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Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Linguística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 36, 2020, Especial N°

27

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

ISSN 1012-1587/ ISSNe: 2477-9385

Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



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Maracaibo - Venezuela

Relationship with creativity: Employees working in vocational schools of Qadisiyah Governorate

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact of conflict in organization on creativity. There is a significant inconclusive and elusive literature to explain the relationship of conflict with creativity. The instrument was divided into three parts named as task conflict, Interrelation conflict and creativity. It is found that interrelation conflict has a linear and negative effect on creativity while task conflict has curvilinear relationship with creativity. This study recommends managers and supervisors who to control task conflict at moderate level by facilitating communication channels. The benefits of task conflict can be collected when it is at moderate or low level.

Keywords: Conflict, Creativity, Employees, Vocational schools.

Relación con la creatividad: Empleados que trabajan en escuelas vocacionales de la gobernación de Qadisiyah

Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar el impacto del conflicto en la organización sobre la creatividad. Existe una importante literatura no concluyente y evasiva para explicar la relación del conflicto con la creatividad. El instrumento se dividió en tres partes llamadas conflicto de tareas, conflicto de interrelación y creatividad. Se encuentra que el conflicto de interrelación tiene un efecto lineal y negativo en la creatividad, mientras que el conflicto de tareas tiene una relación curvilínea con la creatividad. Este estudio recomienda a los gerentes y supervisores que controlen el conflicto de tareas a un nivel moderado facilitando canales de comunicación. Los beneficios del

conflicto de tareas se pueden recopilar cuando está en un nivel moderado o bajo.

Palabras clave: Conflicto, Creatividad, Empleados, Escuelas vocacionales.

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of conflict, because of its omnipresence and unavoidable nature, has procured a huge number of implications and meanings. Conflict produces extensive vacillation and leaves researchers indeterminate around its importance pertinence adapting strategies. Conflict is inevitable in this world either home, organizations or international relations. Conflict is a situation in which one recommends that its advantages are being restricted by another (NEBGEN, 1978).

The hidden consequences of conflicting process are more significant than its observable aspect like anger. The perceptual difference may leads to see the conflicting situation with different angel. Some may see conflict as a negative circumstance which must be stayed while others may consider it to be a marvel which requires taking down. Similarly, conflict may stimulate someone to open door for growth and opportunities (MC SHANE AND GLINOW, 2008).

In this competitive arena, organizations are critical to gain competitive advantage to enhance organizational performance. Therefore, organizational inputs particularly human resource has a

significant role for organizational performance and success (PARSAEIAN and THE ARABI, 1999). In recent studies many researchers have focused to identify causes and results of employee stress and dissatisfaction (ALVANI, 2000). One of the major reasons of stress and employee dissatisfaction is organizational conflict. Conflict is a condition of dispute among authority, opposition and effected group caused by perceived and actual needs (JACKSON and SCHULER, 1985). Hence, it is vital for managers to have the capacity to perceive the origin of the conflict to understand its useful and ruinous potential. It is important for organizations to figure out how to cope up with conflict to actualize organizational goals (FLEERWOOD, 1987). Therefore, the perception about conflict has been modified form negative to positive potential for organizational productivity (QAJARI, 2005). DEETZ and STEVENSON (1986) argued that conflict may be used in positive direction while conflict usually arises on real differences.

That conflict is great and essential is recommended in light of the fact that conflict can be managed to invigorate creativity (DEETZ and STEVENSON, 1986; FISHER, 2000; HENDEL et al., 2005). Leadership can play an important role in inter-organizational conflict among different groups and individuals to leverage creativity. Therefore, this research is aimed to shed light on the relationship among organizational conflict and creativity. However, this void leaves a huge gap among hypothetical and experimental research. Therefore, this research is an effort to shed light on the relationship among organizational conflict and creativity. Furthermore, vocational

institutes played an important role for national skill development. The investigation of organizational management and its effect on creativity in vocational institutes will provide interesting results for policy makers.

Conflict has been a central issue in management research due to its possible impact on the productivity of personnel (PETERSON and BEFAR, 2003). Conflict is often categorized as interactional conflict, task conflict and process conflict. The interactional conflicts exists when there are relational incongruence's among gathering individuals, including identity conflicts, pressure, enmity and inconvenience (JEHN, 1995). This kind of conflict produces negative for example, nervousness, doubt, or disdain (JEHN, 1995), disappointment, pressure and dread of being rejected by other colleagues (MURNIGHAM and CONLON, 1991). Task conflict is characterized as difference among individuals about decisions, viewpoints, thoughts and feelings (SIMONS and PETERSON, 2000) and can incorporate debate over the most ideal approach to accomplish goal (DEVINE, 1999). Task conflict has been viewed as a positive stimulus for starting discussion inside a group which results in quality thoughts and advancement and prompts better performance and productivity (AMASON, 1996; WEST and ANDERSON, 1996; TJOSVOLD, DANN and WONG, 1992; JEHN, et al, 1999). The third category of conflict named as process conflict arises when there is a disagreement on the procedures to accomplish a task including delegation of freedom and power. It usually arises when there is an ambiguity among the employees on responsibilities and task assignment.

There have been two schools of thoughts regarding the impact of conflict on group procedures and group results (DEDREU and WEINGART, 2003). One point of view is that conflict is distressing, troublesome and therefore unfavorable to most (CARNEVALE and PROBST, 1998). Whereas, opposite thoughts argues that, contingent upon the sort of conflict, it tends to invigorate and utilitarian (JEHN, 1995). Such utilitarian impacts are just anticipated to task conflict hence, a door opens for discussion and dialogue among the two groups or individuals, which may lead to a creative solution of the problem or conflict.

Inter-organizational conflicts often arise among colleagues may experience task conflict due to different opinion, experience, diverse abilities and capacities and distinctive working styles (CHUA, 2013; LI and HAMBRICK, 2005). Notwithstanding, their distinctive areas of ability, undertaking duty or communication challenges may produce misunderstanding about key ideas, who is accountable for what, how to gather or dissect information and even basic issues about the task (DURAND, 2002). Similarly, interrelation conflict arises when colleagues are from different organizations with different organizational norms, culture and technical belief for objectives (GELFAND et al., 2007; SHAPIRO et al., 2002). It noticed that colleagues who held assorted understandings of organization were found more chances of having conflict contrasted with the individuals who have more homogenous perception about organization (MCCLURE, 2010).

Researchers have investigated the connection among inter-organizational and creativity in the organizational work setting (DEDREU, 2006; DESIVILYA et al., 2010; FARH, LEE and FARH, 2010). He, DING and YANG, (2014) and YONG, SAUER and MANNIX, (2014) asserted that relationship strife assumes a negative impact on individual or team productivity. Similarly the negative impact of task conflict has reported by Schulze, STADE and NETZEL, (2014). In contrast, LU, ZHOU and LEUNG, (2011) argued that creativity can be enhancing by managing the task conflict into a fruitful dialogue and exchange of ideas. Therefore, a direct and negatively linear impact of interpersonal or relationship conflict on the creativity can be drawn (FARH, LEE and FARH, 2010). On the other hand a positive impact of task conflict can be detected from previous studies (XIE, WANG and LUAN, 2014).

However, there is a dearth of literature to draw a conclusive argument on the impact of conflicts for creativity. The instruments by which conflict is accepted to be conceivably utilitarian are exceedingly identified with innovativeness, as they include exchange of views. Besides, the essential contention for the advantages of conflict embroils innovativeness as an essential component for these impacts. There has been a gap in literature to explain the impact of conflict on the process of innovation and creativity.

The innovativeness of individuals or team in an organizational are negatively influence by interrelation conflict due to communication gap and information exchange (DE CLERCQ, THONGPAPANL, and

DIMOV, 2009). In this way the employees spend most of their time and energy on interrelation conflict to win the situation and the concentration on work related activities may lose (HÜLSHEGER, ANDERSON and SALGADO, 2009). The smooth flow of information and knowledge in the organization became slow or impeded which is the central ingredient for creativity. The cognitive abilities also infected by interpersonal conflict by narrowing the thinking and flexibility (HÜLSHEGER et al., 2009). As argued by PARAYITAM, Olson and BAO, (2010) interpersonal conflict elude creativity by increasing dissatisfaction and commitment hence the diluted decision quality. Therefore, interpersonal conflict stimulates the individual or team creativity which ultimately affects the productivity of organization. In the light of these arguments this study hypothesized that:

H1: The creativity is negatively influenced by Interpersonal organizational conflict.

Task conflict can encourage creativity among groups or individuals by means of organizational learning. Open dialogue and free exchange of thoughts are encouraged by task conflict (ENSLEY, PEARSON and AMASON, 2002). Task conflict builds capacity to give and take, voice their perspectives and battle for perspectives that they trust (XIE et al., 2014). Therefore, the increasing ability to learning and understanding different perspective will increase adaptability to take alternate points of views (DE DREU and WEINGART, 2003). Hence, learning brings an assortment of

thoughts, and the individuals will have the capacity to join diverse points of view to acquire a more cognitive understanding with the job and objectives (SIMONS and PETERSON, 2000). This study hypothesizes that:

H2: The creativity has a significantly positive relationship with Task conflict among employees.

2. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire technique is adopted in this study to measure and verify the proposed framework. The faculty members of vocational institutes in Qadisiyah Governorate of Iraq are selected for this study. The underlying reason to conduct this study in Iraqi context is because most of prior studies are conducted in western world. The Iraqi cultural and social norms are different from western world. Collectivism approach is more prevailed in Iraqi culture whereas this culture is not a dominant one in western economies. Further, it is worth to investigate the proposed framework in such a harmonious and conflict resolving nature and culture of Iraq.

Therefore, this study will provide useful insights whether the conflict among faculty members of vocational schools are utilized to benefit creativity. Another reason to choose vocational schools is that its importance for developing national technical knowledge. The

creativity among faculty members will lead to inculcate the same in students and the overall industry will benefit.

The faculty members are the unit of analysis in this study. In total 180 questionnaires were distributed among faculty members. The respondents were selected on the basis of random sampling approach. The respondent's identity was kept secret during the process of data collection as to allow the respondents free from any pressure. The completed questionnaires received in all respect were 171 out of total 180 which make the response rate 95%.

The questionnaire used to collect data for this study was adopted from JEHN (1995) and SHIN and ZHOU (2007). All the items of questionnaire were measured on a five point Likert scale. Task conflict was measured by four item scale measuring the contention of experience regarding job or task conflict with colleges. Relationship conflict was also measured through 4-items to record interpersonal rigidity. The third part of questionnaire consists to measure creativity and measured by 4-item scale. This portion of questionnaire used to record responses of departmental heads about each individual selected in the sample. We also include some control variable that may affect the creativity of employees these control variables are education level, educational diversity and diverse experience.

Further, validity and reliability of instrument was measured by factor analysis and cronbach's alpha accordingly. Factor analysis

results are presented in table 1 illustrating the CR, Cronbach Alpha and AVE values. The loading score and AVE for each item is recorded between the ranges of 0.73 to 0.82. The standard value to meet the criteria is to achieve the value of 0.50. Additionally, discriminant validity of instrument is estimated by square root of AVE (average variance extracted). The discriminate validity results are also presented in table 1. The cronbach alpha is measured to estimate the internal consistency of responses. It is noted that all the variables has surpass the minimum threshold level of cronbach alpha (0.7) (BAGOZZI and YI, 1988).

Table 1: Validity and Reliability Estimation

Variables	Loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
Task Conflict	0.91-0.95	0.83	0.82	0.85	0.90
Interrelation Conflict	0.73-0.97	0.78	0.73	0.77	0.85
Creativity	0.74-0.89	0.87	0.74	0.73	0.86

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In first step we regress creativity against control variables and results are presented in table 2 under Model1. This is necessary to measure the significance of independent model and change of R^2 with the introduction of independent variables. The model 2 presents the inclusion of task conflict and interrelation conflict. In last model (3) we estimate the quadratic relationship of conflict with creativity.

Table 2: Regression Estimation for Creativity

Variables	1	2	3
Education Level	0.13	0.08	0.05
Education Diversity	0.25	0.18	0.15
Diverse Experience	0.33	0.11	0.12
Task Conflict		0.14	0.16
Task Conflict ²			-0.51
Interrelation Conflict		-0.38	-0.42
R2	0.18	0.42	0.51
ΔR2		0.20	0.09
F-Statistics	2.72	4.91	
5.81			

All values are significant at 0.05 level of significance

From the above results, it is concluded that task conflict has appositive relationship with creativity while interrelation conflict has negative relationship with creativity. The change in R² from model 1 to model 2 is significant. To measure the quadractic relationship of task conflict with creativity a squared term of task conflict was added in model 3. The B-value has change the sign from positive to negative and the change in R² is also significant. Hence hypothesis H1 is accepted while hypothesis is partially accepted as task conflict has a curvilinear relationship with creativity. Therefore, this study indicated that the moderate level of task conflict is fruitful for organizational creativity while creativity is negatively influenced in very low and very high level of task conflict. Hence, to improve creativity in organizations there is a need to minimize the level of task conflict if the conflict is at high level. Whereas, the very low level of conflict

regarding task or assignments shows that employees are less interested in work or have to motivation to introduce innovation due to usual routine tasks.

4. CONCLUSION

The high level of conflict in organization has deteriorating effects for creativity. However, an in effective management of conflict may worsen the situation. The moderate level of task conflict can be used to stimulate creativity while interrelation conflict should be resolved due to its negative implications for creativity. The highest level of task conflict is also has a negative implications for creativity where dialogue and exchange of views are not useful. The appropriate resolution of interrelation conflict will lead to enhance psychological well-being and ultimately productivity will increase. This study provides useful recommendations for managers and supervisors who are seeking creativity in organization. It is recommended to control task conflict at moderate level and facilitate employees be opening communication channels. The low and moderate level of task conflict can be used to stimulate creativity. However, supervisors should hold forums for employees to communicate and discuss the disagreements on task or assignment related issues. Further, supervisors should act as moderator to minimize interpersonal conflicts.

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Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

Año 36, Especial N° 27 (2020)

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.

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