

Conflict Management in Organisations: Case of Albania

Desara Agaj

Department Motivational Psychology, Rectorate of the University of Tirana
Email: desara.agaj@unitir.edu.al

Abstract

Nowadays, people spent almost one-third or even more of their life at work. During these hours relations with colleagues play an important role in the overall well-being of the employees, leading to job satisfaction and high performance. Sometimes, the workload, the pressure to finish the work on time, to respect deadlines, and even the daily relations with coworkers, etc., can lead to some conflicts between employees. The way employees manage conflicts happening in organizations has a crucial impact on their well-being and the culture of the organization, making conflict management an important element for human adaptability. The aim of this article is to study conflict management styles that employees in different banks in Albania use in their everyday work. Data analyses are based on the interpretation of forty-six semi-structured interviews with employees in five banks in the city of Tirana. So, qualitative design analyses are used. This study shows us that the dominant style to manage conflicts at work according to the sample that participated in this study is the compromising style.

Keywords: Conflict management, conflict management style, organization, bank.

Introduction

Due to different styles of communication, cultural backgrounds, work perspectives, and political and religious beliefs, conflicts in the workplace are an inevitable part of human interactions. Conflict, in fact, is a complex process, because it involves the interaction of cognitive, psychological, physiological, and contextual dynamics (Madalina, 2016). The most essential part of the conflict is the employee's perception and their reaction to it.

Employees come from different cultures and bring to work their background, their beliefs, and their attitudes in relation to colleagues and the workplace. They also have different viewpoints and approaches to resolving conflicts.

The way that employees manage these conflicts plays a crucial role and has an important impact on employees' performance, job satisfaction, overall well-being, and the culture of the organization.

Literature Review

Nowadays, people spent almost one-third or even more of their life at work. The quality of the relationships and communication in the workplace has a positive impact

on the overall well-being of the employees, leading to job satisfaction and high performance. Sometimes, the workload, the pressure to finish the work on time, to respect deadlines, and even the daily relations with colleagues, etc., can lead to some conflicts between employees. Conflict is an inevitable part of human recourses in organizations (Pembi et al., 2023).

Even though conflicts are seen as a negative part of the competition at work, conflicts have also a lot of benefits, because due to their dynamics, the organization avoids stagnation and uniformity.

According to Riaz and Jamal (2022), conflict is seen as a state of dissonance or disagreement caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values, and interests between people working together.

Conflicts have a cost not only for the relationship but also for the individuals and organization. The answer to resolving or managing conflicts is in the words people use. Words can build bridges or create barriers (McConnon & McConnon, 2008, pg. 16-17).

Conflict management refers to the process of using preferred strategies to handle a conflict with the goals of limiting negative impact and enhancing positive impact (Wang, 2015)

Baro and Robert (1992) explained the typical reactions of employees in dealing with conflict at the workplace and the five modes of management conflict such as fight, avoidance, adaptation, collaboration, and compromise.

When we speak about **the fight** management conflict model, we are speaking about almost zero cooperation and a high level of assertiveness.

When we speak about **avoiding** management conflict model, we are speaking about zero assertiveness and a low and at the same time high level of cooperation.

When we speak about the **adaptation** management conflict model, we are speaking of low assertiveness and high availability for cooperation.

When we are speaking of the **compromise** management conflict model, we are speaking of a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation.

When we are speaking of the **collaboration** management conflict model, we are speaking of high levels of assertiveness and cooperation (Madalina, 2016).

The way employees manage conflicts happening in organizations has a crucial impact on their well-being and the culture of the organization, making conflict management an important element for human adaptability.

Aim of the study

This article aims to identify the most common management conflict style that is used by employees in the banks of Albania in their everyday life at work.

Research question

What is the most common management conflict style used by employees in banks in Albania?

Research method

To understand the conflict management styles in the bank employees it is used the qualitative design. It is chosen this design because of the difficult previous experience to get the necessary data through the quantitative design with the employees in the banks.

Sample: In this study participated forty-six employees from five banks in the city of Tirana, Albania. It was conducted Semi-structured interviews to understand how they deal with conflicts in the workplace, as an inseparable part of the work, and what management style conflicts they use.

Procedure: First it was obtained permission from the general director of the bank and then it was conducted semi-structured interviews with the target group. The ethical issues of anonymity and sincerity are guaranteed. Then the aim of the study was explained to them. Interviews were conducted in the period February-April 2023. One interview lasted approximately twenty minutes.

Data analysis: Data analysis was carried out based on the interpretative phenomenological approach. It was transcribed all the interviews one by one. Each of them has been analyzed and then two themes were identified.

Results

Using semi-structured interviews, this article tried to identify the conflict management style that bank employees use in their daily work. After analyzing the responses to the interviews two important themes were identified as *conflicts among employees are related to stress* and *compromising style as a dominant style in managing work conflicts*.

Conflicts among employees are related to stress

Even though conflicts have a positive side because to some extent they impact the employee's development, they are always related to stress. Taking into consideration the long hours working in the bank, continuous communication with the clients, not to mention here also conflicts among colleagues - all of these lead to high levels of stress. Below are shown some of the responses of the bank employees who participated in this study.

"I just don't like conflict, they give me so much stress" (R9. Male, 27 years old).

"When you get involved in a conflict, you should almost have two qualities: Empathy and self-control.....but in any case stress is inevitable" (R32. Female, 28 years old).

"Conflicts make me think about a lot of things,,,,,I simply get furious...." (R45. Female, 32 years old).

"In general, If a conflict is related to work issues, I try to use the normative acts to find a solution,,,,,,but.... in any case a conflict drains my energy and causes me to lose concentration for work" (R7. Male 32 years old).

Compromising style as a dominant style in managing work conflicts

When it comes to conflict, employees part of this study use and evaluate a compromising conflict management style. They want the best solution not only for them but also for their colleagues and the organization and that's why they try to find

a middle way to satisfy both needs. In this case, they sometimes make a little sacrifice in order to satisfy colleagues' needs. This is shown even in their responses below.

"Depending on the conflict,,,,,yes I can make compromises" (R17. Female, 42 years old)

"Hmmm.... I get a little bit furious when it comes to conflicts,,, but when I calm down I try to find a win-win solution for both parties or the best solution even though this can make us sacrifice a little bit" (R6. Male, 38 years old)

".....conflicts at work?? I try to find a solution which is compromising" (R28. Female 34 years old).

"I have a philosophy of give and take, in this way, I believe human relationships work" (R13. Male 39 years old).

"When we find a common solution, things go better" (R21. Female 28 years old)

"In general I am tolerant, but not always...Most of the time I let my colleagues have their way" (R14. Female 24 years old)

"I insist to make a compromise because I work every day with my colleagues and I want to see them satisfied, too" (R 41. Male 36 years old)

"I always try to work and negotiate with others to come up with a solution" (R3. Female 44 years old).

"I am able to find a "common ground" (R 31. Male 29 years old).

Conclusions

In the end, conflicts are an inseparable part of people's lives and the way people react to them plays an important role in their overall well-being and their relationships with others. This study revealed that the most common conflict management style used by the target group of employees selected from five banks in Albania in this study is the compromising style.

Employees, part of this study tried to find out the best way to resolve a conflict at work that suits everyone involved, making them partially win and also partially sacrifice. So, neither of them is fully winner or fully loser because when it comes to managing conflicts at work, the organization's needs are at the top. In this case, the target group of this study revolve somewhere between the middle level of assertiveness and the middle level of cooperation as a manner to manage work conflict. On the one hand, this is a positive way in finding a mutual solution and the best one to satisfy all parties. On the other hand, this may lead to exhaustion of the employees and sometimes to burnout since the work in bank has to deal with and communicate with a lot of clients.

At any time the best way to manage and resolve different conflicts, not only in organizations but also in everyday life is to use effective communication.

Further studies should be done to see how conflict management styles affect the overall performance and job satisfaction of employees in different work sectors.

Limitations

- Lack of sincerity in responding. Since the interviewees were contacted through the general director it was a bit difficult to get a real response about the conflicts in the bank.
- This data cannot be generalized, due to a low number of participants.

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