

General Preference of Conflict Management Styles of NADRA Employees

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Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in every field of life due to argument, disagreement and difference of opinions among individuals. Conflict management is essential in order to avoid its negative impact on the performance of organization. This study aims at focusing on different styles for managing conflict which executives may prefer for resolving conflict either with public or with their subordinates. Dimensions of conflict studied are Disagreement and Argument while conflict management styles studied are Avoiding, Competing, Collaborating, Accommodating and Compromising. This paper focuses on all the conflict handling styles. Employees working as Deputy Assistant Directors (Sample size = 120) in National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) were selected by convenience sampling for collection of data through questionnaires (Thomas-Kilmann Instrument) and collected data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. Out of 120 questionnaires, 88 questionnaires were received from respondents and response rate can be said as 73%. Findings reveal that Deputy Assistant Directors prefer to use collaborating style followed by accommodating, compromising, avoiding and competing respectively for managing conflict. Implications of the study are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Conflict; Conflict management; Avoiding; Competing; Collaborating; Accommodating; Compromising

Introduction

Conflict can be defined as a series of disagreement or argument; incompatibility between opinions etc. Disagreement, argument, etc are the words that make us better understand that there is conflict. Difference in goals, expectations and values, etc can be said as factors influencing the conflict to arise [1,2]. Conflict avoidance was an old term or concept but this term has been replaced by the term ‘conflict management’ today. If conflict is handled fruitfully it can bring great benefits [3]. Five conflict handling styles were presented by Thomas and Kilmann as displayed in (Figure 1). Avoiding is a conflict handling style where a manager is neither cooperative for other’s goal nor assertive for his own preferred outcome. Competing is style where managers pursue his own goal for his preferred outcome with less or no concern for other party. Accommodating is style where a manager prefers other’s side as compared to his own side. Compromising is style where a manager gives equal importance to both sides and finally collaborating is style where both sides creatively work towards achieving the goal of both parties [4,5]. This research has been particularly conducted in National Database and Registration Authority. National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) was started as National Database Organization (NDO), a connected department under the Ministry of Interior, Government of Pakistan in 1998. On 10 March, 2000, NDO & Directorate General of Registration (DGR) merged to form NADRA, an autonomous corporate body with essential autonomy to operate

independently and help good control. NADRA initiated the Multi-Biometric National Identity Card project developed in conformance with international security documentation issuance practices in the year 2000.

Research Questions and Objectives

Questions

- Which one style is preferred for managing conflicts particularly in organizational setup like NADRA?
- What is the significance of each conflict handling style? (Order wise use or preference of each style)

Objectives

- To find out the most preferred style for conflict management
- To measure the significance of each conflict management style

Significance

Importance of conflict management cannot be avoided in any field of life. If conflict is not handled properly, it can ruin one’s relationship in one’s daily life and can badly impact on the performance of an organization if one is part of an organization. If conflict is managed properly, it can strengthen one’s relationship and can have positive impact on the performance of an organization [2,6,7]. This study will be helpful to learn about those styles which are mostly used by the executives to resolve their conflicts particularly in organizational setups like NADRA.

Related Research Work

Conflict management is very important as it can badly impact on the performance of an organization. Previous researches have

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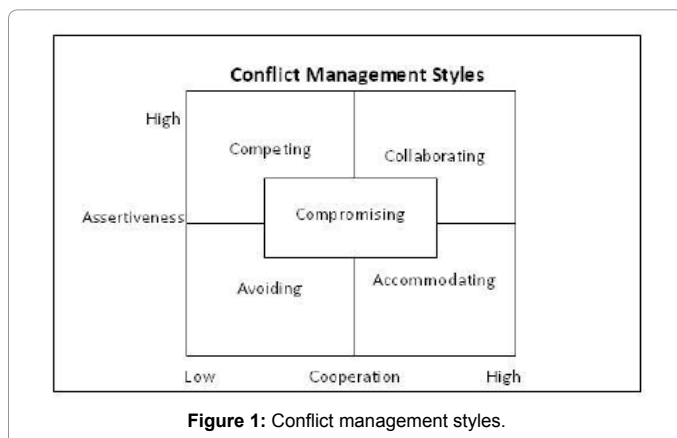


Figure 1: Conflict management styles.

shown that relationship conflict is negatively related to employee's performance at all management levels (i.e. low, middle and top Levels) [6] and also it badly affects the overall performance of employees whether employees are part of a group or a team in an organization [2,7]. Moreover, relationship conflict is negatively associated with satisfaction and well being and has positive influence on the desire to leave the current job [8].

Although age status and gender role have not very significant relation with the selection of a conflict handling style particularly in small businesses but people use and prefer different conflict handling styles as per their cultural background, personality, value system, etc. As Iranian inexperienced and experienced engineers both prefer to use avoiding style for managing conflicts while Swedish student prefer collaborating style for handling conflicts. Similarly, first integrating (Collaborating) and, second, compromising are found to be the most preferred conflict handling styles of Turkish managers. Also, Individual's personality plays an important role for using a proper conflict handling style as individuals with extraversion personality trait prefer compromising style of conflict handling and they do not use avoiding style and on the other hand individuals with openness to experience are also more tending towards compromising style of conflict handling [9-12].

Moreover, it is also found that people who prefer conflict handling styles that has a low concern for self (avoid and oblige) avoid complaint behavior, whereas people who prefer a dominate conflict handling style are more likely to actively complain [13].

Using proper conflict handling style is essential whether you are part of a group or team in an organization. Studies have shown that collaborating and competing styles are negatively related to team functioning and overall team effectiveness because these styles sidetrack team members from their responsibilities while avoiding style is effective as it allows team members to track job performance [14].

Hypotheses

This paper is based on the conflict management styles given by the Thomas-Kilmann for managing conflict. All of the five conflict handling styles i.e. Avoiding, Competing, Collaborating, Compromising and Accommodating are taken to find out the most preferred style and order of preference. Hypotheses on the basis of above literature are given as under:

H1: Deputy Assistant Directors prefer to use avoiding style to manage conflict

H2: Deputy Assistant Directors prefer to use competing style to manage conflict

H3: Deputy Assistant Directors prefer to use compromising style to manage conflict

H4: Deputy Assistant Directors prefer to use accommodating style to manage conflict

H5: Deputy Assistant Directors prefer to use collaborating style to manage conflict

Research Methodology

This study focuses on the different conflict management styles that an executive may prefer while managing conflict particularly in organizations like NADRA. NADRA is an IT organization mainly providing Computerized National Identity Cards to Pakistani nationals

where public management is the core issue and Deputy Assistant Directors in NADRA have more face to face interaction with public, therefore only employees working as Deputy Assistant Directors were selected for this study. The unit of analysis in this research is individual as the characteristics being examined are those of individual behavior. Deputy Assistant Directors of NADRA from all over Pakistan were selected by convenience sampling (Sample Size = 120). Data was collected by questionnaires (Thomas-Kilmann Instrument) and these questionnaires were based on dimensions (i.e. Disagreement and Argument) of conflict and conflict management styles (i.e. Avoiding, Competing, Collaborating, Compromising and Accommodating). Out of 120 questionnaires, 88 questionnaires were received from respondents, so response rate can be said as 73%. Collected data was analyzed through descriptive statistics by using SPSS and Microsoft Excel.

Results

Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics of the variables of interest. The mean scores of the table show the preference of conflict handling style used by Deputy Assistant Directors. Greater mean value shows that most preferable style for conflict management for Deputy Assistant Directors of NADRA is collaborating while lowest mean value shows that least preferred conflict handling style is competing. Graphical representation of the results is also shown by pie chart and 2-D column in (Figures 2 and 3) respectively, (Table 1).

Discussion and Conclusion

Considering the results of the study it can be said that most

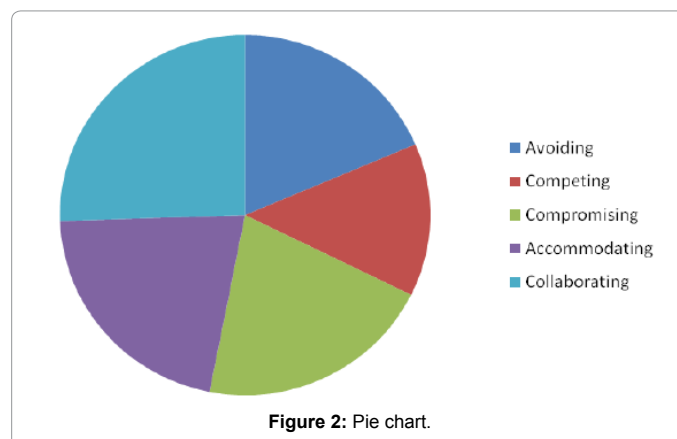


Figure 2: Pie chart.

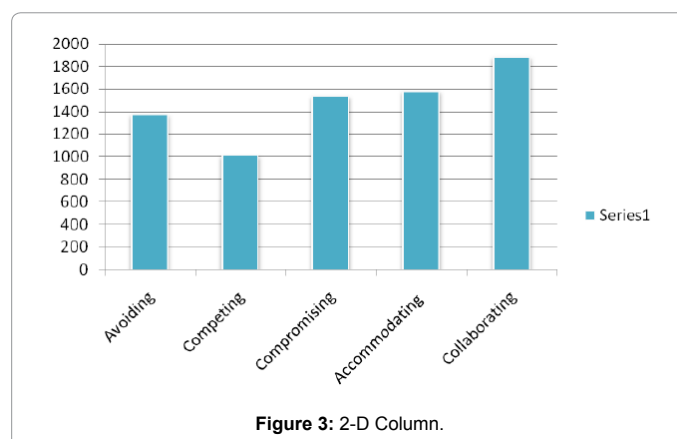


Figure 3: 2-D Column.

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Avoiding	88	5	25	15.6	3.768
Competing	88	6	23	11.49	3.318
Compromising	88	9	25	17.47	3.311
Accommodating	88	7	25	17.95	3.37
Collaborating	88	13	25	21.41	2.807

Table 1: Descriptive statistics.

preferred style for conflict management for Deputy Assistant Directors of NADRA is collaborating followed by accommodating and compromising while avoiding and competing are lowest preferred styles. Use of proper conflict handling style is essential as it is found in a study that the approach by which conflicts are managed may shape organizational environment, level of conflict and stress. Previous studies have also found that those who use integrating (collaborating), obliging (accommodating) or avoiding style were more effective than those who use dominating (competing) style. Individuals who use integrative (collaborative style) conflict handling style experience lower level of work conflict and stress at job, but people using avoiding or dominating (competing) style were facing more conflicts and work stress [15,16].

It can be further concluded that Deputy Assistant Directors of NADRA as their first preference have high concern for self (Assertive) as well as high concern for the others (Cooperative) and in other way we can say that Deputy Assistant Directors of NADRA creatively work towards achieving the goals of both parties or look for all the concerns of both parties through a solution that satisfy both parties completely and as their second preference use to accommodate others.

Results of the study have good future implications as it can be concluded that collaborating style of conflict management should be preferred and used in setups like NADRA where public management is the core issue. While discussing the limitation of the study, only Deputy Assistant Directors of NADRA have been taken for study while other staff of NADRA (i.e. Assistant Directors, Deputy Directors, etc) has not been taken. This staff can be further taken to get detailed insight for preferred conflict handling style in NADRA.

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