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EVALUATION OF EXECUTIVE OFFICIAL'S PERSONALITY TRAITS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Conflict Management has a significant impact on organizational growth. This study investigates research on various personality traits of the topmost hierarchy in any organization. The study investigates how they deal with conflicts in their organizations to keep the organization's functions running smoothly. The sampling was purposely done selectively; 25 heads of various organizations in various fields were asked to inform their point of view regarding Conflict Management. Two reliable scales from reliable resources, i.e., TKI (Thomas et al.) and BFI (Big Five inventory), have been used to generate the results. The data has been treated for descriptive statistics, and frequencies and correlational values have been calculated. It has been found that at the top level, Collaborating and Accommodating were the most preferred styles, and Competing was the least preferred style in Conflict Management. Whereas in BFI, the participants scored high in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. However, the level of Neuroticism was observed to be extremely low in all the participants.

Keywords: Senior Management, Personality, Conflict management, Thomas Kilmann Instrument, Big-five inventory

Introduction

History shows that people have always been immensely successful in all their endeavors, whether hunting or traveling the world when they worked hard to achieve their group goals. The social nature of man does not change. Knowledge is shared, and ideas from many sources are brought together when people connect. Disagreement, dispute, or conflict may develop if these concepts are poorly understood and handled diplomatically. Fighting is not essential, yet conflict will surely develop. Conflict management research is a somewhat large field in and of itself (Hodgetts et al., 2020). Conflict resolution entails communicating disagreements in a way that makes the other person feel like a new chapter is about to begin. Conflict management may be seductively alluring for clever people with broad views and a persistent thirst to learn (Hammeed et al., 2020). It connects our minds and other people's senses In settings where people from various schools of thought and perception coexist. Conflict management can, on the one hand, obstruct professional and organizational growth. It might even provide someone with new insights into honing their

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interpersonal skills. Any organization should comprehend and utilize conflict management for its development and success.

Even though conflicts frequently result in anger, frustration, and even violence (when they reach a boiling point), successful conflict resolution frequently leads to positive outcomes. Strong conflict management skills are desired and necessary for employment in many industries. Conflict can be successfully managed by reaching an agreement that satisfies the needs of all parties. Conflict management also refers to the worker in the company who is crucial to settling disagreements. For instance, to effectively manage their departments, many administrative roles call for this delicate ability of "conflict management." As a result, the leader's function in dispute resolution is vital. This conflict, which is a fact of life and exists in every corporation, can also be referred to from an organizational viewpoint as worker-to-worker or lateral conflict, given that it mostly affects persons in the same hierarchy (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011).

Research Questions

This study has been undertaken to determine.

1. What is the impact of effective conflict management by the administration in an organization and organizational growth?

2. To bring positive organizational change, what is the impact of conflict management if it merges well with interpersonal skills?

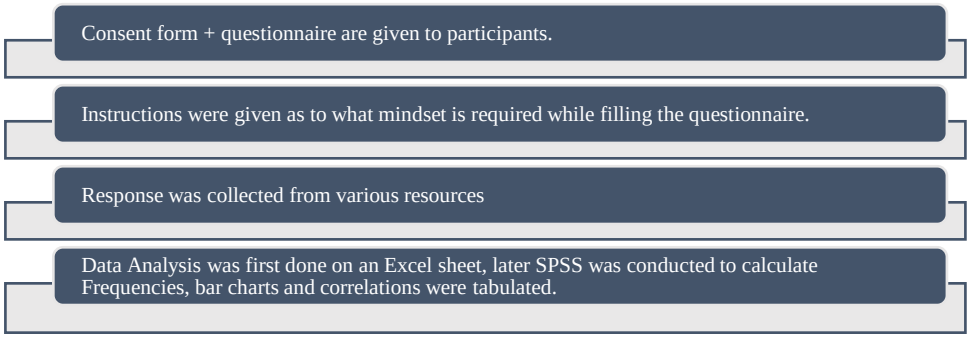
3. What are the most preferred and unique conflict management styles in performing organizational administrative responsibilities?

Research Objectives

- To investigate the phenomenon of conflict and its impact on organizational growth.

- To investigate the impact of effective conflict management on the efficiency of an organization.

Research Framework



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Research Hypotheses

H_1: Managers/ Administrators who are at par in interpersonal skills are more accurate and precise in dealing with conflicts positively. They play a pivotal role in the growth of an organization.

H_2: When conflict management is done effectively by the administration in any organization, it positively impacts organizational growth.

H_3: Interpersonal skills and leadership qualities make an administrator or manager very effective in managing organizational conflicts.

Literature review

Conflict is common in organizations, affecting various individuals, organizational operations, and outcomes. Reticence to change, disturbance, mistrust in interpersonal relationships, low productivity, and organizational inefficiency are all detrimental impacts. Since conflict cannot be avoided in businesses (Sharma, 2022), how it is handled affects whether it will positively or negatively affect the organization's effectiveness, according to Hotepo, Asrokee, and Ajemunigbohun (2010). Before a disagreement grows or worsens, the key to effective organizational conflict management is precise identification and fast resolution of the underlying tension (Schiff, 2020). Its importance is supported by more than 70 years of research summarized in many books, handbook chapters, and journal review articles.

All parties involved in productive conflicts, even those around them, benefit. Open conversation, debate, and the opportunity for excellent ideas and judgments at work are all encouraged by constructive conflict. Employees develop closer relationships with bosses and fellow employees. As a result, collaboration occurs, leading to achieving a common goal. Constructive conflicts typically result in equality and enhance interpersonal connections. Destructive disagreement frequently prevents communication and leads to anger and frustration. As a result, the parties to the conflict are further left with illusion, deception, and complete confusion in their brains. Team members become more distrustful of one another as it worsens, which reduces their efficacy. Employees become disengaged when they feel they are being unfairly judged.

This study begins by succinctly describing the conceptualization of conflict in teams. Researchers have always been interested in discovering more about conflict's many aspects. Early academics such as Hodgetts et al. (2020) believed that conflict was inevitable and may even be good (Knoke et al., 2021). Goal incompatibility is typically used to illustrate how competition, or a win-lose mentality, underlies conflict (Feruni et al., 2020). Fink 1968, on the other hand, addresses all types of social enmity and conflict.

Qiu, H., & Freel, M. (2020) put forth the idea that a company's capacity to develop and manage systems for handling a range of conflict occurrences or a series of interlocking conflicts has a big impact on how successful the company is. Organizational conflict can occur when disagreement over how a task or job should be performed, whether between individuals, organizations, or both. This conflict's resolution will depend on how it is

handled (Wilden et al., 2019). According to Riaz & Junaid (2011), poorly managed organizational conflict causes lower confidence, stress, irritability, and anxiety that may cause disengagement and embarrassment. Additionally, it exacerbates friction and has a detrimental effect on the whole company. An effective conflict management strategy enhances organizational development by fostering employee dedication, excitement, and absorption. Additionally, it raises spirits and energizes workers, ultimately improving organizational performance.

Thomas Kilmann (2010) described Compromising, Avoiding, Collaborating, and Accommodating to give a more focused assessment of conflict in teams. People often think conflict starts when they believe their interests, goals, or actions differ (Kornioti et al., 2021). Perceived incompatibilities can be caused by power imbalances, resource competition, and decision-making tendencies that diverge rather than coincide. Because it is associated with situations where resources are limited, the division of functions, power dynamics, and role differentiation, conflict is believed to be an inherent element of life. Ambiguities, denials of self-concepts or values, and any other irritating behavior support this idea. These disputes frequently lead to conflict, which can benefit or harm an organization's ability to function. Recent academics, however, are said to have a different perspective on disagreements and suggest a distinct category. The first, "Conflict of Interest," focuses mostly on interpersonal problems and disagreements. The second is "Cognitive disagreements," which come up as a result of various viewpoints on particular subjects. The third is "Value Conflict," which develops when different expectations or values diverge.

Kurtzberg Mueller (2005) found three different categories of disagreements. Conflict is based on relationships, tasks, and conflicts arising from the work process (how work is done and allocating team roles and responsibilities). Kurtzberg also asserts a linear relationship between task-based disagreements and team effectiveness. Distinct people's approaches to conflict show different aspects of their unique personalities. A useful tool in this regard is the Big Five Inventory, developed in 1970 by two distinct research teams at the National Institutes of Health and the Universities of Michigan and Oregon, led by Warren Norman and Lewis Goldberg (Costa & McCrae, 2011). This study concentrated on conflicts and discovered that they happen after reading the works of many scholars, but the key is how they are handled and how a team uses them to accomplish its goals.

Research Methodology

The Research has been conducted with the help of two questionnaires and a consent form. Twenty-five top executives of various organizations were asked to provide details about how they deal with conflicts in their work environment according to their organizational culture. What mindset do they have while resolving conflicts? The data was first tabulated on an Excel sheet. Then, the data was transferred to SPSS to tabulate frequencies, charts, and correlations—25 male and female executives of various organizations, ages 20-50 years. The postgraduate level education representing different geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds has been administered the battery of the test.

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The Big Five inventory BFI

- **The TK Model**

Twenty-five participants of the CEO/ Principal level were interviewed with experience of 10 to 20 years of working in various organizations. To inquire and understand the nature of work environment conflict and ways to approach and manage it. Moreover, propose and describe unique styles participants use to deal with conflict effectively.

Unit of Analysis

Demographic sheets

A demographic sheet has been prepared comprising a consent form and two questionnaires to be completed by all the participants from various backgrounds. The demographic variables included Gender, Age, Education, Total household income, Average working hours, and job title.

The Big Five Inventory, commonly known as BFI, was developed by Paul Costa, Robert Mc Crae, Warren Norman, and Lewis Goldberg. The questionnaire consists of 44 statements that every participant shall fill in based on their perception. The answers will be given based on the 5-point categories, i.e. (Disagree strongly 1), (Disagree little 2), (Neither agree nor disagree 3), (Agree a little 4), (Agree strongly 5). The results for each questionnaire shall be calculated to reach a particular conclusion and coupled with each questionnaire's results being tabulated accumulatively to reach a radicle consensus.

Thomas Kilmann model or TKI Model

The TK Model, commonly known, was developed by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann. The Thomas Kilmann conflict modes instrument, is often used to identify a person's behavior in conflict situations. It gives a deep understanding of one's conflict-handling styles and how various individuals manage conflict. The TKI comprises 30 questions. Each question has two options, out of which the respondent is expected to choose one of the options. Then, the questions are tabulated according to the TKI scale. Which further reveals details about the attitudes and personality traits of various individuals.

Analysis and Discussion

The data explains in detail the personality traits that the top management often have. The study also explains the least and the most preferred styles in conflict management. According to the SPSS: on the BFI, out of the 25 participants, 13 had a higher level of Extraversion in themselves. On the contrary, it was found that regarding Agreeableness, 14 participants had comparatively higher frequency levels. Seventeen were found to be more Conscientious, whereas seven were more inclined towards Openness. Somehow, the level of Neuroticism was found to be extremely low. All these trends generate information that diverts the reader's and the investigator's attention towards a random sketch of the random traits of the topmost hierarchy in any organization. I feel the top brass is usually very Conscientious and agreeable. Hence, they are ready to listen to the concerned people before deciding. On the TKI: the tabulated results give interesting information about the top management's most favored trends. They were found to be less Competing, as out of 25, only 8 showed a higher frequency. Further, it was investigated that the higher authorities in any organization were more accommodating and collaborating, i.e., 14 were more Accommodating, and 13 were more Collaborating. A very high trend was found to be in Compromising and Avoiding. This Avoiding trend is the sole reason behind miscommunication (See Annexure – I).

As in the words of Harriet B. Braiker:

"Conflict can and should be handled constructively, when it is relationships benefit, conflict is not the hallmark of a good relationship. On the contrary, it is a symptom of serious problems and poor communication."

Study Findings

- **Openness to experience:** (are inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious). These people value art, feeling, adventure, odd ideas, curiosity, and various experiences. A person's amount of creativity, intellectual curiosity, and preference for novelty and variety can all be seen in their level of openness. Additionally, it reveals an individual's imagination or independence and demonstrates a desire for various activities over a rigid routine. High openness could be perceived as erratic or unfocused. It has also been proposed that individuals with high openness intentionally seek out intense, euphoric experiences like skydiving, living abroad, and gambling to realize their full

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potential. On the other hand, people with low openness are characterized as pragmatic, data-driven, and perhaps even dogmatic and narrow-minded, and they seek fulfillment through persistence. Some disagreement remains about how to interpret and contextualize the openness factor.

- **Conscientiousness:** (are efficient/organized vs. easy-going/careless). These people often prefer planned behavior over spontaneous behavior, are orderly and dependable, exhibit self-control, conduct themselves honestly, and strive for success. High conscientiousness is sometimes interpreted as being unyielding and obsessive in these persons. Although spontaneous and adaptive, people with low conscientiousness can also be considered irresponsible and unreliable.

- **Extraversion:** (outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved). Positive emotions, vitality, assertiveness, friendliness, a tendency to look for stimulation in other people, and talkativeness. Highly extroverted people are typically perceived as attention seekers and dictatorial. Low extraversion can provide a restrained, thoughtful attitude that might be perceived as distant or self-absorbed.

- **Agreeableness:** (are friendly/compassionate vs. analytical/detached). A tendency to be friendly and cooperative with others rather than suspicious and antagonistic. It also shows whether or not someone is normally polite, dependable, and helpful. High agreeability can sometimes be taken to mean naivete or meekness. Low agreeableness people tend to be competitive or demanding, which could be considered argumentative or unreliable.

- **Neuroticism:** (are sensitive/nervous vs. secure/confident). A propensity to feel angry, anxious, depressed, and vulnerable feelings very rapidly. The phrase "emotional stability" is sometimes used to describe neuroticism to describe how well-controlled one's emotions and impulses are. The usual temperament of someone with a high demand for stability is one that others could deem dull and uncaring. Reactive and excitable personalities emerge from low desires for stability; although these individuals are frequently quite vivacious, they may be perceived as insecure or unstable.

- **Competing:** It suggests that one should try to obtain something by outperforming or demonstrating superiority. Alternatively, to engage in a rivalry with someone else to achieve a feat. It has been observed that individuals who are hypercompetitive frequently dispute. They are less content in their relationships, nevertheless. Competitive personalities are outspoken and specific in what they want. Usually, they prioritize their own goals over those of others. We often describe someone who asserts their rights as having a competitive style. However, if this method is used in less urgent situations, people could feel beaten, unhappy, and angry.

- **Collaborating is working** with someone to achieve a specified goal. Additionally, it is a collaboration or alliance. Unquestionably a leadership trait (Olivetta, 2021). Collaborators are amiable, welcoming, and pleasant. People who gravitate toward collaboration attempt to meet everyone's needs. They cooperate and respect one

another in contrast to rivals. This approach is advantageous when you need to integrate many points of view.

- **Accommodating:** They are frequently considerate, generous with their time, charming, and nice. It speaks of those prepared to alter their behavior to benefit others. People are seen as more mature when they are accommodating. Frequently, the accommodator is aware of when to yield to others. The hosts are frequently passive.

- **Compromising:** to come to a compromise and an agreement based on mutual concession. Compromise is advantageous when the cost of arguing is higher than the cost of conceding. Compromise might sometimes mean sacrificing important needs. It commonly happens that both parties walk away from a compromise feeling dissatisfied.

- **Avoiding:** to refrain from doing something. Avoiding is characterized by low degrees of aggressiveness and cooperation with the other party. Such people are distant and less gregarious. This group of people wants to avoid conflict fully. They are resistant and untouchable. When one tries to avoid conflicts, one is neither trying to achieve results nor dealing with connections with other people.

Common approaches of people towards conflicts:

- **Passive**: approach adopts submissive behavior, in which conflict is avoided, allowing conflict to escalate.

- **Aggressive**: This approach works in the short term, as people can be bullied into accepting an outcome. Due to this, people who have been forced into submission are resentful and unhappy.

- **Assertive**: This approach produces lasting resolutions. This approach supports dialogue and further supports meeting the requirements of all the parties.

Conclusion

The study's results showed that people who often manage conflicts are among the topmost hierarchy. They were postgraduates and above, i.e., highly educated. Both males and females were comparatively higher in accommodating and collaborating. It was observed that the higher management is not competing as the frequency was observed to be comparatively low. Further, it was revealed that the sample was more Agreeable and Conscientious.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study itself has its limitations; first and foremost, the sample itself was very selective. The data collection was tough as the targeted sample included a very committed group of men and women who were indeed difficult to get hold of. The sample was all key post personnel of 25 organizations in the country. So, a hard copy of the questionnaire was submitted to all to tabulate the results. This research can be taken further by collecting a

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larger sample. However, collecting this sample will be tough because contacting the CEO and GM levels via email is difficult. This data (mentioned in the annexure) can be utilized for further findings with the help of SPSS. This research paper can be utilized in large organizations to bring conflict management and harmony to any organization globally. This research paper can further be used to resolve conflicts and form a very cohesive team. Conflict management can be studied in a team rather than as an individual technique.

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Annexure-I

Frequency Analysis for Competing

Table 1: Frequency Analysis for Competing	
Values	Percentage
2	14.3
3	23.8
4	23.8
5	14.3
6	4.8
7	14.3
9	4.8
Total	100.0

Frequency Analysis for Collaborating

Table 2: Frequency Analysis for Collaborating	
Values	Percentage
3	19.0
4	19.0
5	9.5
6	19.0
7	28.6
8	4.8
Total	100.0

Frequency Analysis for Compromising

Table 3: Frequency Analysis for Compromising	
Values	Percentage
3	4.8
4	4.8
5	4.8
6	9.5
7	38.1
8	19.0
9	19.0
Total	100.0

Frequency Analysis for Avoiding

Table 4: Frequency Analysis for Avoiding	
Values	Percentage
4	9.5
5	14.3
6	14.3
7	19.0
8	14.3
9	23.8
11	4.8
Total	100.0

Frequency Analysis for Accommodating

Table 5: Frequency Analysis for Accommodating	
Values	Percentage
2	4.8
3	14.3
4	14.3
5	9.5
6	4.8
7	9.5
8	38.1
9	4.8
Total	100.0

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Frequency Analysis for Extraversion

Table 6: Frequency Analysis for Extraversion	
Values	Percentage
28.00	4.8
30.00	4.8
42.80	4.8
44.37	4.8
45.93	4.8
47.50	4.8
49.06	9.5
50.62	4.8
55.31	4.8
56.78	4.8
56.87	4.8
58.37	4.8
58.43	4.8
58.43	4.8
60.00	9.5
63.12	9.5
64.69	4.8
69.37	4.8
Total	100.0

Frequency Analysis for Agreeableness

Table 7: Frequency Analysis for Agreeableness	
Values	Percentage
34.810	4.8
38.000	4.8
39.000	4.8
45.900	4.8
45.920	4.8
49.600	4.8
49.620	4.8
51.330	4.8
51.480	4.8
53.300	4.8
53.330	4.8
54.000	4.8
55.160	4.8
55.185	14.3
58.880	9.5
60.660	4.8
61.660	4.8
66.296	4.8
Total	100.0

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Frequency Analysis for Conscientiousness

Table 8: Frequency Analysis for Conscientiousness	
Values	Percentage
25.000	4.8
41.420	4.8
44.000	4.8
49.360	4.8
50.857	4.8
52.530	4.8
54.120	4.8
55.710	9.5
55.714	4.8
57.280	4.8
57.300	9.5
57.301	4.8
63.570	4.8
65.200	4.8
65.230	14.3
68.410	4.8
70.000	4.8
Total	100.0

Frequency Analysis for Neuroticism

Table 9: Frequency Analysis for Neuroticism	
Values	Percentage
9.000	4.8
14.680	4.8
26.560	4.8
29.680	4.8
34.370	4.8
34.750	4.8
35.968	4.8
37.500	4.8
39.000	4.8
39.100	4.8
39.700	4.8
40.620	9.5
40.625	9.5
45.316	4.8
49.680	4.8
51.500	4.8
51.560	4.8
57.810	4.8
62.500	4.8
Total	100.0

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Frequency Analysis for Openness

Table 9: Frequency Analysis for Openness	
Values	Percentage
38.570	4.8
39.000	4.8
41.420	4.8
45.710	4.8
48.520	4.8
48.570	9.5
50.000	14.3
51.420	9.5
52.850	4.8
54.285	9.5
57.140	4.8
57.142	4.8
64.200	4.8
64.280	9.5
65.310	4.8
Total	100.0