REVIEW OF RESEARCH
IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631(UIF) UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514 ISSN: 2249-894X
VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 2 | NOVEMBER - 2018

"MANAGING WORKERS AND THEIR PROBLEMS"

Dr. N. H. Awade
Head Deptt. Of Business Studies,
Gramin (ACS) Mahavidyalaya Vasantnagar Mukhed,
Dist. Nanded (Maharashtra).

ABSTRACT:

The research-paper is based on a review of interdisciplinary research, thus representing various methodologies, including experimental studies and both quantitative and qualitative field research.Problems constitutes an inevitable and commonplace element of social life. Hence, it is highly prevalent in the organizational arena and is a significant element in the dynamics of organizational work teams. Members of work groups and teams within organizations experience and manage conflict with their counterparts on an everyday basis.

KEYWORDS: *Organizations, Management, Groups, Communication, Business Expanding.*

INTRODUCTION:

Work teams as increasingly popular organizational structures serve to improve quality, increase efficiency, and ensure organizational sustainability. Effectiveness in group functioning depends to a large extent on the strength of the relationships within the team (such as trust in team members), which, in turn, nourish the nature of their internal interactions. Scholars in the area of organizational behaviour and management have argued that the quality of work team interpersonal bonds is significantly affected by the group's ability to manage conflicts. Moreover, the organizational reality of a highly diverse work group composition increases the propensity for intragroup conflicts, thus turning effective dispute management into a vital asset.

Modes of handling disagreements in work teams constitute critical determinants of problems outcomes. Problems can be harmful if managed destructively, adversely affecting the quality of teams' decisions, as well as their productivity, innovation, and members' satisfaction. Conversely,

This research-paper attempts to review and integrate findings derived from both streams of research. It is aimed to elucidate major patterns of managing conflict in work teams, focusing on the bipolar constructive-destructive dimension and its determinants. First, the nature of conflicts in work teams and their antecedents will be explored. Then the dynamics of conflict management will be explicated. Next, outcomes of conflicts in work teams will be addressed, as related to the types of conflicts and patterns of handling internal disputes. Finally, future research directions and applications to team management will be discussed.

The Nature of Problems in Teams and Their Antecedents:

As indicated earlier, conflict constitutes one of the rudimentary processes in teams. De Dreu and Weingart (2003a) defined intragroup conflict as a process emanating from interpersonal tensions among team members owing to real or perceived disparities. Inputs of team members and their interactions in work teams involve both social and mission-related aspects. Hence, conflict processes may touch upon task and

relationship issues. Accordingly, Jehn (1997) distinguished between relationship (or affective) and task (or cognitive) conflict and developed separate definitions of these two concepts. Relationship (affective) conflict refers to an awareness of interpersonal incompatibilities, reflecting interpersonal frictions; tensions; clash of personalities; and disagreements about personal values, taste, and interpersonal styles. This type of conflict is associated with the emotional aspects of interpersonal relations in work teams. Task (cognitive) conflict pertains to an awareness of differences in opinions and perspectives with respect to the work team's tasks, entailing divergent perceptions concerning distribution of resources, work procedures, and policies. In contrast with the emotionally driven relationship conflict, this type of intra-team discord is embedded in the substantive elements of teams' tasks, and is thus viewed by some scholars as more intellectual in nature.

In addition to elucidating the characteristics of conflicts, scholars of organizations and management have investigated the triggers of relationship and task conflicts in work teams. Among a variety of potential antecedents, diversity and team's geographical arrangements collocated versus distributed are noteworthy.

Diversity as a Trigger of problems in Work Teams:

Diversity denotes variation in a wide range of team members' characteristics, including professional background and expertise, tenure, and salient demographic features such as age, gender, race and ethnicity. Mohammed and Angell (2004) distinguished between surface-level and deep-level diversity. Surface-level diversity refers to the extent of demographic variation in a work unit, whereas deep-level diversity purports to disparities in personality, attitudes, and values.

Both quantitative and qualitative studies of work teams provided substantial evidence that members of groups characterized by high levels of diversity experience more conflicts than their counterparts in homogeneous groups do. This finding referred primarily to the relationships between surface-level diversity and relationship conflict, showing that greater demographic diversity was associated with more relationship conflict. Members of heterogeneous work teams experienced interpersonal tensions due to cultural differences reflected in divergent beliefs and values. Researchers have attempted to explain the triggering effect of surface-level diversity on relationship conflict drawing on Tajfel's and Turner's (1986) social identity and social categorization theories and Byrne's (1997) similarity-attraction paradigm. The basic tenet of the social categorization and social identity conceptual framework posits that people tend to define and distinguish themselves from others based on their group membership. Encountering individuals from different groups sets up the categorization process and gives rise to a tendency to form a more favourable image of one's own group in comparison to the attitudes toward individuals from dissimilar groups. This process allows individuals to protect and maintain positive social identity.

Work Groups' Geographical Arrangement as an Antecedent of Problems in Work Teams:

Geographically dispersed teams have become an increasingly prevailing work group arrangement, capturing the attention of organization scholars. Some of this work revolved around group dynamics, especially conflict processes in such teams as contrasted with their collocated counterparts. Research findings have indicated that the former experienced more relationship and especially task conflicts than the latter experienced. This result can be partially explained by the lack of shared identity in geographically distributed teams, which erodes trust and a sense of loyalty toward distant team members, leading instead to interpersonal tensions among geographically separated team members—namely, to relationship conflict.

Greater propensity for task conflict in distributed teams in comparison to collocated teams was attributed to paucity of shared context—namely, standardized work processes, tools, and systems. Lack of shared work procedures precipitates misunderstandings and divergence in approaches and interferes with coordination efforts, thus enhancing task conflict in distributed teams.

Both shared identity, which may moderate relationship conflict, and shared context, which may attenuate task conflict, require spontaneous information exchange among team members. Such open communication processes appear more problematic in distributed than in collocated teams.

Based on a study of research and development teams in two U. S. states, Hinds and Mortensen (2005) showed that open communication channels may enhance the salience of shared identity by highlighting similarities and joint concerns. Shared identity, in turn, strengthens psychological bonds between distant members, thus moderating relationship conflict. In a similar vein, open and spontaneous communication helps to clarify common work procedures, thereby contributing to shared context, which then mitigates task conflict. The researchers have also found that open information exchange has an independent moderating effect on the relationships between geographical distribution and conflict; it helps to identify conflict as well as to handle it.

Methodologies to Problems Management:

Problems management refers to behaviours team members employ to deal with their real and perceived differences, some relating to emotionally driven conflicts (relationship conflicts) and others addressing the more substantive elements of their discords (task conflicts). Most studies on interpersonal conflict management patterns have adopted the Dual Concern Model, originally proposed by Blake and Mouton (1964) later adopted with some modifications by several scholars: Pruitt and Rubin (1986), Rahim (1983), and Thomas (1976). The basic tenet of this model postulates that the conflict management mode employed by an individual emanates from two underlying motives: concern for self and concern for the other party. The strength of each of these two motivational orientations according to conflict scholars may vary as a function of the particular conflict situation, with differing emphases on each of the two concerns yielding five major conflict management patterns: (a) dominating (high concern for self and low concern for the other), reflected in attempts to persuade the other side to accept one's position, or use of more extreme means in coercing the other to give in, such as harassing the other, making threats and positional commitments—that is, posing ultimatum; (b) obliging (low concern for self and high concern for the other), manifested in behaviors such as acquiescence with the other and admitting one's own mistakes; (c) avoiding (low concern for self and low concern for the other)—that is, evading confrontation of the conflict issues, illustrated by reactions such as changing the subject of the conversation and refraining from contact with the counterpart; (d) integrating (high concern for self and high concern for the other), reflected in exchange of information concerning interests and priorities, searching mutually beneficial alternatives for solution, and providing constructive feedback to the other's suggestions; and (e) compromising (moderate concern for self and moderate concern for the other, in Rahim's version of the model), manifested in behaviours such as seeking and proposing midway solutions.

Backgrounds of problems Management Patterns in Work Teams:

Relatively limited number of studies examined the processes of problems management and their antecedents in work teams. Ayoko and associates' (2002) qualitative study on business students' teams constitutes one pertinent example. It is noteworthy that most of these scholars' results were cross-validated by data collected through three methods—(a) observations, (b) interviews, and (c) self-report questionnaires—thus affording greater confidence in the findings.

These researchers showed that cultural diversity affected the way that team participants approached conflict. Members who constituted the cultural mainstream tended to ignore and exclude their minority counterparts from intra-team interactions, especially at the initial phases of the group process. Such exclusive communication patterns were reflected in interruptions of the minority members' speech, their exclusion from turn taking, and not maintaining eye contact with them. The minority team members themselves refrained from participation owing to fear and insecurity about their language proficiency. Thus, members of the majority exhibited competitive tactics associated with destructive conflict management while members of the minority accommodated their behaviour accordingly by withdrawing from intra-team interaction.

CONCLUSION:

This research-paper attempted to present in a nutshell a state-of-the art picture on problem management in work teams. However, it is by no means exhaustive of the rich and dynamic research endeavours in the organizational field.

The review has corroborated the prevailing assumption that problems in contemporary work teams constitute a daily phenomenon, especially due to increasingly diverse workforce and globalization leading to geographical distribution of work groups. The nature of discords in organizational teams is far from monolithic; this research-paper presented two major types of conflicts relationship and task highlighting their differential effects on conflict dynamics and outcomes.

Finally, the research-paper points at several potential applications for management of work teams. Among these, raising awareness regarding the nature of conflict and its functions in team's relations and performance, training team members and leaders in cooperative approaches to conflict management, especially in diverse and geographically distributed teams, and creating positive team climate a sense of shared identity, group identification, and interpersonal trust are deemed to be of the utmost importance.

REFERENCES:

1. Alper, S., Tjosvold, D., & Law, K. S. (2000). Conflict management, efficacy, and performance in organizational teams. Personnel Psychology, 53, 625-642.
2. Amason, A. C. (1996). Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams. Academy of Management Journal, 39, 1.
3. Ayoko, O. B., Hartel, C. E. J., & Callan, V. J. (2002). Resolving the puzzle of productive and destructive conflict in culturally heterogeneous workgroups: A communication-accommodation theory approach. The International Journal of Conflict Management, 13, 165-195.
4. Blake, R. A., & Mouton, J. S. (1964). The managerial grid. Houston, TX: Gulf.
5. Byrne, D. (1997). An overview (and underview) of research and theory within the attraction paradigm. Journal of Social and Personal Relationship, 14, 417-431.

LBP PUB