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Title of Thesis: “THE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN A BANKING ORGANIZATION”

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ABSTRACT

Constructive conflict management is a vital organizational process for achieving the objectives. Indian banking industry had been experiencing a number of unprecedented changes in view of the increasing competition from the entry of new players in the business. Banking organizations are constantly experiencing the pressure to develop and implement new products, policies and programmes for aligning them with national development plans. Thus, more than ever before, today’s managers are required to have the competencies for managing conflict and anger in an effective manner. Moreover, an important ingredient for the success of banks in this turbulent business environment is the guarantee of organizational behavior that makes the new vision and goals achievable. The present study, therefore aimed at identifying the factors affecting conflict management strategies of bank managers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The primary purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between various personal, personality and organizational aspects and the conflict management strategies as exhibited among managerial workforce of a leading public sector bank.

RESEARCH DESIGN: This research study used a quantitative, descriptive correlational approach to examine the degree of relationship between various personal, personality and organizational factors (predictor variable) and conflict management strategies (dependent variable) of employees from branches of three geographical zones of a leading public sector bank. The unit of analysis in the present study was the branches of the selected banking organization. The sample was of 159 middle level (managers/officers) employees from 50 randomly selected branches from 3 Zonal regions of the selected banking organization viz. Delhi, Karnal and Chandigarh. The survey questionnaire for data collection consisted of 169 questions in total, which was spread over six separate sections. Frequency distributions, descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlation, multiple regression analysis, one way ANOVA and independent sample t-test were used to analyze the data and test the various hypotheses using SPSS 17.0.

FINDINGS: The results of statistical analysis indicated various significant relationships between the study variables. Geographical zone of the branch was found to affect the preference for three of the five conflict management strategies i.e. Integrating, Obliging and Compromising strategies. Gender was also found to affect the preference for dominating, avoiding and compromising strategy but it does not have any effect on the preference for integrating and obliging strategy for managing conflicts. Males had larger scores on dominating strategy and smaller scores on avoiding and compromising strategies as compared to females. Age was found to be a significant predictor of two of the five conflict management strategies i.e. integrating and dominating strategy. Marital status and family type of the managers does not affect their conflict

management strategies.

Personality was found to be a significant predictor of conflict management strategies of managers. Integrating strategy for conflict management was positively predicted by the agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and extraversion dimensions of personality and negatively predicted by neuroticism. Obliging strategy of conflict management is positively predicted by only one dimension of personality i.e. agreeableness. Dominating strategy is negatively predicted by agreeableness and conscientiousness dimensions of personality. No relationship is found between dominating strategy and extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience dimensions of personality. Avoiding strategy is negatively predicted by only one dimension of personality i.e. extraversion. Compromising strategy is positively predicted by agreeableness and negatively predicted by neuroticism dimensions of personality. No relationship is found between compromising strategy and conscientiousness, extraversion and openness to experience dimensions of personality.

Emotional intelligence was also found to have a significant effect on the conflict management strategies of the managerial employees of the selected banking organization. Three of the five conflict management strategies i.e. integrating, obliging and compromising strategy are positively predicted by emotional intelligence. Organizational commitment and its three components are found to significantly affect the conflict management strategies of managerial employees of the selected banking organization. Integrating, compromising and obliging strategy for conflict management are positively predicted by organizational commitment. Organizational culture and its eight dimensions as measured by OCTAPACE are also found to be significant affect the conflict management strategies of the managers. Integrating strategy for conflict management is positively predicted by overall organizational culture along with its eight dimensions.

The findings of this study are significant because it used an interdisciplinary approach to test the hypothesis that conflict management behavior is a multivariate phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

Organizational conflict is always not considered to be negative since a moderate amount of conflict is vital to foster creativity and innovation. Thus, the biggest challenge for the organizational leaders is to nurture a set of managers who will be able to keep the conflict at the optimum level and manage conflicts by using constructive strategies like integrating strategy of conflict management. It is clear that a great deal of research has to be done to fully understand and disentangle the complex cobweb of conflict management. However, the present research study has definitely contributed to disentangle some of the strands of this cobweb.

A few **implications** of research findings are as follows:

1. The results can thus be used as a base for designing various HR policies related to recruitment, selection and training.
2. Training in conflict management might assist bank managers to get rid of aggression and tendency of dominating while they are learning how to use integrating strategy for managing conflicts.
3. Training professionals can predict the preferred conflict management strategies of the employees by analyzing the personality, emotional intelligence and organizational commitment of an employee and hence can analyze the potential areas for improvement.
4. Counseling programmes and sessions can be arranged for improving personality factors, emotional intelligence and organizational commitment on the basis of weak spots revealed by the studies.