

Conflict Management and Grievance Handling at WCL, Umrer Area, Nagpur

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Abstract

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting. A grievance is a complaint filed by an employee who may be resolved by procedures provided for in a collective agreement or by mechanisms established by an employer. The paper aims to identify the important factors affecting the Grievance handling among an employee in the organization for effective conflict management. A factor analysis was conducted and five important factors have been identified namely: Giving Solution to problems, Resolving of Disagreement, Open discussion, Taking your stance and Satisfying of expectations

Keywords: Conflict, Grievance Handling

Introduction

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting. Conflict management is the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational balanced and effective way. Conflict management when implemented within a business environment usually involves effective communication, problem resolving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company's overall goals.

Grievance Handling

A grievance is a complaint filed by an employee who may be resolved by procedures provided for in a collective agreement or by mechanisms established by an employer. Such a grievance may arise from a violation of the collective bargaining agreement or violations of the law, such as workplace safety regulations. All employees have the contractual right to raise a grievance, and there is a statutory Acas Code of Practice for handling grievances.

Grievance Handling outlines the stages and approaches to be followed in handling workplace grievances. The aim of grievance handling is to ensure that the issues brought to the employer's attention by the employee are adequately handled, and are settled in fairly.

Grievance may result from the following factors-

- a. Improper working conditions such as strict production standards, unsafe workplace, bad relation with managers, etc.
- b. Irrational management policies such as overtime, transfers, demotions, inappropriate salary structure, etc.
- c. Violation of organizational rules and practices

Conflict Management Techniques

Conflict situations are an important aspect of the workplace. A conflict is a situation when the interests, needs, goals or values of involved parties interfere with one another. A conflict is a common phenomenon in the workplace. Different stakeholders may have different priorities; conflicts may involve team members, departments, projects, organization and client, boss and subordinate, organization needs vs. personal needs. Often, a conflict is a result of perception. Is conflict a bad thing? Not necessarily. Often, a conflict presents opportunities for improvement. Therefore, it is important to understand (and apply) various conflict resolution techniques.

1. Forcing

Forcing is also known as competing. An individual firmly pursues his or her own concerns despite the resistance of the other person. This may involve pushing one viewpoint at the expense of another or maintaining firm resistance to another person's actions.

Examples of when forcing may be appropriate

- a) In certain situations when all other, less forceful methods, don't work or are ineffective
- b) When you need to stand up for your own rights, resist aggression and pressure
- c) When a quick resolution is required and using force is justified (e.g. in a life-threatening situation, to stop an aggression)
- d) As a last resort to resolve a long-lasting conflict

Possible advantages of forcing:

- a) May provide a quick resolution to a conflict
- b) Increases self-esteem and draws respect when firm resistance or actions were a response to an aggression or hostility

Some caveats of forcing:

- a) May negatively affect your relationship with the opponent in the long run
- b) May cause the opponent to react in the same way, even if the opponent did not intend to be forceful originally
- c) Cannot take advantage of the strong sides of the other side's position
- d) Taking this approach may require a lot of energy and be exhausting to some individuals

2. Win-Win (Collaborating)

Win-Win is also known as problem confronting or problem solving. Collaboration involves an attempt to work with the other person to find a win-win solution to the problem in hand - the one that most satisfies the concerns of both parties. The win-win approach sees conflict resolution as an opportunity to come to a mutually beneficial result. It includes identifying the underlying concerns of the opponents and finding an alternative which meets each party's concerns.

Examples of when collaborating may be appropriate:

- a) When consensus and commitment of other parties is important
- b) In a collaborative environment
- c) When it is required to address the interests of multiple stakeholders
- d) When a high level of trust is present
- e) When a long-term relationship is important
- f) When you need to work through hard feelings, animosity, etc
- g) When you don't want to have full responsibility

Possible advantages of collaborating:

- a) Leads to solving the actual problem
- b) Leads to a win-win outcome
- c) Reinforces mutual trust and respect
- d) Builds a foundation for effective collaboration in the future
- e) Shared responsibility of the outcome
- f) You earn the reputation of a good negotiator

g) For parties involved, the outcome of the conflict resolution is less stressful (however, the process of finding and establishing a win-win solution may be very involved – see the caveats below)

Some caveats of collaborating:

- a) Requires a commitment from all parties to look for a mutually acceptable solution
- b) May require more effort and more time than some other methods. A win-win solution may not be evident
- c) For the same reason, collaborating may not be practical when timing is crucial and a quick solution or fast response is required
- d) Once one or more parties lose their trust in an opponent, the relationship falls back to other methods of conflict resolution. Therefore, all involved parties must continue collaborative efforts to maintain a collaborative relationship

3. Compromising

Compromising looks for an expedient and mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties.

Examples of when compromise may be appropriate:

- a) When the goals are moderately important and not worth the use of more assertive or more involving approaches, such as forcing or collaborating
- b) To reach temporary settlement on complex issues
- c) To reach expedient solutions on important issues
- d) As a first step when the involved parties do not know each other well or haven't yet developed a high level of mutual trust
- e) When collaboration or forcing do not work.

Possible advantages of compromise:

- a) Faster issue resolution. Compromising may be more practical when time is a factor
- b) Can provide a temporary solution while still looking for a win-win solution
- c) Lowers the levels of tension and stress resulting from the conflict

Some caveats of using compromise:

- a) May result in a situation when both parties are not satisfied with the outcome (a lose-lose situation)
- b) Does not contribute to building trust in the long run
- c) May require close monitoring and control to ensure the agreements are met

4. Withdrawing

Withdrawing is also known as avoiding. This is when a person does not pursue her/his own concerns or those of the opponent. He/she does not address the conflict, sidesteps, postpones or simply withdraws.

Examples of when withdrawing may be appropriate:

- a) When the issue is trivial and not worth the effort
- b) When more important issues are pressing, and you don't have time to deal with it
- c) In situations where postponing the response is beneficial to you, for example -
 - When it is not the right time or place to confront the issue
 - When you need time to think and collect information before you act (e.g. if you are unprepared or taken by surprise)

- When you see no chance of getting your concerns met or you would have to put forth unreasonable efforts
- When you would have to deal with hostility
- When you are unable to handle the conflict (e.g. if you are too emotionally involved or others can handle it better)

Possible advantages of withdrawing:

- a) When the opponent is forcing / attempts aggression, you may choose to withdraw and postpone your response until you are in a more favorable circumstance for you to push back
- b) Withdrawing is a low stress approach when the conflict is short
- c) Gives the ability/time to focus on more important or more urgent issues instead
- d) Gives you time to better prepare and collect information before you act

Some caveats of withdrawing:

- a) May lead to weakening or losing your position; not acting may be interpreted as an agreement. Using withdrawing strategies without negatively affecting your own position requires certain skill and experience
- b) When multiple parties are involved, withdrawing may negatively affect your relationship with a party that expects your action

5. Smoothing

Smoothing is also known as accommodating. Smoothing is accommodating the concerns of other people first of all, rather than one's own concerns.

Examples of when smoothing may be appropriate:

- a) When it is important to provide a temporary relief from the conflict or buy time until you are in a better position to respond/push back
- b) When the issue is not as important to you as it is to the other person
- c) When you accept that you are wrong
- d) When you have no choice or when continued competition would be detrimental

Possible advantages of smoothing:

- a) In some cases smoothing will help to protect more important interests while giving up on some less important ones
- b) Gives an opportunity to reassess the situation from a different angle

Some caveats of smoothing:

- a) There is a risk to be abused, i.e. the opponent may constantly try to take advantage of your tendency toward smoothing/accommodating. Therefore it is important to keep the right balance and this requires some skill.
- b) May negatively affect your confidence in your ability to respond to an aggressive opponent
- c) It makes it more difficult to transition to a win-win solution in the future

Some of your supporters may not like your smoothing response and be turned off.

Company Profile: WCL at a Glance

Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) is one of the eight Subsidiary Companies of Coal India Limited (CIL) which is under administrative control of Ministry of Coal. The Company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 has its registered office at **Coal Estate, Civil Lines, and Nagpur-440001**. WCL has been conferred "Miniratna" status on 15th March'2007. The Company has contributed about 8.6% of the national coal production

during 2009-10. It has mining operation spread over the states of Maharashtra (in Nagpur, Chandrapur & Yeoman Districts) and Madhya Pradesh (in Betul and Chhindawara Districts).

Research Methodology

Objective of project: To identify the important factors for grievance handling to manage Conflicts in the organization

Data Collection:-

1. Primary:- fill questionnaire by the employees in umrer area, WCL (total 50 Employees)
2. Secondary:- information collected from websites

Data Analysis: Factor Analysis

The following are the basic conditions to be fulfilled for conducting Factor Analysis

a. **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy** - This measure varies between 0 and 1, and values closer to 1 are better. A value of 0.6 is a suggested minimum. The condition of adequacy is fulfilled.

b. **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity** - This tests the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. An identity matrix is matrix in which all of the diagonal elements are 1 and all off diagonal elements are 0. You want to reject this null hypothesis.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling	.515
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	of Approx. Chi-Square	86.586
	df	55
	Sig.	.004

Both the essential conditions are being satisfied for all the factors of Grievance Handling as KMOSAT is Greater Than 0.6 and Barletts test of sphericity is significant as well as hence Factor analysis can be conducted for all the variables of Grievance Handling.

Taken together, these tests provide a minimum standard which should be passed before a factor analysis (or a principal components analysis) should be conducted. As the p value <0.05 (Level of significance hence the null hypothesis is rejected and hence the Factor Analysis can be conducted for the given data set.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.955	26.859	26.859	2.955	26.859	26.859	1.991	18.097	18.097
2	1.509	13.716	40.575	1.509	13.716	40.575	1.948	17.713	35.809
3	1.451	13.195	53.771	1.451	13.195	53.771	1.501	13.645	49.454
4	1.275	11.593	65.364	1.275	11.593	65.364	1.464	13.305	62.759
5	1.154	10.489	75.853	1.154	10.489	75.853	1.440	13.094	75.853
6	.754	6.858	82.711						
7	.668	6.077	88.788						
8	.496	4.508	93.295						
9	.367	3.339	96.634						
10	.215	1.953	98.588						
11	.155	1.412	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factor Analysis Output

a. **Factor** - The initial number of factors is the same as the number of variables used in the factor analysis. However, not all 4 factors will be retained. We have reduced it to 1 factor alone.

b. **Initial Eigenvalues** - Eigenvalues are the variances of the factors. Because we conduct our factor analysis on the correlation matrix, the variables are standardized, which means that the each variable has a variance of 1, and the total variance is equal to the number of variables used in the analysis, in all cases it is 4.

c. **Total** - This column contains the eigenvalues. The first factor will always account for the most variance (and hence will have the highest eigenvalue), and the next factor will account for as much of the left over variance as it can, and so on. Hence, each successive factor will account for less and less variance.

d. **% of Variance** - This column contains the percent of total variance accounted for by each factor.

e. **Cumulative %** - This column contains the cumulative percentage of variance accounted for by the current and all preceding factors. For example, the third row of the individual performance shows a value of 85.985. This means that the first three factors together account for 85.985 % of the total variance in the individual performance of the employee.

f. **Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings** - The number of rows in this panel of the table correspond to the number of factors retained. In our case it is 5 factors and cumulatively they explain 76% approximately.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q1		.761			
Q2		.774			
Q3				.718	
Q4	.779				
Q5			.876		
Q6					.853
Q7	.513		-.610		
Q8				.856	
Q9	.679				.534
Q10		.610			
Q11	.748				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

Based on the above table the following five factors have been identified which are important for the grievance handling and conflict management in the organization

1. Giving Solution to problems
2. Resolving of Disagreement
3. Open discussion
4. Taking your stance
5. Satisfying of expectations

Conclusion

Conflict in project management is not necessarily unfavourable when properly managed. Several advantages have been identified such as increasing personal growth and morale, enhancing communication, and producing better project outcomes.

However, conflict can be the decline of an organization if it is not effectively managed. The challenge for organizational leaders and project managers is to try to maintain the right balance and intensity of conflict in project management. By utilizing project management principles, understanding the dynamics of conflict, and learning approaches to conflict resolution, managers will be able to establish an environment in which creativity and innovation is encouraged and project goals are accomplished. Above five factors can help accomplish the grievance handling due to conflicts better which needs to be inculcated among the employees of the Organization.

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