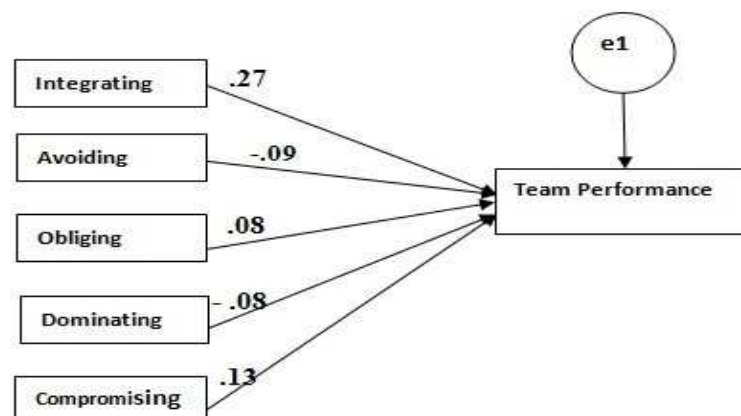
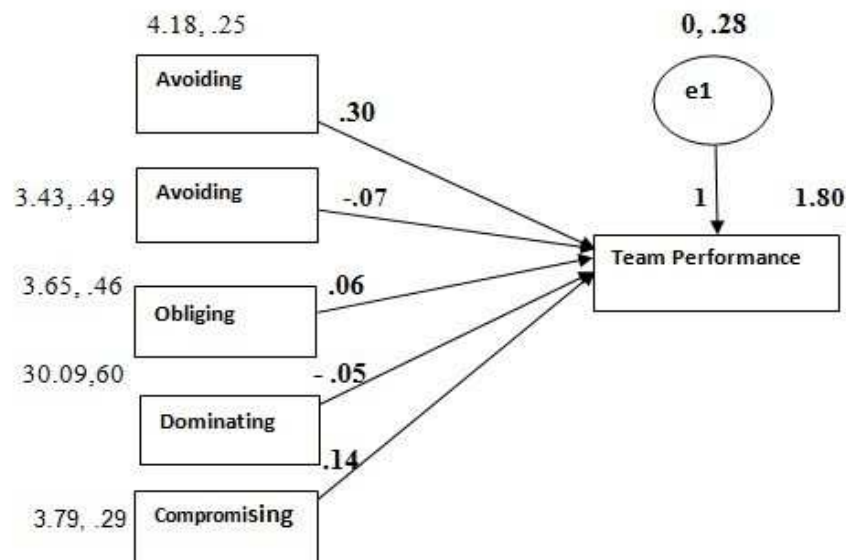**Figure 4.1 Un-Standardized Statistics**

Figure 4.2: Standardized Statistics

The values of β, regression coefficient are being displayed on all the arrows in the figure, and the β-value for integrating style and team performance is 0.30, for avoiding style and team performance is -0.07, for obliging style and team performance it is 0.06, for dominating style and team performance it is -0.05 and for compromising style and team performance it is 0.14. The values above the top right corner of rectangles are showing the variance.

In figure 4.2 the values on the top right corner are the values of R-square, while the values on the straight arrows are exhibiting standardized regression coefficients.

4.10 Model Fit

In order to check the model fit, it is important to examine the values of certain statistical tests like, Chi-Square, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation and CFI. For a Model fit the value of Chi-Square should be < 0.05, the value of RMSEA should be < 0.05 and the value of CFI should be > 0.9.

Table 4.17:   Model Fit

Model	RMSEA	CFI
Default model	.000	.140
Independence model	.079	.000

The goodness-of-fit test statistics have been displayed in table 4.17. The Chi-square test statistic is significant as the p-value for the model is 0.040 which is < 0.05, which suggest that the model is fit. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.000 and since it is less than 0.05, it is evident that model is a good fit. Goodness of Fit Index CFI is 0.14 larger than 0.9 which again reflect a good fit although CFI may not be as informative as Chi-square test statistics and RMSEA. So it is concluded that model used in this study is a good fit and suitable for further future researches. From figure 4.2 which is the standardized model it is concluded that there is positive relationship between integrating style and team performance so, H_0 of hypothesis 1 is being rejected. Figure 4.2 also elaborates that there is positive relationship between obliging style and team performance therefore; H_0 of hypothesis 2 is also being rejected and it also shows compromising style is positively related to team performance hence: H_0 of hypothesis 5 is being rejected. Dominating style and avoiding style shows a negative relationship with team performance and on the basis of this result the null hypotheses of hypotheses 3&4 respectively have been accepted. On the basis of results and analysis the null hypotheses of Hypotheses 1, 2 and Hypotheses 5 have been rejected while the null hypotheses of hypotheses 3 and hypotheses 4 have been accepted.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this research are particularly of assistance for the education sector of Pakistan as it is obvious from the results that most of the employees when work in a team are highly assertive and cooperative and focus to gain a win-win situation while handling conflict and resultantly enhance the performance of team as a whole. Some of the team members try to accommodate the situation by adopting cooperative means to deal with the conflict and in turn effect positively towards the team performance. In some instances team members also try to exhibit mid range of both cooperativeness and assertiveness but it had a nominal impact on team performance though it is positive but not at   high extent.   Integrating, obliging and compromising approaches of handling conflict are practiced by most of the team members as these styles focus on both concerns that are concern for self achievement and concern for others. All in all this study is extremely prolific for the education sector of Pakistan and the findings of this research can be implemented straight away to handle conflicts as we all are exposed to conflict in everyday life/work activities.

It is worthy for any research study to talk about it strong points and weak pointes. This study has been conceded in a narrow time frame, and as a result some essential areas may not have been discussed appropriately. Another limitation is that conflict regardless of its type have been analyzed in this study, it is recommended for future researchers also to examine conflict types (task, relationship and process) with these variables. The Population for this study has been taken as Public and Private sector higher educational institutions of Islamabad but it is recommended for future researchers to carry out the research by targeting the other campuses as well. This will also increase the generalizability. Since, this is cross sectional study a longitudinal study may reveal better findings and results.

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