

# CONSIDERATIONS ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT DURING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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***Abstract:** Organizational conflict is not based on personal values; it occurs due to dynamic changes within the structure of the organization. When these dynamics are neglected, they generate conflict within the organization. Any organization reunites groups of individuals with different personalities, job outlooks, education, systems of values and different behaviors. The maintenance of a perfect harmony is hard to be achieved, conflicts being inevitable.*

***Key words:** conflict management, dynamic changes, organizational conflict, organizational change.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In time, conflict approaches have evolved simultaneously with the transfer concerning the question of generating conflict and how to deal with it. Reality reveals that every organization has an optimal amount of conflict, which can be put into correlation with positive performance. When there is too little conflict, there is a state of general disinterest, apathy, change is not possible, and the persistence of the situation calls into question the very survival of the organization. From another standpoint, a high level of

tension could direct towards the same result, because the occurrence of intense conflicts too frequently, which causes disparity, reflects the ambitions of the incompatibility of character, interests and overall bad management. [3]

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of this research is to identify the sources of organizational conflict and to find the sources and factors that contribute to the occurrence of organizational conflict and to outline the main ways

in which organizational conflict emerges. The research method is that of integrative reviewing under the following research questions: What is organizational conflict? Which are the sources of organizational conflict? How does conflict within the organization manifest itself? Which are the factors that contribute to the occurrence of organizational conflict? The reviewed selected articles are published in international databases. [5]

### 3. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT DURING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

#### 3.1. Approaches relating to organizational conflict

In the economic literature, authors have outlined three main approaches relating to organizational conflict, namely:

- *The traditional approach* (classical) appreciates the conflict as having a dysfunctional character, an evil being to escape as quickly as possible. Because the conflict is not only perceived as harmful, but also time and energy consuming, traditional approach believes should be avoided by eliminating its causes. This concept represents a simplistic approach to the conflict and an old-fashioned standard of its assessment because it calls into question the conflict itself and not its management arrangements.

- *Human relations approach* has a predisposition for human relationships which are established between individuals with personalities, mentality, education, systems of values and different behaviors and generate conflicts. Representatives of this school of thought consider the conflict as being an inevitable and natural result in any organization and any group, being accepted and perceived as positive and negative at the same time. The consequence of this perspective is that a leader must not remove any conflicts related to costs but only those who prove to be real obstacles in achieving the objectives of the organization. In conclusion, this approach takes into account those management strategies that focus on both, the recognition of conflicts, and resolving or removing them (Lussier, 2010).

- The latest approach to conflict is *the interactionist approach*, which considers the conflict as not only inevitable, but also absolutely necessary, an important motivating force for innovation and change. In this sense, some authors consider that such a concept encourages leaders to cause organizational changes through a strategy of fostering conflict. Effective management of post-conflict situations requires the identification of their causes in order to act for purposes of the corresponding positive effects and reduce negative consequences (Sierau & Hertzberg, 2012). [7]

### 3.2. Organizational Conflict Sources

As organizational conflict sources (Figure 1) we can name the following:

- **Change.** Certain changes within the organization are ordinary and expected. New policies, changes in operational procedures and a certain fluctuation of personnel are internal changes that all organizations go through. Reorganizations and changing the size of the organization may cause chaos, threatening the security of employment of every member. Even growth can generate conflict. (Dechurch & Marks, 2001) Although the increase is considered beneficial for the organization, the communication will be affected, it can change the responsibilities and hierarchical relationships can

become entangled. Changes within the organization surely generate conflicts.

**Goals and objectives.** Usually this is the result of insufficient communication and planning. The goals and objectives of a department may be conflicting with those from another department. Better communication between the leadership of the departments can generally solve this problem.

**Limited resources.** Limited resources can be practically anything: running out of workers, lack of space, financial shortfalls, antiquated equipment, etc. These and other similar issues can cause conflict by limiting the expected performance on the part of individuals, departments, and perhaps even the entire organization. [1]



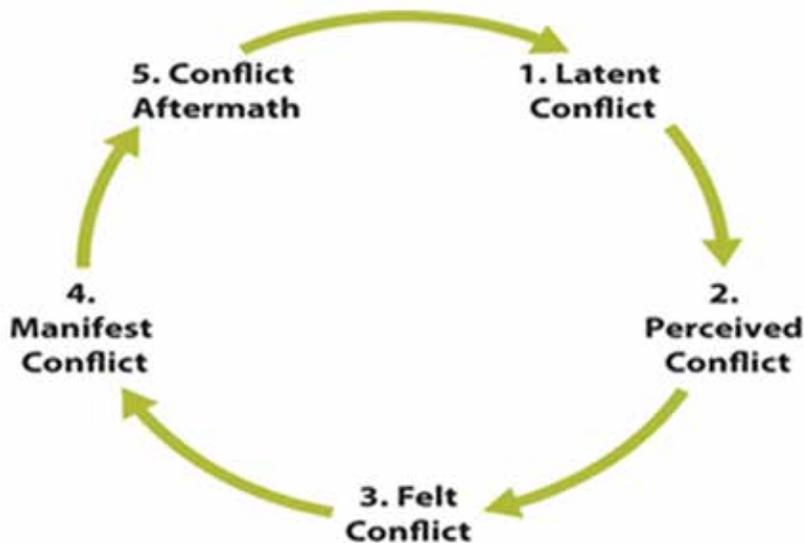
**Fig. no. 1** Reasons for organizational conflict  
Source: Personal interpretation of the data

In the organizational context, conflict is an expression of dissatisfaction in process, product or service. Someone or some group is unhappy with someone or something else. This dissatisfaction can result from several factors: different expectations, competitive goals, conflicting interests, interpersonal relations, confusing or unsatisfactory communication (Figure 2) (Taher, 2016). The examples include the managers concerned with the way of resource allocation; the production department's discontentment about the marketing of a product department that led to vanity; dissatisfaction with regard to the procurement process; consumer anger due to lack of technical support after the purchase of the product. [9]

In this way, the conflict is a process (Figure 3) and not a product (Dickinson, 2012). Organizational conflict is indeed an indicator of organizational dissatisfaction. Through consideration of the concept of conflict as a process, we abandon the idea that conflict is a tangible "problem" that can be solved, dominated, driven or controlled. Rather, the conflict is an interaction, a signal of discontent from inside or outside the system. The organization or person may elect not to respond to the announcement of the dissatisfaction (in a perfectly legitimate reason), but it does not mean that the conflict will cease (Taylor, 2010). [2]



**Fig. no. 2** The conflict pyramid model  
Source: Personal interpretation of the data



**Fig. no. 3** The phases for organizational conflict  
Source: Personal interpretation of the data

### 3.3. Manifestations of Organizational Conflicts

Conflicts in organizations are present in several ways:

- Competition: competition, especially within the organization and between individuals in the organization.
- Sabotage: this manifestation of conflict can be observed both in the inner and outer conflicts – for example, when the consumer says that everything is alright and afterward, without notice, he holds a news conference where he sends for trial for negligence in the manufacture of the product.
- Demoralization: much the same as ineffectiveness or failure to achieve the maximum productivity level, demoralization is frequently a response to the disputes. Usually

this is the outcome of the test to keep away from or repudiate conflict or disappointment by trying to object to the actions within the organization. Workers are worried about the possibility of being transferred or restructured once more.

- Retention of knowledge: many corporate cultures consider that knowledge is power and the retention of knowledge (information) is used as a form of manipulation.

The *strategy oriented towards the avoidance* (Havenga & Visagie, 2011) is characterized by the fact that, although the warring parties admit its existence, they do not want to confront it. Conflict avoidance (trains) might be a reasonable response, particularly if the adversary is powerful and unfriendly, and it can become concrete by removing a

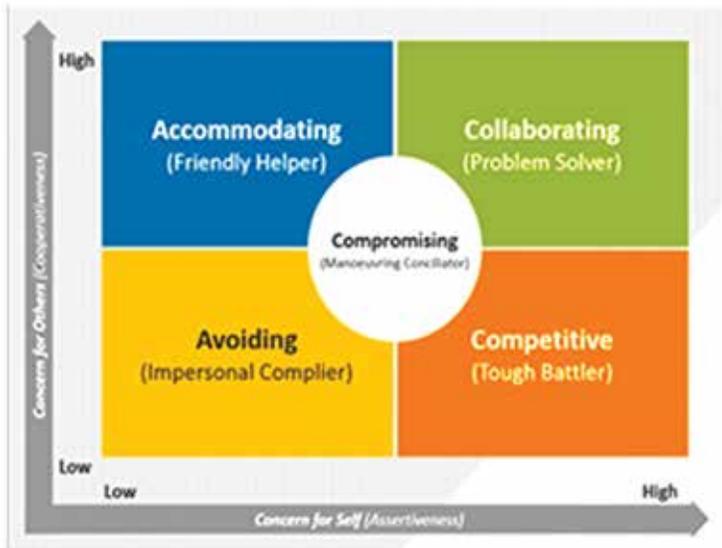
diplomatic subject or an issue until a more suitable possibility arises, or by switching the matter, neglecting some information or by trying to “bird” duties to others. [6]

The *approach oriented towards habituation* involves maintaining interpersonal relations at any cost, without regard to too much of the goals of the sides involved (Havenga & Visagie, 2011).

The *strategy focused on the collaborative approach* constitutes a perspective on conflicts that maximizes both the imposition of interest, or their own point of view, as well as cooperation or meeting the needs of others, in order to satisfy all interests of the warring parties (Figure 4). [8]

When conflicts are becoming destructive, the perspective is normal as long as it regulates power

towards an optimal end result and interpersonal dispute, in this case, is in fact a third-party feedback. In general, when the confrontation has a better finished result, whether in a relationship or activity it means that the conflict system works. Mediation in this type of adjustment must only intervene when the fighting continues and after optimizing it when the power struggle appears. It is very rare that the recognized leader in the organization fights against others for influence. This happens because people instinctively updated according to good, positive, desirable values and they to this regardless of deviations. Therefore, at any time, a true leader is the one who boosts their self-esteem through technical and relational skills, not by force, not even by word (Behrman, 2012). [10]



**Fig. no. 4** The conflict management matrix  
Source: Personal interpretation of the data

### 3.4. Factors that Contribute to Organizational Conflicts

Furthermore, we may isolate a few factors (Avruch & Mitchell, 2013) that contribute to organizational conflict:

Identification with the group or in organizations: there are many groups or classes with which people can identify. In addition, far from being coincidental or insignificant, differences between groups are accentuated by the real differences of power, opportunities, clients served, etc. Most likely, people who consider themselves as belonging to a group tend to be skeptical with those outside of it. The likelihood of conflict increases as the factors to which we will refer below enter the relationships between groups

(Ludrigan et al., 2012). The emphasis that organizations put on teamwork counts as a huge success, bringing the employee on the verge of strongly identifying with his team.

Interdependence: when individuals or departments are mutually dependent for meeting their own objectives, there is a high risk of conflict. Interdependence means that each side has a certain power over the other and it is relatively easy for one of them to abuse of that power and create antagonism (Weiner, 2011). Interdependence does not always lead to conflict. In fact, it often provides a good basis for cooperation through mutual support. [11]

These factors can generate interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup or interorganizational conflicts (Figure 5).



**Fig. no. 5** Types of organizational conflict  
Source: Personal interpretation of the data

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

No leader should get scared of disagreements arising within his organization, because an organization or a completely uniform group, devoid of controversy, records low performance. At the same time a superficial approach to conflict, ignorance or non-utilization of appropriate strategies, constitute the main causes for different organizations, despite the fact that the human resources, financial, informational, etc., were weaker than the expected performance. Proper management of interpersonal conflicts between groups always has a positive impact on yields and performance and makes the organization a pleasant environment. [4]

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