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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract

This research seeks to identify best practice in conflict management in the workplace and how to improve organization and working life through better employment relations. The study focused on the factors that informed an organization's decision to seek and alternative means of handling conflict to traditional discipline and grievance procedures; and also looked at the barriers and facilitators to integrating mediation into workplace practice and culture. Two hypotheses were formulated to determine the source of conflict and conflict resolution in the Nigeria Public Service. The study makes use of descriptive statistics to analyze the data collected from a sample of 170 employees of the Nigeria Public Service. Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the responses collected from the respondents. The findings of the experimental survey of conflict management and resolution in public sector showed that conflict can be resolved through compromise between the employee and management. That leadership styles can lead to conflict in the organization. On the recommendations workers should be more involved in decision-making process in Nigeria Public Service so as to reduce the rate of conflict. There should be effective communication network between the workers and the management.

Keywords: Conflict, Organizational learning, Organizational learning and Public Organization.

Introduction

The need for a new approach to workplace dispute resolution has become central focus of public employment policy (Gibbons, 2007). In particular, it has been argued that more emphasis needs to be placed on early responses to individual employment disputes and the increased use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes. Recent attention has centered on the promotion and use of workplace mediation. While there has been limited academic research into workplace mediation in Nigeria, there is a growing evidence base that points to its potential benefits (CIPD, 2008)

Literature on organization and management has been a re-examination of internal conflict. It is perceived as inevitable, often legitimate and perhaps even desirable. Conflict between individual and between groups is a universal phenomenon. Areas of

conflict will help management or manager to make necessary adjustment and changes so as to come up with a better way of correcting it.

Conflict is one of the most prevalent issues in organization. It has been one of the tools the management uses to develop the relationship between manager and staff. It is in view of this that study looked at the causes of conflict and resolution in an organization.

Conceptual Framework- Khun And Poole's Model

Khun and Poole (2000) established a similar system of group conflict management. In their system, they split Kozan's confrontational model into two sub models: distributive and integrative. **Distributive** - Here conflict is approached as a distribution of a fixed amount of positive outcomes or resources, where one side will end up winning and the other losing, even if they do win some concessions. **Integrative** - Groups utilizing the integrative model see conflict as a chance to integrate the needs and concerns of both groups and make the best outcome possible. This model has a heavier emphasis on compromise than the distributive model. Khun and Poole found that the integrative model resulted in consistently better task related outcomes than those using the distributive model.

De-Church and Marks's Meta-Taxonomy

DeChurch and Marks (2001) examined the literature available on conflict management at the time and established what they claimed was a "meta-taxonomy" that encompasses all other models. They argued that all other styles have inherent in them into two dimensions-activeness (lithe extent to which conflict behaviors make a responsive and direct rather than inert and indirect impression") and agreeableness (lithe extent to which conflict behavior make a pleasant and relaxed rather than unpleasant and strainful impression"). High activeness is characterized by openly discussing differences of opinion while fully going after their own interest. High agreeableness is characterized by attempting to satisfy all parties involved. In the study they conducted to validate this division, activeness did not have a significant effect on the effectiveness of conflict resolution, but the agreeableness of the conflict management style, whatever it was, did in fact have a positive impact on how groups felt about the way the conflict was managed, regardless of the outcome.

Rahim's Metal Model

Rahim (2002) noted that there is agreement among management scholars that there is no one best approach to how to make decisions, lead or manage conflict. In a similar vein, rather than creating a very specific model of conflict management, Rahim created a meta-model (in much the same way that DeChurch and Marks, 2001, created a meta-taxonomy) for conflict styles based on two dimensions, concern for self and concern for others.

Within this framework are five management approaches: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Integration involves openness; exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and examining differences so solve the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties. Obliging is associated with attempting to minimize the differences and highlight the commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party. When using the dominating style one party goes all out to win his or her objective and, as a result, often ignores the needs and expectations of the other party. When avoiding a party fails to satisfy his or her own concern as well as the concern of the

other party. Lastly, compromising involves give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. (Rahim, 2002).

Theoretical Framework- The Traditional Of Classic Theory

According to Pruitt (1983) stated that this theory predominate management thinking from the date 19th century to late 30th century during this phase, conflict was viewed as bad, unnecessary, destructive, irrations harmful or dysfunctional and should therefore be avoided when possible and be immediately resolved or eliminated when it occurs. This theory sees the occurrence of conflict was believed to be caused by personality differences or failure of the leadership.

This theory believed that conflict can be avoided or overcome by carefully recruiting people who have appropriate skills and who are willing accept authority, clarity of chain of command, elaborate job description and by the use of rewards and punishment to reinforce organizational norms.

Behaviour Theory

This replaced the first theory in the 1940's. According to Rahim (2002); it recognizes the frequent occurrence of conflict between individuals and groups within the organizations and accepts the notion that conflict is inevitable in an organization. They also hold support the traditional theory that conflict is bad and can be avoided and that the best approach to manage conflict was to resolve it or eliminate it once it arises.

Contemporary Theory

This is the third phase in the thinking about conflict Robbins (1991) calls it the interaction between organization and its environment. It views conflict as a necessary condition of the organization life if the organization is to be adoptive and responsive to change. This school believed that conflict is both functional and responsive to change. They believed that conflict both functional and dysfunctional and that the best way to handle conflict is not to suppress it or resolve it but to manage it as to minimize its dysfunctional effects.

Types of Conflicts

- i. **Hierarchical Conflict:** There may be conflict between the various levels of the organization. The board of director may be in conflict with top management, middle management may be in conflict with supervisory personnel, or there may be general conflict between management and workers.
- ii. **Functional Conflict:** There may be conflict between the various functional department of the organization conflict between the production and marketing department in an industrial organization is a classic example.
- iii. **Line- Staff Conflict:** There may be conflict between line and staff. It often results from situations in which staff personnel do not formerly possess authority over line personnel.
- iv. **Formal- Informal Conflict:** There may be conflict between the formal and informal organizations for example the informal organizations norms for performance may be incompatible with the formal organizations norms for performance.
Conflict can be viewed into fire sequential stages which are; latent, perceived, felt, and manifest and conflict resolution stages.
- v. **Latent:** In this stage the basic conditions for potential conflict are resources, role conflict, drivers for autonomy, divergence of individual goal etc these conditions are lower suppressed for reasons not quite known to members or belong to the opposition on every issue.
- vi. **Perceived:** At this stage focused anxieties are created between the anxiety and tension. Each party begins to develop negative feelings towards each other. As the parties in

conflict argues and battle for their points of view the significance of the disputed issue is likely to be blown out of proportion.

- vii. **Manifest:** This is the stage of open conflict, a stage when conflict behaviour is exhibited such overt behaviour includes sabotage.
- viii. **Resolution and Aftermath:** This stage represent the condition that exists after the resolution or suppression of the conflict if the conflicts have been genuinely resolved, if can lead to an improved relationship and effective cooperation between organizational members. But if not resolved adequately, it may lead to a new and more severe conflict than the first.

In a similar vein conflict could be intrapersonal or interpersonal, inter-group or inter organizational.

Intrapersonal are conflict that are internal to individual i.e. mutually exclusive positive goal conflict, positive negative goal conflict and negative- conflict.

Interpersonal are conflict between two or more people in the organization. Intergroup are conflict between groups in the same organization. Inter-organizational conflicts are conflict between organizations.

Causes of Conflict in Nigeria Public Organizations

Non-Structural Causes Of Organizational Conflict: By non-structural factors we mean sources of conflict with the organization that are not a consequences of the organization that is causes of conflict not attributable to the way in which the set of work roles and administration arrangement determine the pattern of authority relationships among task activities and employees are formerly defined these cause include.

Differences in Background: Luthons (1985) emphasized that people in the work place may differ in their background, age, education level attained, work experience and social relations. Studies on conflict have revealed that general, the potential for interpersonal and inter-group conflict is highest when organization members differ markedly in the characteristic decrease the inter-personal report and collaboration between unit representatives in organization.

Difference in Value: Values are the very core of individual personalities and deeply affect people's thought and actions for example professionals such as medical doctors and teacher' value freedom and autonomy, but their subordinate believe in closely watching over their work as subordinates. This difference in value is often a source of conflict between professional and bureaucratic orientation within formal organization. Bingham (2004)

Difference in Personal Trait/Behaviour: In an organization setting people differ in terms of such personality like authoritarianism, dogmatism, hostility, aggressiveness, self-esteem, reaction to provocation and predisposition to distrust and suspicion. Hampton (1986) for example recognizes individual personality is a source of conflict in organization when he asserts that most of us can think of someone we know who seems to fight with others. There are some people who are predisposed to disagree on every issue or belong to the opposition on every issue.

Difference in Perceptions: Perception is the way people view issues differing perception over what constitutes reality between individuals and groups is also a major source of interpersonal or inter-group conflict. Differences in perception precipitates disagreement hinder inter-group report and make co-operation and joint decision making impossible. Communication problems, different goals status incongruent etc can result to difference in perception

Poor Communication Skills: People also differ in communication skills and ability simple misunderstanding that maybe a source of conflict between individuals or group may erupt from

the inability to articulate one's position clearly to others. It could be due to semantics that is the same words or phrase may have different meaning to different individuals or groups, these differences in meaning may lead to communication breakdown which is a forerunner of harmful misunderstanding and consequently conflict between individuals or group in organization poor communication is not only a cause but can be a result of conflict.

Differences in perception precipitates disagreement hinder inter-group report and make co-operation and joint decision making impossible. Communication problems, different goals status incongruent etc can result to difference in perception.

Structural Causes of Organization Conflict

According to Aggyris (1994) organization structure refers to the formally defined framed work or task and authority relationship conflict that arise from the structural and designed features in the organization and its interrelated parts are what we call structural causes of conflict. Factors that influence the design and structure of an organization include the nature of its environment, its sizes and characteristic of its technology-Most conflict in an organization is based on the structural characteristics of organization rather than personal disputes. He further stated the different types of conflicts to include;

Work Interdependence: One of the features of organization is division of labour and committed task specialization, which is the process of dividing jobs into more homogenous acts of task. This division of labour and specialization often creates a situation whereby two or more different unit must depend on one another to complete their respective task, this create interdependence among the organizational groups.

A potential for conflict exist in such a situation of interdependence of work activities. The more interdependence, two or more departments or one another is more the potential for conflict to exist.

Difference in Unit Orientation and Goals: The division of labour and task specialization or differentiation on that often characterized units to formulate their goals or objectives and to develop a narrower orientation towards the goals and problems of the organization. The more the conflict between the two groups and orientation of two units, the more the conflict between the two groups.

Difference in Performance Criteria and Reward System: Conflict amongst unit can arise if work activities are evenly distributed, but the reward of reward system re dissimilar the more the evaluation and reward management emphasis the separate performance of each department rather their combined performance the greater the conflict.

Mutual Dependence on Limited Resources: One of the facts of organization life is that the resources that are personal, materials, equipment, operating funds, space etc limited. Management must decide at a particular point in time on how to allocate these scarce resources among the various departments in order to effectively attain the organizational goal and objectives. In allocation, some sub-units will be given priority attention and will therefore less than they would need. The dependency of limited resources is therefore a potential for conflict between units in an organization.

Differences in Status: Division of labour and task specialization often lead to a situation where some units come to be viewed as more important than others and therefore posses higher status. This will finally results too many status hierarchies within the organization. However, people in lower status units may not always recognize the greater importance or contribution of higher status units the relative status of the different departments.

Effect of Conflict in Public Organizations

Rahim (2002) assert that conflict is not an evil phenomenon per se, its effect whether constructive or destructive depend on how it's being managed. Functional conflict is said to have occurred when the outcomes lead to improve organizational performances or effectiveness. The beneficial effects of functional conflict are very suitable and include the following;

- a. Conflict increases internal cohesiveness as members often increase their identification and loyal to the group.
- b. Conflict can highlight important problems in an organization disagreement between groups has the tendency of bringing problems to the surface to the notice of the management.
- c. Conflict between divergent views in the organization often result in higher quality decision or solution to the problem, because it cause dominant view point or favoured of a group to be question.
- d. Conflict motivate group to classify their objectives and this increase the group awareness of its purpose.
- e. Conflict energizes people. It tends to make organizational life more interesting as disagreement and arouse organizational members to test ideas and provides opportunity.
- f. Conflict may actually be an educational experience since participants may become more aware and more understanding of their opponents function and the problem that they must cope.

Strategies to Deal with Conflict in Nigeria Public Sectors

Arnold (1983) summarized the strategies that can be employed to reduce conflict into four major types below. Our observation of the type of problems which each type could unfold is included.

Avoidance: This type of strategy attempt to keep the conflict from surfacing at all. Examples would be to simply ignore the conflict or impose a solution. This may be appropriate if the conflict is trivial or if quick action is needed to prevent the conflict from occurring. The major problem with this technique is that the problem which has been avoided can still surface again. If a similar situation occurs what happens? Certainly, it is likely to be avoided. We end up avoiding issues until everything explodes.

Diffusion: Under this strategy, an attempt is made to deactivate the conflict and cool off the emotions and hostilities of the groups involved. Examples would include trying to "Smooth things over" by playing down the importance and magnitude of the conflict or of established super-ordinate goals that need the cooperation of the conflicting groups in order to be accomplished. This strategy is appropriate where a stop-gap measure is needed or when the groups have a mutually important goal. The major problem with this technique is that when a problem is defused (passed under the carpet), it could gather steam and escalates into a major crisis.

Containment: Under this strategy, some conflict is allowed to surface, but it is carefully contained by spelling out which issues are to be discussed and how they are to be resolved. To carry out this strategy, the problems and procedure may be structured, and representative from the conflicting parties may be allowed to negotiate and bargain within the structure established. This is appropriate where open discussions have failed and the conflicting groups are of equal power. The problem with containment is that one group may still end up being the underdog ever when a problem has been seen to have been solved; and

Confrontation: Under this strategy, which is at the other of the continuum from avoidance, all the issues are brought into the open and the conflicting groups directly confront the issues are

each other in an attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory solution. This may involve mutual problem solving or even formally redesigning jobs or responsibilities in order to resolve the conflict. This is most appropriate when there is a minimum level of trust, when time is not critical, and when the groups need to cooperate to get the job done effectively.

The Causes of Conflict in Public and Private Sector Organizations

Havenga (2002,) indicated that causes of conflict at the level of the organization could also include resource availability; affirmative action programs; the scope and content of workload; the introduction of new management techniques; and differences of a cultural and racial nature.

A typology that further categorizes sources of conflict is offered by Nelson and Quick (2001,) who differentiate between structural factors (causes) i.e. those that develop from within the organization and originate from the manner in which work is organized, and secondly, personal factors, which emerge as a result of individual differences among employees. Although the potential sources of conflict seemingly abound, the important role of communication as a potential source of conflict appears to be understated.

However, despite the frequency with which causes (sources) of conflict are nominated or suggested, empirical support for the claimed validity of these causes or typologies is substantively lacking, which suggests that any and each categorization framework is as helpful or unhelpful as the next. Adversely impact of organizational performance, but also suggests and reinforces a conflict strategy best described as 'conflict avoidance'. This in fact appears to be the essence of the response of employee groups two and three to the experienced conflict. The reported effects of conflict as evidenced for these two groups similarly convey a conflict negation or conflict avoidance approach or strategy. Withdrawal or alienation from peers and superiors in conflict situations echoes an avoidance style of conflict management, while experienced depression may result in a similar avoidance style of dealing with conflict-both adversely impacting on the individual and the organization's performance. Evidence of such 'avoidance' of conflict, is also observed in, for example, absenteeism and personnel turnover, as observed by Van de Vliert (2001). The observed inefficiencies reported by Van de Vliert (2000) were also recorded by John (2001), who noted that these inefficiencies resulted in poor work performance. This perspective underscores the importance of differentiating between the occurrence (incidence) of conflict and the employee and organization's response to such conflict (e.g. avoidance) - as argued by Dijkstra (2006). Not only will such a distinction facilitate understanding of the nature of conflict and its impact on every day employee well-being, but it will crystallize the action component in the response to the conflict ('the reaction').

This in turn introduces greater focus and specificity and will result in differentiated conflict management strategies, which should prove more effective in the resolution of specific sources of workplace conflict. Effective conflict resolution strategies will remove and eliminate the underlying causes of conflict and will reduce the potential for recurrence of similar conflicts in future. The implications of this, however, are that appropriate and accurate data on the sources of conflict should emerge, and secondly, that organizational functionaries and managers acknowledge that conflict resolution is a shared priority (Kreitner and Kinicki (2000) which in turn necessitates a greater involvement of all individuals and groups likely to be affected by the conflict. The fundamental challenge of conflict management is to address the identified sources of

conflict effectively and expediently in a manner that will minimize its negative impact on the workforce Crawley (2008).

Furthermore, conflict may occur when: A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests. A party holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences.

A party wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, such that the wants of all parties involved may not be satisfied fully. A party possesses attitudes, values, skills, and goals that are salient in directing his or her behavior but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, values, skills, and goals held by the other(s). Two parties have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint actions. Two parties are interdependent in the performance of functions or activities (Rahim, 2002).

Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management in Public Organisation

As the name would suggest, conflict resolution involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflict. In practice, when people talk about conflict resolution they tend to use terms like negotiation, bargaining, mediation, or arbitration.

Conflict management does not necessarily imply conflict resolution. "Conflict management involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization" Rahim (2002). Learning is essential for the longevity of any group. This is especially true for organizations; Organizational learning is essential for any company to remain in the market. Properly managed conflict increases learning through increasing the degree to which groups ask questions and challenge the status quo (Luthans, Rubach, & Marsnik, 1995).

An Effective Conflict Management Strategy In Public Organizations Should:

Minimize Affective Conflicts at Various Levels: Affective conflict refers to inconsistency in interpersonal relationships, which occurs when organizational members become aware that their feelings and emotions regarding some of the issues are incompatible. "Summarily stated, relationship conflicts interfere with task-related effort because members focus on reducing threats, increasing power, and attempting to build cohesion rather than working on task.

The conflict caused members to be negative, irritable, suspicious, and resentful" Jehn, (1997).A. Evidence indicates that affective conflict impedes group performance. It affects group performance by limiting information processing ability and cognitive functioning of group members and antagonistic attributions of group member's behaviour Amason, (1996); Baroon, (1997); Jehn et al, Wall & Nolan, (1986). Affective conflict diminishes group loyalty, workshop commitment, intent to stay in the present organization, and job satisfaction Amason, (1996); Jehn et al., 1999). These result from higher levels of stress and anxiety, and conflict escalation.

Attain and Maintain a Moderate Amount of Substantive Conflict: Substantive conflict occurs when two or more organizational members disagree on their task or content issues. Substantive conflict is very similar to issues conflict, which occurs when two or more social entities disagree on the recognition and solution to a task problem. A study by Jehn (1995) suggests that a moderate level of substantive conflict is beneficial as it

stimulates discussion and debate, which conflict may miss new ways to enhance their performance. "Groups with an absence of task conflict may miss new ways to enhance their performance, while very high levels of task conflict may interfere with task completion" (Jehn, 1997).

Evidence indicates that substantive conflict is positively associated with beneficial outcomes: A. Groups that report substantive conflict are able to make better decisions than those that do not (Amason, 1996; Cosier & Rose, 1977; Fiol, 1994; Putnam, 1994; Schweiger, Sandberg, & Ragan, 1986). Substantive conflict encourages greater understanding of issues, which leads to better decisions. Groups that report substantive conflict generally have higher performance.

This conflict can improve group performance through better understanding of various viewpoints and alternative solutions (Bourgeois 1985; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990; Jehn, 1995, 1997; Jehn et al). It should be noted that the beneficial effects of substantive conflict on performances were found only.

In groups performing non routine tasks, but not groups performing standardized or routine tasks.

Although substantive conflict enhances group performance, like affective conflict, it can diminish group loyalty, workgroup commitment, and intent to stay in the present organization, and job satisfaction (Jehn, 1997; (Jehn et al., 1999). As a result, interventions for conflict management should be designed to develop cultural norms to support disagreement among group members in connections with tasks and other related management issues without generating affective conflicts.

Select and Use Appropriate Conflict Management Strategies: As will be seen later, there are various styles of behavior, such as integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising, which can be used to deal with conflict. Organizational members would require training and on-the-job experience to select and use the styles of handling interpersonal conflict so that various conflict situations can be appropriately dealt with. In general, managing conflict to enhance learning and effectiveness require the use of integrating or problem solving style (Rahim, 2001).

Sources of Conflict

The number and range of potential sources of conflict suggested by scholars are substantive, but most of these were theoretical conceptualizations with rigorous empirical research a rarity. The scientific legitimacy of these claimed sources of conflict as well as the categorization systems proposed; remain problematic in the absence of empirical research. This is particularly applicable to the Nigeria environment where empirical studies on the causes of organization-level conflict are not in evidence. When considering research beyond the Nigeria setting, it is observed that the causes of conflict emphasized by scholars seldom pertinently addressed the organization or business level. Those who did consider the causes of conflict at the *organizational level* identified a multitude of potential sources of conflict.

Accordingly, such sources or causes included differences in knowledge, beliefs or basic values; competition for position, power or recognition; a need for tension· release; a drive for autonomy; personal dislikes; and differing perceptions or attributes brought

about by the organizational structure, "different role structures, heterogeneity of the workforce, environmental changes, differences in goals, diverse economic interests, loyalties of groups, and value discrepancies, which were all considered at various stages as major causes of conflict in public sector (Rahim, 2002).

Conflict arises when one or more person tries to ensure their preferred outcome is achieved to the exclusion of the preferred outcome of others. In examining the area of conflict more closely, the issues causing the conflict need to be examined as well as the behaviour of both parties and then finally the feelings which result based on how people feel they have been dealt with. Often it is the behaviour and consequent feelings which cause the longer term and deeper damage to the relationship than the actual issue itself. Therefore, in managing conflict, these aspects need to be understood and resolved as well as dealing with the issue that may have caused the original conflict (Luthan, et al., 1995, Tom, 1995).

Organizational Learning

One of the major objectives of managing conflict in contemporary organizations is to enhance organizational learning that involves knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memorization (i.e., preserving information for future access and use). This enables organizational members to collectively engage in the process of diagnosis of and intervention in problems. Argyris and Schon (1996) define learning as "detection and correction of error" and discuss two types of organizational learning: single-loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning results in cognitive and behavioural changes within an existing paradigm (the old paradigm or mindset). Double-loop learning occurs when the diagnosis and intervention require changes outside the existing paradigm (the new paradigm or mindset).

Double-loop learning is very similar to second-order learning, or "learning how to learn." Bateson (1972) describes this type of learning as deuteron-learning. An intervention for conflict management should promote double-loop rather than single-loop organizational learning. It should be noted that individual learning is a necessary but not adequate condition for organizational learning. There must be process and structure for transferring what is learned by individuals to the collective. In other words, organizational learning occurs when members of the collective have successfully learned from the individual. There must also be mechanisms for preserving and accessing knowledge acquired by the collective.

Existing conflict resolution strategies, which have been described as dispute resolution or dispute management, emphasize negotiation or bargaining, training and on-the-job experience to select and use the styles of handling interpersonal conflict so that various conflict situations can be appropriately dealt with. In general, managing conflict to enhance learning and effectiveness require the use of integrating or problem solving style (Rahim, 2002). Mediation and arbitration. These conflict resolution strategies are designed to deal with conflict at the micro-level within the existing structure and processes of an organization. In other words, these strategies do not involve significant change in the function of the organizations. As such these strategies maintain status quo which lead to single-loop learning (Argyris, 1994).

The strategies for managing conflict presented in this paper would involve macro-level changes to encourage double-loop learning. Learning organizations such as Motorola, Dow Corning, General Electric, and Honda have adapted strategies of conflict management that are likely to encourage double-loop learning.

Conditions for Effective Conflict Management

Traditional conflict management does not question whether the structure and process of an organization is deficient which are causing dysfunctional conflict. It tries to resolve or reduce conflict between parties at the micro-level within the existing system.

Effective conflict management involves change at the macro-level in the organization so that substantive conflict is encouraged and affective conflict is minimized at the individual, group, intergroup, and organizational levels. To do this there must be changes in leadership, culture, and design of an organization (Rahim, 2002)

Studies on the management of organizational conflict have taken two directions. Some researchers have attempted to measure the amount or intensity of conflict at various organizational levels and to explore the sources of such conflict. Implicit in these studies is that a moderate amount of conflict may be maintained for increasing organizational effectiveness by altering the sources of conflict. Others have attempted to relate the various styles of handling interpersonal conflict of the organizational participants and their effects on quality of problem solution or attainment of social system objectives. It becomes evident from the discussion that the distinction between the "amount" of conflict at various levels and the "styles of handling interpersonal conflict," is essential for a proper understanding of the nature of conflict management.

Substantive and Affective Conflict

Affective- may be classified as intra-organizational (i.e., conflict between two or more organization) or inter-organizational conflict may also be classified on the basis of levels (individual, group, etc.) at which it occurs. On this basis intraorganizational conflict may be classified as interpersonal, Intragroup, and intergroup. Interpersonal conflict, also known as dyadic conflict, refers to disagreement or incompatibility between two or more organizational members of the same or different hierarchical levels or units. Intragroup conflict, also known as intradepartmental conflict, refers to conflict among members of a group, or between two or more subgroups within a group in connection with its goals, task, procedures, etc. intergroup conflict, also known as interdepartmental conflict, refers to conflict between two or more units or groups within an organization.

There are various processes and structures that affect substantive and affective conflict at these three levels. The management of conflict partly involves the diagnosis of and intervention in these factors to reduce affective conflict and to attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict at each level (Vam de Vhert and Kabanoff, 1990).

Conflict Management and Resolution in Nigerian Public Sector: The Way Forward

Workers should be more involved in decision-making process in Nigeria Public Service so as to reduce to its lowest minimum the rate of conflict in Nigeria Public Service. Also, there should be effective communication links in Nigeria Public Service. There should be sufficient and adequate information flow. Communication gap breeds conflict.

Good leadership structure should be put in place that would ensure that every worker would be carried along. Policies of the organization should be well spelt out. People should understand their management, and those of their co-worker roles and rules should be in black and white, management must encourage workers to work as a team rather than a group.

Workers welfare should not be toil with. They should be remunerated as at when due. The organizational policy on promotion and remuneration should, as a matter of necessity, be strictly adhered to. Management should also ensure that they work hand in hand with the various unions in the established so as to have a cordial industrial relationship.

Conclusion

The case of Nigeria Public Service suggests that the introduction of in-house mediation can lead to a fundamental change in the way in which disputes are handled and conflict is managed. However, it also provides a number of important insights that inform our understanding of how such a change can occur. The findings outlined key elements, firstly, the development and success of workplace mediation at Nigeria Public Service was dependent on, and shaped by, a number of key individuals.

The genesis of the scheme lay in the values of human resource managers who saw mediation as a way of improving employment relations and breaking down barriers between management and unions. However, while one manager initiated these changes, there were a number of 'champions' within different constituencies. Influential individuals were 'recruited' to the cause from both the trade unions and the human resource department. Therefore, responsibility for change was ceded to key actors and was not, ultimately, the responsibility of senior management. Secondly, the most distinctive element of the Nigeria Public Service case was the way in which the manager driving the introduction of mediation scheme sought to involve trade union representatives to boost the relationship between the management and the workers. To ensure that unions had a significant degree of involvement in the scheme and of the notion of mediation itself.

Indeed, the introduction of mediation was central to the continued development of partnership working; and respondents were unanimous that without mediation, partnership would not have become embedded within Nigeria Public Service. Finally, the way in which the mediation training process was designed and conducted was crucial in developing trusting relations between management and unions. The structure of the training deliberately built in time to allow difficult issues between the trainees to be aired and discussed: As can be seen from the case-study, this was a high risk strategy, but it was possibly the only forum in which managers and unions were stripped of their traditional hierarchical roles and therefore able to address issues in an honest and straightforward way.

Workers were of the view that frequency of conflict in Nigeria Public Service would reduce if worker were part of the decision-making and implementation processes. Majority of the employees in Nigeria Public Service agreed that a greater number of conflicts in Nigeria Public Service were as a result of leadership style as well as company policies which were rigidly implemented. Excessive demand made by Nigeria Public Service workers for higher wages and salaries had been responsible for some of the conflicting situations. Labour Unions in Nigeria Public Service had played significant roles in conflict resolutions

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