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Organizational Conflict Management Strategies of Hotel Sectors in Ethiopia: Employees Perception on the Practices in Case of Selected Hotels in Wolaita Sodo Town, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract:

One of the organizational concerns of Human Resource Management is conflict management. Conflict is one to be expected fact for any organization. The objective of this study was to investigate Organizational conflict management strategies of hotel sectors in Ethiopia: Employees perception on the practices in case of selected hotels in Wolaita Sodo Town, Southern Ethiopia. The research was descriptive type and uses convenient and quota random sampling technique to drawn sample of 114 respondents. This study investigated that employees of these selected hotels have negative perception towards organizational conflict management strategies and they believe that the outcome of workplace conflict is bad. Besides to these, leaders of the selected hotels did not use conflict management strategies/techniques appropriately. In this case, Leaders should understand and apply various conflict management techniques appropriately and genuinely in order to form strong relationships with subordinates and also build effective two way-communications with their subordinates to achieve their organizational objective and employees also should be aware of their organization conflict management strategies and create two-way communication. Therefore, this study concludes that Conflict is inevitable and it is a situation when two or more parties are in disagreement and needs two-way solutions for organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Keywords: Conflict, perception, Human Resource Management, Employees, Conflict management strategies

1. Introduction

In our diverse society, the possibility of these differences leading to conflict between individuals is always there, and we must be ready to act to preventing and resolving situations where conflict arises. People have different style of communication, ambitions, political or religious views and different cultural backgrounds. Even within one organization or team, conflict can arise from the individual differences or ambitions; or from rivalry between sub-groups or factions. All leaders and members of the organization need to be attentive to group dynamics that can spill over into conflict (Kindler, H.2006). Diversity management has been overestimated as the latest fad to occupy management discourse today. This shift to diversity management has been necessitated by the move away from the traditional labor-intensive organizations to the modern globalised industries which rely on a diverse array of workers to meet organizational objectives (Nyamubarwa, W. and Yusuf, M.2013).

As noted by Mujtaba, G. (2015.P.14) Organizations are collections of people who work together and coordinate their actions to achieve a wide variety of goals or desired future outcomes" (Jones & George, 2014, p.5). A good manager should provide possibilities for his/her employees to coordinate and cooperate within the organization (Jones & George, 2014, p.5). Leaders also need ways of recognizing and resolving conflict amongst people, so that conflict does not become so serious that co-operation is impossible (Vecchio, R 2003). Hotepo, M.O. (2010) Conflicts are inevitable parts of organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staffs are often incompatible (Schweiger, A. 1997) and Der, B. C., (1978). Conflict has both positive and negative effects (Jerome GP, 19764). It can be positive when it encourages creativity, new looks at old conditions, the clarification of points of view, and the development of human capabilities to handle interpersonal differences. (Tah.S.2015, Richard et al. (2009). Individual incompatibilities between the employees and in their groups, can adversely affect their work output resulting in decreased performance (Eunice, M 2015).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Organizational conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other (Herry, O.2009). This results into a situation whereby they frustrate each other in

an attempt to achieve their objectives. Conflicts are expected part of organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staff are often incompatible Conflict is an unpleasant fact in any organization as longer as people compete for jobs, resources, power, recognition and security (Johns, GR. 2000).

According to Kazimoto (2013), workplace conflict is described as the presence of discord that occurs when goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and frustrate each others' attempt to achieve objectives in an organization. It is a communication process and an inevitable consequence of transactional relationship manifesting in disagreement and dissonance with and between individuals and groups in the work-environment. In this context, workplace conflict is a fact of life in any organization as long as people will compete for jobs, power, recognition and security (Adomie and Anie, 2005). Therefore, the task of management is not to suppress or resolve all conflicts, but to manage them in order to enhance and not to detract from organizational performance (Longe.O.2015).

According to Sepehri, M. (2014) Hotel Managers and owners face the challenges of keeping the delicate balance of satisfying both their guests' as well as their employees' need and demand without alienating one group versus the other. Working out and resolving the likely conflicts are mostly the responsibility of the hotelier. If hoteliers could prevent possible conflicts before they occur or if they find a stark solution, they would be successful and the business will gain and the moral would improve. As noted by Longe, O. (2015) Akanji (2005) opined that constructively managed conflict induces a positive performance, while destructively managed conflict heats up the work environment to bring about dislocation and polarization of the entire group with reduction in productivity and job performance. (Obasan.2011). Meggison & Chung (1981) conflict raises in organizations the struggle between incompatible or opposing needs, wishes, ideas, interests or people. This means that conflict arises when individuals or groups encounter goals that both parties cannot attend sat factory.

The availability of few studies within the country Ethiopia has concentrated mainly on manufacturing industries and construction industries on conflict management issues. And the related research efforts are still passive in focusing on the onservice sectors especially on hospitality industry. As the result, this present study has an attempt to redress the situation by providing valuable insights to management in the service organizations and on their strategic importance of conflict management strategies as a resource tool for optimizing business performance. Based on the findings recommendations would have been given and expected that it greatly help hotels to reduce their problems brought by conflicts.

1.2. Research Questions

In order to achieve the above stated objective, the researcher expected to answer the following research question:

- 1. What are the major sources of the conflict in your organization?
- 2. What are the major conflict management strategies/techniques that applied in your organizations
- 3. What are the challenges of conflict management process in your organization?
- 4. What are the major outcomes of the conflict that occurred in your organization?
- 5. What are the attitudes of employees towards the current conflict management approach of selected organization?

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objectives

The general objective of this study was to investigate Organizational conflict management strategies of hotel sectors in Ethiopia: Employees perception on the practices in case of selected hotels in Wolaita Sodo Town, Southern Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- 1. To investigate the major sources of the conflict of organizations.
- 2. To examine the major conflict management strategies that applied in Hotel sectors
- 3. To know the challenges of conflict management process by organizations
- 4. To assess the major outcome of the conflict occurred in organizations
- 5. To examine the attitudes of hotel employees towards the current conflict management strategies of their organizations

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Sources/Causes of Conflict

Early reviews in the field of conflict resolution identified a large number of schemes for describing sources or type of conflict (Fink, 1968; Mach and Snyder, 1958). One of the early theorists on conflict, Daniel Katz (1965), created a typology that distinguishes three main sources of conflict: economic, value, and power. According to Ron Fisher (2000:118) there are other major causes of conflict in the organizations such as: goal incompatibility, Differentiation, a Task Interdependence, Scare Resource, Communication Problems are the other sources of conflict in organization. Similarly, Daniel Katz (1965), scare resource resources generate conflict because scarcity motivates people party intends to interfere with the other party's goals. scare resource resources generate conflict because scarcity motivates people party intends to interfere with the other party's goals and conflict often occurs due to the lack of opportunity, ability, or motivation to communicate effectively. First, when two

parties lack the opportunity to communicate, they tend to use stereotypes to explain past behaviors and anticipate future actions (Prause, D.2015).

2.2. Conflict Management Strategies of Organizations for Resolution

As noted in Prause, D. (2015. p.18.). Conflict management strategies have ranged from a basic face-negotiation theory by Ting-Toomey (1988) and competing theory among team members to manage Intergroup conflict by Cohen and Ledford (1994) to the often-cited Thomas and Killman 5 model Strategy (1974). Thomas and Killmann defined five modes for responding to conflict situations and which are used by managers in decision making process (Mujtaba and McCartney, 2010):

- I. Accommodating: in this case a manager is one who cooperates to a high degree. This may be at the manager's own expense and actually work against that manager's own goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other person is the expert or has a better solution (Kilman, 2007).
- II. Avoiding: is one way a manager might attempt to resolve conflict. This type of conflict style does not help the other staff members reach their goals and does not help the manager who is avoiding the issue and cannot assertively pursue his or her own goals. However, this works well when the issue is trivial or when the manager has no chance of winning (Kilman, 2007).
- III. Compromising: In this strategy all the parties in the conflict lose. When this strategy is implemented, none of the parties would be acknowledged to be right but the party which lost has also gained a little due to the payment of compensation (Cupach and Canary, 1997). Similarly, parties would not get what they want in this case, either. As a result, all the parties are considered to have lost in this strategy (Luthans, 1981, p. 379). This scenario has win-lose approach. As Herb Kindler (2005:215) Conflict tends escalate when the parties develop a win-lose orientation because they rely on power and politics to gain advantage.
- IV. Competing: In this strategy, parties of a conflict tend not to see the other party's position while they increase their authority and interests. The effect of this strategy in long term is indefinable (Jones & George, 2014, p. 101). Likewise, if both parties of the conflict implement this strategy and two equally powerful bullies enter in a fight, the result may be a lose-lose situation (Ertürk, 2000, p. 231).
- V. Collaborating: This strategy refers this approach has win-win scenario and to the problem-solving approach to a large extent. Mutual integration of conflicting needs is in question with this strategy (Gannon, 1979, 266). The main purpose of this strategy is, for all of the conflicting parties, to be successful in resolving the disputed issue and therefore to win.

Another way of coping with conflict is through smoothing, that is emphasizing the areas of agreement and common goals and de-emphasizing disagreements (Robert, J.1969) and (Yates, 1987, p. 45-155). And the other one is forcing, which is pushing one's own view on others; this, of course, will cause overt or covert resistance. A traditional way of coping with conflict is to compromise, agreeing in part with the other person's view or demand. The biggest problem in developing the institutions of conflict control in organization is to develop an action of plan to identify conflicts at its initial stage (Hotepo.M.2010). As Herb Kindler (2005:216) there are effective conflict management techniques.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The researcher used descriptive survey research design method. Because it helps to gather data at a particular point in time with intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identification standards against which existing conditions can be compared or determining the relationship that exists between specific events. In addition to this, it is used to gather data on a one-shot basis and hence is economical and efficient (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.2. Data Sources and Research Methods

For this particular study primary data and secondary data were used. For primary data Questionnaire and interview were served and for the secondary data different sources of written materials were well revised and empirical evidences from different sources were being used.

3.3. Population and Sample Size of the Study

The target populations of this study include the staff of and workers of 8 selected smart hotels namely: Axum hotel, Bekelle Mola Hotels, Baltu Hotel, Enjori Hotel, Midre genet Hotel, Awurobar Hotel, Green land Hotel, and Befekadu Hotel. These hotels were selected on the bases of their long service in hotel industries in Wolaita sodo town. The sampling techniques deployed were quota sampling and judgmental sampling. Quota sampling was used to select 15employees from each hotel, which constitutes 120 population and judgmental sampling was used select conveniently hotels which are most senior and smart in the town.

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3.4. Data Analysis and Presentation

Qualitative analysis consisted of examining, categorizing, tabulating and recombining evidences to address the research questions (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). Qualitative data was analyzed descriptively through the use of questionnaires together with interview.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Introduction

Questionnaires were prepared and distributed to 120 employees, 114 were collected but the remaining 6 were uncollected. Based on the collected data from employees of selected hotels and interview conducted to managers/employers, based on this data, the following analysis and interpretation was made.

No.	Item	Sex		No	Marita	al statı	ıs	No	Facing conflict			
		No	Percentage		Item	No	Percentage		Item	No	Percentage	
1	Male	76	66.7	•	Married	33	28.9	٦	Yes	98	85.6	
1.	Female	28	33.3	3.	Unmarried	81	71.1	5.	No	16	14.4	
	Total	114	100			114	100					
	Age	No	Percentage		Education level	No	Percentage		years worked	No	Percentage	
i .	Below 20	15	13.1		Primary school	26	22.8	6.	Below 1 year	14	12.3	
2.	21-30	75	65.8	4.	Secondary school	58	50.1		1-3	66	57.8	
2.	31-40 Years	24	32.1		Certificate	13	11.4		3-5	23	20.1	
	above 40				1st Degree	14	12.3		More than 5	11	9.6	
	Total	114	100			114	100			114	100	

Table 1: Summary of Respondents background information Source: Survey study 2017

As revealed in the table 1 above about (66.7%) of the respondents were males while the rest of them are females. Regarding the marital status large number (71.1%) is unmarried and the rest are married. For the issue of facing conflict large numbers of respondents (85.6%) of respondents were faced conflict in their respective organizations and the rest were not. Regarding the work experience majority of the respondents (57.8%) was worked for 1 to 3 years.

		leve	l of occi	Total									
No	Distribution	Very high		High		Medium		Low		Very Low			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Goal incompatibility	36	31.6	34	29.8	15	13.1	15	13.1	14	12.3	114	100
2.	Task interdependence	47	41.2	33	28.9	27	23.7	7	6.1	-	-	114	100
3.	Poor communication	42	36.8	37	32.5	18	15.6	13	11.4	1	0.9	114	100
4.	Poor performance	40	35.1	31	27.1	13	11.4	20	17.6	10	8.8	114	100
5.	Personal problems of workers	37	32.5	33	28.9	20	17.6	11	9.6	3	2.6	114	100
6.	Resource related conflict	60	52.6	32	17.6	18	15.6	10	8.8	4	3.6	114	100
7.	Power related conflict	36	31.6	35	30.7	27	23.7	10	8.8	6	5.3	114	100
8.	Rumors and intolerance	34	29.8	40	35.1	24	21.0	22	19.3	14	12.3	114	100
9.	Values/interest related	39	34.2	36	31.6	30	26.3	5	4.4	5	4.4	114	100
10.	Organizational structure	33	28.9	38	33.3	22	19.3	17	14.9	4	3.6	114	100
11.	Financial reward	45	39.4	35	30.7	20	17.6	7	6.1	7	6.1	114	100
12.	Unfair promotion	40	35.1	31	27.1	13	11.4	20	17.6	10	8.8	114	100

Table 2: Summary of Sources of Conflict in hotel sectors, most practiced in Wolaita Sodo town, Southern Ethiopia Source: Survey study 2017

As described in the table above (4.1) majority of the respondents (31.6) stated that their cause of conflict in their organization is goal difference is very high and also (29.8) stated that the probability of occurrence of goal related conflict is high. In other ways the conflict because of task interdependence is also very high (41.2%). The problem of Poor communication occurred also with high number (36.8%). Majority (35.1%) described that the other side cause of conflict in their organization is because of poor performance of employees. On the other hand, majority of the respondents (52.6%) the other most cause of conflict in their organization is resource related and. Values and interest difference among employees, large number of respondents (34.2) accepted values and interest difference among employees. In addition to these, organizational structure is also the other source of conflict, among the respondents (33.3%) accepted it as high.

Moreover, majority of the respondents said that there is very high conflict related to power (30.7%) and rumors and intolerance among employees also accounts high coverage (35.1). During the interview the managers of hotel stated their opinion that, their other challenge in conflict management is informal communication and rumors. And regarding financial reward, large number of respondents (39.4%) gave their answer to the other root cause which is related to reward system of their organization. The issue of fairness in promotion considered majority (35.1%) stated that their other side cause of conflict is unfair treatment of employees in promotion process.

	No Distribution		The extent of Conflict Management strategies practiced& employees` satisfaction										
No			Highly satisfied		Low satisfaction		Medium		Unsatisfied		Highly unsatisfied		
			%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Negotiation strategies		8.8	14	12.3	20	17.6	32	28.1	38	33.3	114	100
2.	On time decision		12.3	18	15.6	22	19.3	30	26.3	32	28.1	114	100
3.	Smoothing potential causes		15.6	10	8.8	16	14.0	38	33.3	32	28.1	114	100
4.	Accommodation strategy	2	1.8	12	10.5	40	35.1	13	11.4	37	32.5	114	100
5.	Avoiding as an issue	10	17.6	48	42.1	16	14.0	32	28.1	8	7.0	114	100
6.	Competing as the strategy	-	-	10	8.8	28	24.6	40	35.1	36	31.6	114	100
7.	Compromising as the strategy	8	7.0	14	12.3	22	19.3	37	32.5	33	28.9	114	100
8.	Collaborating as a strategy	4	3.6	11	9.6	19	16.7	39	34.2	41	36.0	114	100
9.	Forcing: pushing one's own view on others	6	5.3	-	-	28	24.6	38	33.3	42	36.8	114	100
10.	Formal discussion among hotel stack holders		7.0	14	12.3	22	19.3	37	32.5	33	28.9	114	100

Table 3: Summary of the extent of Conflict Management strategies practiced& employees` perception Source: Survey study 2017

As revealed in the table above (table 3) majority of the respondents (33.3%) were highly dissatisfied by the negotiation strategies of their organization and (28.1%) were dissatisfied by their management strategies. Regarding on time decision by managers large number (28.1%) were highly dissatisfied. Besides to this manager responded in interview that in fact they are not giving on time decision for employees because of their work load and related problems. Regarding Smoothing potential causes of conflict, large number (33.3%) were unsatisfied. Whereas, to the issue of an accommodation with managers (42.1%) of the respondents reveals that there is low avoidance strategy. Regarding Competing as the strategy, large number of the respondents (35.1%) were dissatisfied and compromising strategy majority (32.5%) was unsatisfied. From this we can easily understand that the competing strategy is highly practiced that and compromising strategies. Majority of the respondents (36%) are highly dissatisfied by collaborating strategy. These imply that the management does not find solution which is more collaborating with employees even if the respondents' response is optimum. In addition to this, the manager's response for interview, they agreed that there are medium collaborating conflict management techniques are applied in selected hotels. These imply that the management does not find solution which is more collaborating with employees even if the respondents' response is optimum. Regarding Forcing/pushing one's own view on others, for about (36.8%) of the respondents was highly dissatisfied by the strategies and for about (33.3%) was unsatisfied. Regarding Formal discussion among hotel stack holders large number (32.5%) of respondents were unsatisfied and (28.9) were highly unsatisfied.

5. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes and concludes the findings of the research and forward possible recommendations.

5.1. Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Sources of conflict in the selected hotels were different types and also there are different types of conflict management techniques to be used by hotels. However, the management of these hotels did not use these techniques

- appropriately. And the way the management of hotels were responding to their employees in order to solve conflict is not grateful and the effort to solve conflict effectively in the hotels is very poor.
- The challenges identified by this study related to hotel managers on conflict management were: lack of getting enough time to solve conflict with the side of the management, cultural background of workers, economic condition in market for salary and the other related benefits issues, personal interest and motivation differences, lack of giving attention to the conflicts and lack of close relationship or communication with employees.
- Based on these facts, the researcher come up with conclusion that hotel managers and owners were not using conflict resolution strategies genuinely and appropriately, these results in high dissatisfaction of employees in their workplace and leads the employees even to perceive that the outcome of conflict in the organizations is terrible. These all elements results in the impact on the hotel effectiveness and also on employees moral and performance, high employee turnover, loss in the profitability hotels, bad reputation on hotels, fail to achieve organizational goal and objectives in the long run.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher has recommended some possible points in order to enable the selected hotels to be effective and efficient on the uses of conflict management strategies. The following recommendations are forwarded to both employers and employees in order to solve conflict related problems.

- In order to solve conflict problems and minimize conflict in the organizations, the hotel managers/employers should develop the following conflict management skills such as: managers be aware and respect differences, they have to develop appealing procedure for workers, changing personnel, changing organizational structure and the ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing, focus on root causes of conflict, make all participative decisions, calm in emotion. In addition to these the managers/employers should also develop the management behaviors such as: should give enough time to workers and discuss on causes and solutions of conflict, counsel and train their employees to minimize conflict cause, consequences and resolution techniques, advise and communicate with employees and develop effective two-way communication, so that the employees be responsible to do their best.
- * Employees of the selected hotels also required to develop important skills such as: develop effective communication skills/two-way communication, improve their performance through trainings and practices, and give their interest and personal differences to the organizational benefits.
- Not all workplace conflict is bad. In fact, some of the best solutions to problems come from working through and properly managing conflict. However, mismanaged conflict can result in bad outcomes, and even really ugly ones. So, this needs the manager's skill how to manage the cause and consequences of conflict. Moreover, Leaders/employers should use and implement different types of conflict management strategies like Avoiding, Accommodating, Competing, Compromising, Collaborating, negotiation and smoothing. To be effective and efficient on their sectors they have use these strategies genuinely, appropriately and as situation as needed for their organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

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