The Relationship between Conflict Management Styles and Effectiveness in Physical Educational Offices of Mazandaran Province

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ABSTRACT: Conflict occurs when needs and desires of two individuals or parties are contradicting, consciously or unconsciously. In other words, conflict happens when parties are not getting what they want. Consequently, proper resolution is inevitable to avoid tensions and stresses that conflict may cause. Awareness of how people generally prefer to deal with conflict in an organization seems extremely crucial for leaders to play their leading role properly. Conflict is part of the life and group working of people who undoubtedly have important roles to determine for effectiveness. This study investigates the relationship between conflict management styles and effectiveness in the staffs of physical education is Mazandaran province. The method of study is descriptive – correlation. Therefore, The statistical population consisted the staffs of physical education offices of Mazandaran province including 151 that replied two valid questionnaires of conflict management styles (Putnam and Wilson) and effectiveness (Hamidi). Internal reliability of the questionnaires using were estimated with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for conflict management styles (Putnam and Wilson’s) 0.87 and effectiveness (Hamidi) 0.93. Descriptive statistics is used to draw tables and graphs and inferential statistics is used to the awareness of normal distribution of data and the relationship between conflict management styles and effectiveness. In statistical methods, Pearson correlation and Spearman is used in significant level 0.05. Data analysis is performed using Excel software and SPSS16. Results indicate that there are relationships between collaboration style and effectiveness and also compromise style and effectiveness. There is an inverse relationship between domination style and effectiveness. But there are not relationships between avoidance style and effectiveness and also accommodation style and effectiveness.

Keywords: Conflict management, effectiveness, physical education offices.

Introduction

This study attempts to address this gap in the literature through a systematic investigation of the manner in which conflict styles established early in a group’s life influence its later activities. Most studies of conflict within groups have focused on the immediate outcomes of the conflict episode, such as decision quality, satisfaction, or commitment to the solution (Alderton & Frey, 1986). When groups work through conflicts, however, they are not simply resolving an immediate situation; they are also establishing patterns of behavior that may apply in the future. Important in their own right, these patterns seem likely to influence distal outcomes as well. The following sections define our constructs and develop a hypothesis regarding the relationship between conflict management styles and effectiveness. Conflict can be defined as an incongruity of desires, goals or values between individuals or groups, including attempts to prove their own position accompanying mutual antagonistic feelings (Fisher, R.J , 1990). Similarly, it can be comprehensively described as “a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about” (Robbins, S. P , 1998). In fact, a clash of desires, values, interests, attitudes, manners and methods usually spark a conflict.
Conflict Management Styles
A common approach to studying conflict in group and organizational settings is to use the individual as the unit of analysis. From Thomas and colleagues’ influential perspective (Ruble & Thomas, 1976), an individual’s conflict style is a behavioral orientation and general expectation about one’s approach to conflict. This conception of conflict style does not preclude the individual from changing styles or enacting behaviors not typically associated with a particular style, but asserts that individuals choose (though often not consciously) a pattern of principles to guide them through episodes of conflict. These patterns of principles are translated into actions and reactions that can be conceived of as a “style.” Following Thomas (1977) and Folger (2005), conflict management style is defined here as a general and consistent orientation toward the other party and the conflict issues, manifest in observable behaviors that form a pattern and share common characteristics over time. Thus, observable interaction is central to the definition of conflict style (Folger, Scott Poole, & Stutman, 2005). Managerial theories categorize different strategies of dealing with conflict. A common definition is that people choose five different gestures once confronting conflict: Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, Accommodating, Competing (domination). In fact, these five individual’s conflict modes are assessed along with two principle dimensions: Assertiveness and Cooperativeness. Assertiveness attributes the quality in which person attempts to settle his or her own concerns, whereas cooperativeness addresses to some extend person is concerned to satisfy others’ wishes (Kilmann, R.H., 2010). Collaborating: Pursuit of all concerns of both parties through a solution that satisfy both parties completely as a result of parties collaboration to address all underlying concerns and attempts to find alternatives to satisfy all of them, (Assertive and cooperative). Compromising: Seek for a mutually acceptable solution that satisfy both parties partially via addressing some concerns of both parties and neglecting others by exchanging concessions and finding a middle-ground position, (Moderately assertive and moderately cooperative). Avoidance: Neglect the conflict or deny the availability of conflict. One seeks for neither own concerns nor others’. In this mode, one prefers to evade an issue or put it off until later, (Unassertive and uncooperative). Accommodating: Overlook own concerns to satisfy those concerns of others. It is a form of selfless generosity that followed by yielding to others’ wishes when one would prefer not to do, (Unassertive and cooperative). Domination or Competing: Seek for own concerns at the expense of others’ concerns by using all appropriate power to win the position and defend something that is believed to be correct. (Assertive and uncooperative) (Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R., 1978).

As it is claimed, awareness of how people prefer to deal with conflict seems extremely crucial for leaders to play their leading role properly. Therefore, through these years researchers have been trying to illuminate how people deal with conflict and what is the impact of their preference on the performance and efficacy of their organization. For example, a study has shown that when superiors implementing competing and avoiding styles of conflict to deal with conflict, their subordinates view them as incompetent superior, consequently resulting in job dissatisfaction. Conversely, subordinates are more satisfied when superiors exercise collaborating, compromising and accommodating conflict modes (Lee, 2008).

There are lots of causes that can initiate a conflict. Conflict can be started by poor communication, dissatisfaction caused by management style, desire to obtain power, ineffective leadership, lack of openness and so on. Three distinct main drivers of conflict can be recognized as: Power, Value and Economic (Katz, 1965). Power conflict happens once each party or individual is struggling to obtain more power and influence on each other that demands less power and influence of another one. Value conflict is a result of inconsistency in people’s culture and way of life. It got affected by how people define rightness and it involves ethical issues as well. Economic conflict originates conflict in people’s attempts to fight for resources that are always scarce. For example, two project managers in a matrix-structure organization should fight for shared resources (Teklab, 2009) that may cause destructive conflict if not be handled properly. Ambiguity (obscure goals and imprecision), the nature of activities and roles and a change in external ambient can be seen as other sources of conflict (Manolesca 2008).

Conflict Management Styles and Effectiveness:
Sambamurthy and Poole (1992) noted that the effectiveness depends on organizational commitment, quality, motivation, negative resistance to change that we use these in our research. Whether and how particular ways of handling conflict in team influences team effectiveness has been studied extensively in both the laboratory and in field research. Much of this research has been inspired by Deutsch's Theory of Cooperation and
Competition (1973), and reviews of this literature suggest that when teams manage conflicts through collaborating, team effectiveness is enhanced. In contrast, when teams manage conflicts through contending, team effectiveness suffers (Tjosvold, 1997). Laboratory experiments on negotiation emphasized the importance of pro-social motives and concomitant collaborating behavior as a way to solve conflicts about opposing interests (Dreu et al, 1998; Weingart et al, 1993). Field research stresses the importance of cooperative goals and concomitant 'constructive controversy—the open-minded discussion about opposing ideas, feelings and opinions (Tjosvold and Deemer, 1980, Tjosvold, 1997). On the whole, these studies converge on the conclusion that collaborating in conflict situations increases individual and team effectiveness, as exemplified by greater satisfaction and feelings of self-efficacy among conflict parties, more mutually beneficial solutions, reduced likelihood of future conflict, and better goal achievement (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986, Tjosvold, 1997). In the case of relationship conflict teams collaborating responses may be less effective than one would expect. Relationship conflict is difficult to settle to mutual satisfaction. Tension and frustration rooted in discrepant personal norms and values, political preferences and sense of humor is difficult to reduce, simply because it requires changing issues fundamental to one’s personal identity and acquired in the course of an entire life (Druckman and Zechmeister, 1973). At first blush the research by Druckman and colleagues might suggest that relationship conflict requires a certain degree of explicit confrontation and contending, because this clarifies issues and fosters altered understanding of the situation by one or both parties (Putnam, 1997). This notion ignores, however, that contending easily locks parties into a conflict spiral. Conflict research showed that contending behaviors are quickly reciprocated by even stronger responses by others, undermine trust and benevolent views of the opposing conflict parties and result in poor outcomes for all. Thus, although contending responses may help team members to clarify issues and alter their understanding of the situation, they also entail the danger of escalating the conflict and thus hinder team functioning and effectiveness. Contending responses are, overall, not expected to contribute positively to team functioning and team effectiveness (Deutsch, 1973; Pruitt and Canevale, 1993).

H1: Conflict management styles of people will have relationships with effectiveness in their activities. This hypothesis focuses on “main effects” of conflict style. However, the norms promoted by different styles will be brought to bear in specific contexts, so it is necessary to consider the moderating properties of task. This is a rather tentative expectation at this point, so we pose it as a research question:

RQ1: What is the relationship among conflict management styles and effectiveness?
To investigate the hypothesis and the research question, a study combining quantitative and qualitative procedures was employed. The next section explains this design in greater detail.

Methodology

This method of research is descriptive and correlational survey that collects of data took place from field studies. Statistical population of this study included of all employees of physical education departments in Mazandaran province (professionals, managers and employees) were equal to 151 people. To apply of the research, the questionnaires sent to the staff departments of Physical Education in Mazandaran province, which number 139 were filled the questionnaires completely. For data collection, were used the two questionnaires with valid standardized, conflict management questionnaire of Putnam and Wilson (1991) and effectiveness questionnaire of Hamidi (2003) which have a validity and reliability. The reliability was obtained with Cronbach's alpha, that Conflict Management questionnaire was 0.87 and Effectiveness questionnaire was 0.93. The reliability of conflict management styles were respectively Collaboration 0.70, Compromise style 0.72, Avoidance style 0.71, Accommodation style 0.79, Domination 0.73. Also the reliability of Effectiveness elements was respectively Organizational commitment 0.80, Quality 0.82, Motivation 0.79, Negative resistance to change 0.83. For the analysis of the data, descriptive and inferential statistics methods are used. Calmograph Smironoph test identified that conflict management styles, effectiveness and organizational commitment have normal distribution, so parametric tests (Pearson P<0.05) were used for analyzing these data and assumptions. But quality, motivation, negative resistance have non normal distribution, so non parametric tests (Spearman P<0.05) were used for analyzing these data and assumptions. Analyzing was performed by SPSS16 and Excel soft ware.
Results

Results presented in Table 1 shows that the number of females staffs are 49 (35.3 percent) and the number of male are 90 (64.7 percent). Employees with 5 years experience are 35 (25.2 percent), 6-10 years are 31 (22.3 percent), 11-15 years are 23 (16.5 percent) and with an experience of more than 15 years, 50 people (36 percent). Number of employees that their field of study is physical education are 75 (51.6 percent) and non-physical education are 67 (48.2 percent).

Table 1: Distribution and frequency percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Until 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency percent</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1 shows the average of Conflict management styles of staffs of Physical Education offices in Mazandaran province are respectively Collaboration 3.9468, Compromise 3.4101, Avoidance 2.8861, Accommodation 3.1712, Domination 3.0894.

Figure 1: Average Results of questionnaire of Conflict Management Styles.

Figure 2 shows the average of effectiveness and the elements of effectiveness. The average of effectiveness is 3.20, and the elements of effectiveness are respectively, Organizational commitment 3.11, Quality 3.15, Motivation 3.23, Negative resistance to change 3.14.
The inferential analysis in Table 2, revealed that there are relationships between collaboration style and effectiveness and also compromise style and effectiveness, in significant level 0.05 (Pearson). There is an inverse relationship between domination style and effectiveness. But there are not relationships between avoidance style and effectiveness and also accommodation style and effectiveness in significant level 0.05 (Pearson).

Table 2: Correlation between Conflict management styles and Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Domination(co</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td>0.477</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>-0.310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inferential analysis in Table 3, revealed that there are relationships between collaboration style and organizational commitment and also compromise style and organizational commitment in significant level 0.05 (Pearson).But there are not relationships between avoidance style and organizational commitment, accommodation style and organizational commitment and also domination style and organizational commitment in significant level 0.05 (Pearson).

Table 3: Correlation between Conflict management styles and Organizational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Domination(co</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.370</td>
<td>0.273</td>
<td>0.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>-0.093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inferential analysis in Table 4, revealed that there are relationships between collaboration style and quality and also domination style and quality in significant level 0.05 (Spearman).But there are not relationships between compromise style and quality, avoidance style and quality and also accommodation style and quality in significant level 0.05 (Spearman).

Table 4: Correlation between Conflict management styles and Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Domination(co</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.357</td>
<td>0.425</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>0.379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inferential analysis in Table 5, revealed that there are relationships between collaboration style and motivation, compromise style and motivation, accommodation style and motivation and also domination style
and motivation in significant level 0.05 (Spearman). But there is not a relationship between avoidance style and motivation in significant level 0.05 (Spearman).

Table 5: Correlation between Conflict management styles and Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Domination(competition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.864</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>0.225</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.272</td>
<td>0.304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inferential analysis in Table 6, revealed that there are not relationships between conflict management styles and negative resistance to change in significant level 0.05 (Spearman).

Table 6: Correlation between Conflict management styles and Negative resistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative resistance to change</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Domination(competition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>0.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>0.142</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and Conclusion

Organizations are as social systems that human resources are the most important factor for the efficiency and effectiveness and these people conflict to each other, with their different interests in dealing together (Slabbert 2004). In this regard, this research, probe the relationship between conflict management and effectiveness of staffs of physical education departments in Mazandaran province, and has achieved significant results. In the descriptive findings, people whose experience is more than 15 years, have the highest frequency that indicates a statistical population is old and should be considered in the near future to attract young workers. Results concerning the frequency of effectiveness and each of its dimensions and conflict management styles indicate that all of them are in their upper-middle range. After a comprehensive study on the effectiveness, the results showed that motivation has a highest frequency and organizational commitment has a lowest frequency in this research. It also shows that the collaboration has a highest average and the avoidance style has a lowest average in the staffs of the physical education of Mazandaran province. This finding of the study is not matched with Zhenzhong Ma (Ma, 2007) that showed the avoidance had a highest average in his research.

The inferential analysis indicates that there are positive relationships between collaboration style and effectiveness and also compromise style and effectiveness, in significant level 0.05 (Pearson). There is negative relationship between domination style and effectiveness. The findings of the research are matched with the findings of Shaw (Shaw et al., 2011), Lira (Lira, Ripoll, Peiró, & González, 2007), Alper (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000), Slabbert (Slabbert, 2004), Kosic (Kosic, Noor, & Mannetti, 2011), Deutsh (Deutsh, 1973), Tjosvold (Tjosvold, Law, & Sun, 2006) and Counts (Counts, 2003). By examining the results of this research in this field, the usage of conflict management styles in a variety of situations would eventuate the high or the low effectiveness. In the other hand, in the good conditions, the effectiveness would be high and in the bad conditions, the effectiveness would be low. According to the theories of scholars such as Thomas, Kozan, it is clear that the use of conflict management styles is somewhat that depend on the situation in the different positions of the different styles that people use them. As you know, the collaboration style and compromise style indicate cooperation and the degree of persistence in medium and high consultation, and also express that, each of parties, just pursue their own profits and interests, and in Long-term, effectiveness of organizations would endanger and would be in crisis. That has inverse and negative relationship between domination and effectiveness has existed in this study.

The findings also indicate that there are not relationships between avoidance style and effectiveness and also accommodation styles and effectiveness in significant level 0.05 (Pearson). The findings are not matched with the results of Alper (Alper, et al., 2000), Kosic (Kosic, et al., 2011), Slabbert (Slabbert, 2004), Deutsh (Deutsh, 1973) and Tjosvold (Tjosvold, et al., 2006). According to literature, avoiding to conflict in the long term can cause more conflicts and negative impact on the effectiveness. In the accommodation style, people forbear their interests for comfort and also to establish friendly relations, which over time can still be found in
the disputes. So the existence of a healthy relationship is essential element in organizational effectiveness. These two styles avoidance and accommodation, in this study had no significant relationship with effectiveness. Secondary research hypotheses related to the relationship between each of the dimensions of effectiveness including organizational commitment, quality, motivation and negative resistance to change with each of the five conflict management styles were measured that indicate the following results. There are relationships between collaboration style and organizational commitment and also compromise style and organizational commitment in significant level 0.05 (Pearson). But there are not relationships between avoidance style and organizational commitment, accommodation styles and organizational commitment and also domination style and organizational commitment in significant level 0.05 (Pearson). Collaboration and compromise styles explain duty appeal of people who want to help each other, to solve problems and undertake on the organization that that are matched with the result of the research. There are relationships between collaboration style and quality and also domination style and quality in significant level 0.05 (Spearman). But there are not relationships between compromise style and quality, avoidance style and quality and also accommodation style and quality in significant level 0.05 (Spearman). According to previous studies, researchers concluded that collaboration and compromise styles will force both parties to try and scour that improve the quality of organizations which that is matched with the result of the research. There are relationships between collaboration style and motivation, compromise style and motivation, accommodation styles and motivation and also domination style and motivation in significant level 0.05 (Spearman). But there is not a relationship between avoidance style and motivation, in significant level 0.05 (Spearman). Motivation is the main points in organizations and if there is no motivation among employees, there are no efforts to improve the organizations that people willing to work together or compete. According to this, the collaboration, compromise, accommodation and domination styles have relationship with motivation in this research. And there are no relationships between conflict management styles and negative resistance to change in significant level 0.05 (Spearman). Changing is a part of inseparable in any organization that always exist and people should adapt themselves to it. Of course the amount of assimilate is different in people and some people may show some resistance and some don't. Finally the results of this research and past researches can be concluded that the collaboration style is a style that influences the effectiveness of physical education offices. Avoidance style has an inverse relationship with effectiveness; it means that if the usage of domination style is low, the effectiveness of staffs of physical education offices in Mazandaran province is high and would be better. However, it should not be forgotten that the use of conflict management style is related to situations. In different positions are used the different styles. According of the results the collaboration and compromise styles have more averages than the other styles, and also the effectiveness has a medium average, so we can conclude that according to usage of conflict management styles, physical education offices of Mazandaran province have a good level of effectiveness.

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