A Study of Organizational Conflict

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Abstract: Organisational conflict is a situation in which an individual or group of individuals is discordant because their own goals go to the detriment of the goals of others. Organisational conflict is a problem that leaders often face and resolve. Organisational conflict has both adverse and beneficial effects, so leaders are needed to guide building conflict and avoid destructive conflict. This paper describes the causes of organisational conflict and the types of organisational conflict, and makes some suggestions for managing organisational conflict.

1. Definition and causes of organizational conflict

Initially, we defined conflict narrowly as verbal arguments between team members, or even confrontations resulting from the intensification of behaviour. With further developments in management and psychology, researchers have begun to categorise disagreements between organisational members about the overall development process of the organisation or with other team members that arise in an organisational setting as conflict. At this point, of course, the understanding of conflict has become increasingly broad. For the purposes of this paper, by conflict we mean differences in goals or differences in behavioural expectations that have arisen or may arise between individuals. Conflict arises from the different conflicts that exist in a team and is universal in nature, and can occur, for example, in the planning phase of management or in the decision-making phase[1].

The causes of organizational conflict are mainly divided into three aspects: individual causes, group causes and management causes.

First of all, there are individual reasons, each member of the organization has different personalities and values, which will make them deal with problems in different ways, and the pressure generated in the work or some external factors will change the emotions and psychology of the organization members, which may be resistant to the organization they work for or other organization members, and this emotion will be transmitted in the organization, and when the members of an organization deviate from the right values, it can lead to increased conflict between individuals in the organization and affect the unity and coordinated development of the organization. The greater the gap between the personalities and values of the members of an organization, the less commonality there is among the members of the organization, and the chances of conflict in the organization will become higher. Organizational members are responsible for positions with unclear responsibilities in the organization, and an organization member may hold more than one position,

so that the goals of their multiple positions cannot be fully aligned, which can lead to organizational conflict.

Secondly, there are group reasons. Disagreements and inadequate communication between members of an organisation, as well as the irrational distribution of organisational resources and benefits, can lead to organisational conflict. Organisational conflict stems from disagreements and when these disagreements clash in the operation of the organisation, disagreements between organisational members and their perceptions of the work or structure can lead to each side asserting its own position and if this conflict is not properly managed it can easily turn into a vicious circle leading to vicious competition and a negative impact on the organisation. Poor communication between members of the organisation is a major cause of conflict. Members of the organisation have different cultural backgrounds, languages and interests, and this difference can cause communication barriers. Also, due to the large size of the organisation, there are limited communication channels between members of the organisation, resulting in a lack of communication between members of the organisation to convey the necessary information and mutual understanding, which is one of the main reasons why potential conflicts turn into behavioural conflicts. The organisation's resources are limited and all parties in the organisation want more organisational resources and competition for organisational resources will inevitably lead to conflict [2].

Finally, there are also managerial reasons. The irrationality of the organisation's systems, mechanisms and structural functions is also an important cause of organisational conflict. Changes in the organisational system that lose the interests of some members, or leaders who do not pay enough attention to the issue of harmony within the organisation, inadequate organisational systems, and organisational leaders who propose unfair performance appraisals and reward and punishment criteria for members, will all cause dissatisfaction among members of the organisation and lead to conflict. The unreasonable organisational distribution and competition mechanism in the organisation leads to an unreasonable division of labour among the members of the organisation, and also leads to unclear authority and responsibility in different departments, which can easily lead to conflicts between individuals or departments[3].

2. Types of organisational conflict

Organisational conflict can be divided into: constructive conflict and destructive conflict; potential conflict and positive conflict; confrontational conflict and non-confrontational conflict.

2.1. Constructive and destructive conflicts

Constructive conflict is where both parties share the same goals and values and the conflict arises because the members of the organisation are seeking a better solution that will benefit the organisation. Constructive conflict makes it easier for leaders to identify undesirable phenomena such as out-of-control power and institutional bloat in the organisation. It also encourages the expression of different views and arguments within the organisation, stimulates and promotes team creativity and fosters healthy competition; whereas destructive conflict, also known as unconstructive conflict, is mainly caused by cognitive differences, disagreement of ideas and goals between the two parties. It seriously wastes and damages the organisation's resources, affects the motivation of employees, undermines the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the organisation, hinders the achievement of organisational goals and ultimately affects the development of the organisation.

2.2. Potential conflict and positive conflict

Potential conflict is a hidden conflict that has not yet led to actual conflict, and is the most common type of organisational conflict. Unreasonable organisational systems and structures, as well as differences in individual characteristics, lead to the existence of various conflicts in the organisation, which are the causes of conflict but have not yet led to actual conflict, all of which are potential conflicts; positive-type conflict refers to the direct manifestation of potential conflict by triggering a positive struggle between two parties to the conflict, with significant negative effects.

2.3. Confrontational and non-confrontational conflicts

Confrontational conflict is harmful and aggressive, and refers to the phenomenon of mutual confrontation, argument and even aggression between members of an organisation due to differences of opinion and conflicting interests and unwillingness to listen to each other's opinions and suggestions. Confrontational conflict can create a discordant environment that can cause intense conflict stress and physical and emotional harm to members of all sides of the organisation; while non-confrontational conflict refers to the conflict between members of an organisation who, despite their differences of opinion, are able to accept each other's views and are willing to listen to each other's effective suggestions and consider both sides' opinions. . Common interests.

3. Thomas's organisational conflict management strategies

Thomas' two-dimensional conflict resolution model consists of five strategies, namely: avoidance, competition, adaptation, cooperation and compromise. When conflicts occur, members of the organisation should try to consider the long-term interests of the organisation and respond to them with the right attitude and appropriate responses so as to achieve the overall objectives of the organisation.

3.1. Avoidance strategies

When the interests of organisation members cannot be achieved temporarily or their demands are not met within a short period of time, they will often temporarily put aside their conflict of interest in order to maintain the cooperation and relationship between the two sides, and put the overall situation first, or may even put their own interests aside temporarily, so that the cooperation between the two sides can be maintained and developed. In such a situation, the members of the organisation tend to show superficial unity and harmony with each other, but it is difficult to develop a deeper level of cooperation because the two sides do not have equal strength. So, in such situations, members of the organisation may choose to avoid the situation in an appropriate way. For example, if a member of the organisation chooses not to recuse himself or herself during a verbal altercation between a superior and a subordinate, the situation will continue to escalate and the matter will not be resolved properly. Therefore, choosing to recuse oneself appropriately can be effective in mitigating conflict.

3.2. Competitive strategies

Competitive strategies are often aggressive through the application of pressure. In order to achieve their goals, competing parties often use tactics such as exclusion, isolation, mutual demolition and threats as a means of forcing the other party to make concessions. This strategy is widely used in organisations to deal with very urgent matters. However, it is worth noting that in

this aggressive type of competitive strategy, members of the organisation tend to have a higher perception of the level of competition and conflict between each other, which may lead to more intense conflicts between members of the organisation. This is why it is important for companies to use as little or as little competitive strategy as possible when dealing with organisational conflict.

3.3. Accommodating strategies

In organisations, there are also some members who do not like competition because of their personalities and have to maintain the working status and status quo among themselves for reasons of commiseration. In this case, someone is bound to sacrifice their own interests in order to satisfy another person's needs. The essence of the accommodation strategy is still to accomplish a currently unfinished goal or to temporarily mitigate the conflict. As the root cause of the conflict is not identified by the parties involved after it has occurred, both parties approach the problem in an emotional way. In this case, accommodation can only temporarily keep the conflict down and does not get to the root of the problem. Once one of the parties has become disgruntled, accommodation can be used again as a means of blackmailing the other party until a better solution is found. When faced with more serious conflicts, accommodation is not a viable strategy. The company should use accommodation or avoidance strategies depending on the situation when dealing with organisational conflict.

3.4 Cooperative strategies

Cooperation strategy is a win-win or multi-win strategy, in which members of the organisation can have a proper understanding of the differences or contradictions that exist between them, and the main goal is to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organisation, rather than to compete, to pull strings, and to look at favours as the main objective. In such cases, positive measures are used to resolve the conflict, so that the interests of each other can be maximised. For example, when the leader of an organisation wants to rectify a bad practice in the whole organisation, he can communicate with each member of the team and encourage them to take a cooperative attitude and put forward their suggestions and opinions, taking the overall interests of the team as a premise, and eventually synthesising their opinions to form a solution to the problem. Cooperation is a strategy that is often used in organisations.

3.5. Compromise strategy

Just like accommodation and avoidance strategies, compromise strategies are essentially a way of temporarily easing conflicts. At some point, individuals are likely to make concessions in order to maintain the current situation. Of course, this does not exclude situations where individuals make conditional compromises in the longer term in order to maximise their own interests. Compromise strategies can be very effective when the aspirations of two people are in agreement, because the two people's aspirations are the same and there is room for negotiation. However, because the conflicts and differences between the two people remain, both parties to the conflict will only satisfy their own immediate interests. A compromise strategy is one in which each member of a group takes a long-term view of the problem.

4. Conflict response measures

4.1. Strengthen inter-organizational effective communication

Most of the reasons for conflict in organisations are due to the misunderstanding of each other's meanings by both sides, so it is necessary to strengthen the communication between members of the organisation. The first step is to establish effective communication channels and carry out various cultural building activities in order to promote communication between old and new members, facilitate mutual understanding, exchange ideas, reduce friction and conflict between individuals in the organisation, reduce potential conflicts and create organisational harmony together. Thus, avoiding serious fundamental goal differences in the operation of the business organization, by ensuring that all members of the organization have the same goals and common interests, they can avoid getting in each other's way in their work, or even sabotaging and attacking each other in case of inconsistency, or attacking each other in case of inconsistency. Secondly, leaders in the organisation should pay attention to the psychological state of its members and actively communicate with them in order to reduce the possibility of organisational conflict, promote healthy competition and avoid the escalation of internal conflicts and contradictions between individuals or groups due to ineffective competition. Organisations should provide psychological counselling to help members better control their emotions, reduce member dissatisfaction, improve job satisfaction and build healthy and positive working relationships [4].

4.2. Strengthen managers' capacity to deal with organisational conflict

Managers face many organisational conflicts, and these conflicts are diverse. When contradictions arise, we should face them correctly and calmly instead of letting them go or suppressing them. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish the types of these contradictions, and then consider whether the contradictions need to be handled. After that, we should choose the correct way to deal with them and the common methods to solve contradictions include avoidance, mediation, coercion, compromise, etc. This requires managers to have strong theoretical knowledge and practical experience to adopt appropriate conflict resolution strategies based on the study and analysis of conflicts and depending on the nature and type of conflicts, to deal with these conflicts promptly, and to adhere to the principle of fairness and openness in the process and to publish the results of the handling. At the same time, managers need to help organisations develop conflict identification mechanisms to better manage conflict in the organisation, enabling the business to anticipate potential conflicts as they develop, determine how likely they are to occur, what type of conflict they are, whether they are destructive or constructive, what impact they will have, what the range of impact is, what methods are used to suppress destructive conflicts and constructive conflicts are used What methods are used to suppress destructive conflict and what methods are used to promote constructive conflict. The end result is a comprehensive plan for identifying and responding to conflict in the organisation so that the right action can be taken in time when conflict arises[5].

4.3. Protect legitimate conflicts and create positive conflicts.

One cannot simply try to eliminate conflict; organisations need to understand that there are positive and negative aspects to conflict and maintain appropriate conflict in order to develop a culture of criticism and self-criticism, continuous innovation and self-development. All organisations have conflict as a result of member differences, communication barriers and poor organisational design. There is no need to try to eliminate some minor conflicts, but rather to

identify why they exist and analyse their positive impact. Positive conflicts foster creativity among members of the organisation, generate more new suggestions, approaches and ideas, and help them to continually improve their position and better achieve organisational goals. Managers need to resolve these conflicts effectively. For example, constructive conflict can highlight not only the internal problems of the organization, but also the conflicts between the organization and the external environment, thus enabling the organization to identify potential problems outside the organization and take action to solve them and fill the gaps and shortcomings, thus promoting organizational development. In addition, although there is a degree of disagreement in constructive conflict, the members of the organization are united in their basic goals, and the conflict can be resolved without getting out of hand while maintaining common goals. It has the advantage of breaking the dull monotony of the organization. In the conflict process, each party expresses its viewpoint openly and uses facts to convince the other party, so that different views and opinions in the organization can be exchanged openly and fairly. In this way, problems such as blind obedience and complacency, which are detrimental to the survival, development and progress of the organization, can be avoided. In addition, through constructive conflict, the conflicting parties can improve themselves through open debate, creating a good competitive atmosphere and encouraging self-discipline and renewal.

4.4. Seeking third party help

Most organisational conflicts in the average business are resolved by the parties themselves through negotiation. In other words, two or more parties to an organisational conflict express their different views and opinions in a public forum by clearly stating their interests and objectives in order to find a solution to a common concern. However, this approach is often used by parties in conflict to intensify their own interests, and negotiations may deteriorate rather than succeed. If an organisational conflict cannot be resolved through multi-party negotiation, consideration should be given to enlisting the help of a third party with some authority to resolve the organisational conflict before the situation deteriorates and has a devastating effect on the development of the business. However, the manner in which third party assistance is sought will vary depending on the parties involved in the organisational conflict. If the organisational conflict is not too intense, but there is no consensus for a long time, the members of the organisation may seek the intervention and assistance of the head of the company or the head of the human resources department, as long as they are trusted by both parties and have some influence in the company. Of course, management may not be able to resolve the issue in an absolutely fair way, but the conflicting parties in the organisation will accept the decision because management is strong and authoritative. In addition, more serious organisational conflicts may arise. If an organisational conflict reaches a very serious situation and neither the members of the organisation nor the head of the business can coordinate a solution at this point, it is necessary to seek the help of an external authority. Most of the professional authorities mentioned here are legal bodies, such as the courts. Court decisions are usually impartial and have a certain degree of coercive power, and even if one of the parties does not agree, the court can impose a resolution of the conflict by requiring the parties to do so through a decision based on laws and regulations[6].

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