Organisational Analysis – Conflicts In The Workplace

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Abstract-
The paper talks about Organisational Analysis and the conflicts in the workplace. Organizational analysis is a diagnostic process that helps to better understand the performance of an organisation and conflicts refer to the disagreements that exist between two or more groups and their members. The aim of this article is to review the different types of conflicts that arise in the organisations i.e. Intrapersonal, Intergroup, Interpersonal and Intergroup conflicts and how these can be resolved. Tajfel's social identity theory and Sherif's realistic conflict theory have been applied to review the same. The article concludes that interaction would be more successful when it is easier to get to know and become more respectful of the other group members and when the situation's social norms encourage equitable, fair treatment for all classes.

Keywords: *Organisational Analysis, Conflicts, Organisations, Social Identity Theory, Realistic Conflict Theory.*

I.   Introduction

Organizational analysis is a diagnostic process that helps to better understand the performance of an organisation. It can be undertaken after an initial capacity assessment to obtain deeper knowledge about the causes of organisational weaknesses and to identify emerging opportunities. (Herbel & Rocchigiani, 2013). Before coming to that it is important to know the meaning of organisations. Organisations are groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives. (North, 1990). It is beneficial to undertake an organizational analysis, as it allows management to identify areas of weakness and find approaches to eliminate the problems. Conflict and resolving the conflict are the two most significant roles. Conflict, in simple words refer to 'the disagreements that exist between two or more groups and their members', and in an organisational context it means the state of conflict or misunderstanding arising from real or presumed conflict between the members of the organization about needs, values, resources and relationships. Conflicts alleviate in the workplace due to individual and interpersonal factors. Individual related causes entail attitudes, beliefs, personality orientation and human-frailties. Conflict is a frequent occurrence in organizations, affecting a host of individual and organizational processes and outcomes. (Barki & Hartwick, 2004).

In today's contemporary world, the different types of conflicts which are identifiable are classified into four different types mainly- Intrapersonal, Intergroup, Interpersonal and Intragroup. This topic is explained through Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and Sheriff's Realistic conflict theory and how they can be reduced.

II.   Literature Review

Social identity theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggested that individuals experience collective identity based on their membership in a group, such as racial/ethnic and gender identities. It is based on the assumption that conflict between intergroups may not arise from interpersonal variables. The stereotyping is based on a natural cognitive process: the tendency to group items together. Thus we tend to exaggerate : the similarities of things in the same group (us) and the differences between groups (them). The central hypothesis of the social identity theory is that group members of an ingroup might try to find the negative aspects of an outgroup, thus enhancing their impression.

Prejudiced views between cultures may contribute to racism, as occurred in Germany with the Jews, and in the present time, the one taking place with the Uighur Muslims in China. Similarly, we categorize people in the same way. We see the group we belong to (the in group) as distinct from others (the out group), and members of the same group as being more indistinguishable than they are.

Social Identity Theory Stages-

To identify, an individual need not expend effort toward the group's goals; rather, an individual need only perceive him or herself as psychologically intertwined with the fate of the group. Behaviour and affect are viewed only as potential antecedents or consequences (Foote, 1951; Gould, 1975).

There are three mental processes involved in evaluating others as "us" or "them".

Social Categorization ⟶ **Social Identification** ⟶ **Social Comparison**

The first step is *categorization*, we categorize objects to recognize and classify certain objects. Categories are defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the members (Turner, 1985). We categorize individuals (including ourselves) in a very similar way, in order to explain the social environment, i.e. – Blacks, Whites, Christians, Muslims, Bus conductor etc. If we can assign people to a category then this tells us things about those people, we could not function normally. Likewise, we discover more about ourselves by understanding what groups we belong to. We define acceptable actions by relation to the group norms to which we belong, but this is only possible if you can say who belongs to your group. An individual can belong to many contrasting groups.

Imagine for a moment that two colleagues, Shahir and Zara, are talking at a table in their office break. At this point, we would probably not consider them to be acting as group members, but rather as two individuals. Shahir is expressing his opinions, and Zara is expressing hers. Imagine, however, that as the conversation continues, Zara brings up an issue related to women car drivers. It turns out that Shahir does not think that women should be car drivers and he notify Zara so. He argues that if women start driving and take up jobs related to men, who will take care of the households. Furthermore, he argues that women are getting too many breaks and getting hired in jobs of various definitions and that qualified men are the targets of discrimination. Zara feels quite the contrary—arguing that women have been the targets of sexism for many, many years and even now do not have the same access to high-paying jobs that men do.

We have now seen that social categorization occurs whenever we think about others in terms of their individual group memberships rather than on the basis of other, more personal information about the individual. Social categorization thus can have a variety of negative effects for the people who are the targets of these stereotypes.

In the second stage, *social identification*, we adopt the identity of the group that we have identified as belonging to. For example, if you have identified yourself as a student, you are likely to adopt a student's identity and start behaving in the way you assume students behave (and adhere to the norms of the group). Your affiliation with a group will have an emotional meaning, and your self-esteem will be linked to group membership. Social identification appears to derive from the venerable concept of group identification (Tolman, 1943).

The final stage is *social comparison*, Once we categorize ourselves as part of a group and identify with it, we tend to compare that group with other groups. To maintain the self-esteem our group needs to compare favourably with other groups. Comparison with other people play a significant role in social life, as they provide meaning and self-relevant knowledge. How people view their own circumstances, abilities, and behaviours varies according to the types of social comparisons they make (Festinger, 1954). This is critical to understanding prejudice, as once two groups identify themselves as rivals, they are forced to compete to maintain their self-esteem among members. Therefore, rivalry and animosity between groups is not only a matter of competing for resources (such as in Sherif's Robbers Cave) as employment but also the product of conflicting identities.

Realistic conflict theory (1954) is a conceptual theory focused on the premise that intergroup tensions will arise if social groups have to compete for scarce resources (e.g. food, land, jobs, wealth, power, natural resources) and that this competition will intensify hostility and other antagonistic behaviours that lead to conflicts such as rivalries and war. Sherif explained the theory through Robbers Cave Experiment which took place in 1954.

The participants in the study were twelve-year-old boys who thought that they were participating in a summer camp. The boys arrived at the camp in two different groups: they spent time with members of their own group for the first part of the research, without realizing there was the other group. The groups chose names (the Eagles and the Rattlers), and each group formed its own group hierarchies and norms. After a short period of time, the boys became aware that there was another group at the camp and who were talking negatively about them. The researchers began the next step of the study at this point: a friendly tournament between the classes, consisting of games such as baseball and tug of war for which the winners will earn prizes and a trophy.

After the eagles and Rattlers began competing in the tournament, the researchers found that the relationship between the two groups briskly became tense. The groups began to insult each other, and the conflict swiftly spiralled. The teams burned one another's group flags, and raided the cabin of the other group.

The researchers also found that the group tensions were evident in surveys distributed to the campers. The campers were asked to rate on positive and negative attributes of their own group and the other group, and the campers rated their own group more favourably than the rival group. During this time, they noticed a change within the groups: They became more cohesive.

To establish the factors that could reduce group conflict, the researchers first brought the campers together for some fun activities (such as having a meal or watching a movie together).

However, this didn't work to minimize any conflict; for example, meals together developed into food fights. Next, Sheriff and his colleagues tried having the two groups work on what psychologist call 'superordinate goals', goals which both groups had to work on to achieve. For example, the water supply of the camp was cut off and the Eagles and Rattlers collaborated to solve the problem. In another instance, the truck bringing food to the campers wouldn't work, so both group members pulled on a rope to pull the broken truck. These activities didn't instantly repair the relationship between the groups, but working on the shared goals reduced conflict. The groups stopped calling each other names, perceptions of the other group improved, and friendships started evolving with the members of the other group. By the end of camp, some of the campers requested that everyone (both groups), take the bus home together, and one group bought beverages on the ride home for everyone including the other group. According to Sherif, generally, different strategies to reduce tensions and conflicts between groups "acquire new significance and effectiveness when they become part and parcel of interaction processes between groups oriented toward superordinate goals which have real and compelling value for all groups concerned".(Sherif, 1958).

A group has to differentiate the work activities of its members in order to achieve its goals and maintain its norms. One or more members assume leadership positions, others carry out the group's major work, and yet others serve in supporting roles. This specialization of activities is commonly referred to as *role differentiation*. More specifically, a role in the work is an expected pattern of behaviour assigned or attributed to a specific position in the organisation. On behalf of the group it defines individual responsibilities. Work roles can be divided into three types according to the nature of the activities covering the role. (*I) Task-oriented roles*, these roles focus on task- related activities designed to achieve group performance goals. (*II) Relations-oriented* roles, these roles underline the group's further development, including building group cohesiveness and consensus, maintaining group harmony, looking after group member welfare, and so forth. (*III) Self-oriented roles,* these roles emphasize individuals specific needs and goals, often at the group 's expense.

Once these roles are allotted to everyone, there might be certain disagreements between the members of the groups, which can lead to conflicts. As mentioned before, there are four types of conflicts which are identifiable, and they are- Intrapersonal, Intragroup, Interpersonal, and Intergroup conflicts respectively. *Intrapersonal conflict* exists within an individual. It is a type of psychological conflict involving the thoughts, values , principles and emotions of the individual. Intrapersonal conflict can come in different forms, from simple mundane ones like deciding whether to go vegan for lunch or not to those that can affect major decisions like choosing a career path. *Intragroup conflicts* occur among the individuals within a team. Incompatibilities and misunderstandings among team members lead to conflicts within the group. This starts from interpersonal disagreements as members of the team have different personalities which can contribute to friction or discrepancies in views and ideas. For example, during a meeting, team members may consider the ideas offered by the one who presides to be incorrect due to their differences of opinion. *Interpersonal Conflict* implies a conflict between two individuals. This occurs since individuals have different opinions and views to some ideas. We have distinct traits leading to conflicting choices and views. Therefore, it is a natural phenomenon that can eventually help in personal growth or maintaining our relationships with others. And the last, *Intergroup conflict* takes place when a misinterpretation arises among various teams within an organization. For example, the sales department of an organization might come in conflict with the customer support department.

This is because these different groups have varied set of goals and interests. Besides that, competition often leads to conflict between classes. There are other factors which increase this type of conflict. Some of these factors may involve a competition in resources, or the limits set by a group to others which establish their own identity as a team.

To reduce conflicts, we can apply the contact hypothesis theory/ Intergroup Contact theory, which suggests that additional factors such as equal status, egalitarian norms, and cooperative independence are required in order to alter the cognitive representations of out-groups to reduce conflict.

The question which comes to our minds is how is it possible that it is an organisation which is a framework that defines how certain tasks are directed in order to achieve goals, and includes activities such as rules, roles and responsibilities. It depends on what all strategies we require to reduce any conflict.

Rules and Procedures, A common approach for management to handle intergroup relations is to develop rules and procedures governing the interactions between two or more departments or units. For example, if a certain section routinely fails to communicate with each other, leading to poor communication, the organisation can enforce a new policy requiring all groups to post certain types of information at regular intervals of time or to remind other departments heads of potential new activities or changes. By simply increasing communication flow, group coordination can be stepped up. *Exchange of members,* In some situations, it is advisable for the organisation to temporarily transfer a member from one group to another. Such exchanges provide an opportunity for the employee to better understand the issues of the other group and procedures. Upon, returning to his original group, the employee can share details about the other group. Consequently, the transferred employee often establishes stronger interpersonal relations with the other department , thereby enhancing communication and teamwork, in short it tells us how *decategorization* plays a significant role as it stresses on the plurality of an individual's identity. Decategorization is concerned with reducing categorization boundaries between groups (Brewer & Miller, 1984). Specifically, through repeated individualized interactions with outgroup members, it is expected that intergroup bias is reduced through two processes: (a) differentiation, whereby distinctions are made among outgroup members and (b) personalization, whereby outgroup members are viewed "in terms of their uniqueness and in relation to the self" (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002).

An important one is *task force,* wherein, individuals from different units are brought together to address a specific problem, usually in a short span of time. It is believed that each unit has skills to contribute, and that a stronger solution can be accomplished by integrating these efforts. For example , a company facing a significant financial cutback may create a task force comprised of representatives from around the organization to find ways to address the crisis. In psychological terms, this refers to *recategorization,* which involves the foundation of an inclusive membership which comprises of previously separate groups. The aim is to reduce or eliminate categorization, recategorization efforts have the purpose of creating a new, more inclusive, category in efforts to reduce bias. (Cunningham, 2004). This can result in the use of 'us' and 'we' and a common activity or a superordinate goal in which the groups come together to identify as one. *Decoupling,* includes separating two groups, physically or administratively in such a way as to meet the organization's necessary tasks while reducing the contact between the two groups. Hardware and software engineers will preferably work closely together, for example, on developing a new computer device. And these people often see challenges and solutions quite differently, which may lead to open animosity and uncooperative behaviour.

One solution would be to physically separate the two groups and then have a group (e.g., the hardware engineers) outlining product specifications. Software engineers might work more on their own to design applications that would meet these requirements. Clearly it will require some teamwork. Nonetheless, such an approach could maintain the services of two respected groups of engineers who see problems rather differently a wise high-tech company compromise strategy. Through fostering perceptions of shared identities, encouraging meaningful contact that defies group boundaries, and highlighting similarities on other dimensions unrelated to group distinctions, the ingroup and an outgroup can begin to see each other as more similar than different, thereby reducing negative intergroup actions and promoting positive ones (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell & Pomare, 1990).

In social identity theory, the common ingroup identity group model (1954) harnesses the dynamics of how we categorize ourselves into social groups and redirects it towards the eradication of intergroup bias with recategorization. Recategorization motivates the members of both groups to consider themselves as belonging to a common superordinate group. Williams (1947) proposed an initial formulation of contact theory, noting that contact would be more effective when relations between groups were characterized by equal status, same interests, cooperation and potential to develop more intimate friendships.

Causes/Experimental Conditions ⟶ Representational Mediators ⟶ Consequences

Intergroup interdependence can arise when there is a lack of cooperation, contact and more of competition. In order to engage a group, we need to acknowledge that it is necessary for each member to work towards a particular goal set by the organisation. Hence, recategorization can be utilized, as an identity of 'we' as generated within the group. Certain cognitive effects may contribute, such as better perceived group homogeneity and similarity to self, i.e., the degree to which one believes he or she is similar to another. For instance, when a task force was created by a company who were facing a setback to address the crisis and way to organise the structure. Interdependence determines in large part the degree of interrelationship that develops among two or more groups. High interdependence typically requires high intergroup interaction, whereas low

interdependence typically requires relatively low intergroup interaction. Another one could be *group differentiation,* it prevails when there is a contrast in the status, resources, values, physical similarity (i.e.- skin colour), linguistic representation and the use of inclusive/exclusive pronouns (example- we/they).

In an organisation it takes place when different departments, sections or branches establish their own organisational culture within the company's overall structure. For instance, the sales department consists of members from distinct ethnic backgrounds (Blacks, Latinos, Asians), and the accounting department of only whites. For a group to work, it is possible to submerge the two subgroups in one group recategorization (us+ them = 'we'). The consequence of this new salient group would give rise to better communication, more empathy, and as mentioned before, group homogeneity and similar identity. Stereotypes thus reduce the amount of information in the social environment, obviating the need for effortful processing of interpersonal information (Allport, 1954).

In organisational psychology, egalitarian social norms comprises triple contents: High level of fairness, empathy and collective conformity. Fairness means that people prefer equality and are willing to pay a price to achieve more unbiased outcomes. Empathy means people make agreements, they themselves are willing to accept and collective conformity implies that, in a given situation, people adhere to wildly shared norms of how one should behave in a given situation (Wang, Chen, Wang 2020). Within a group, when we see an absence in such type of norms, it leads to two types of identities, 'me' and 'you'. Therefore, to make the group efficient, cooperation is a major factor. Second, is self -disclosure, a process of communication whereby one person reveals information about themselves to another. The details may be descriptive or evaluative, and may include thoughts, feelings, ambitions, goals, fears and desires, as well as likes, dislikes. This task could bring up confidence among individuals and thus increase the productivity within the group.

III.   Conclusion
To conclude with, interaction would be more successful when it is easier to get to know and become more respectful of the other group members and when the situation's social norms encourage equitable, fair treatment for all classes. If, for example, the groups are treated unequally by a prejudiced teacher or leader who views the different groups differently, or if the groups are in competition rather than cooperation, there would be little benefit. Rather than perceiving conflict as a problem, it should be viewed as a chance for growth and an effective means of 'breaking the ice' among groups or individuals. However, when conflict begins to suppress or disrupt productivity and gives way to more conflicts, then conflict management is what is needed for problem resolution. Sometimes, people hold stereotypes and prejudices is because they perceive outgroup members as different from them. We may worry that our experiences with people from various ethnic groups will be unfavourable and that such anxieties may lead us to avoid engaging with people from those groups. Social norms have a strong effect and long-lasting changes in outgroup attitudes which can occur only if they are influenced by changes in social norms. In situations where they are viewed as the norm, prejudice and discrimination flourish, but perish when the current social norms do not allow it. And since social norms are so significant, individual actions may help build or reduce bias and discrimination.

IV.   Limitations
There are some limitations in organisational analysis like behavioural bias, i.e. A behavioural bias may be developed by individuals who lack system awareness, which causes them to establish a narrow point of view that emphasises employee satisfaction while overlooking the organisation's wider system in relation to all its stakeholders. Second, unethical manipulation of individuals, where a primary worry about organisational behaviour is that its expertise and strategies can be used both to unethically exploit individuals and to help them grow their potential. People who lack regard for human beings' fundamental integrity could acquire ideas of organisational action and use them for selfish ends. In the exploitation of people without concern for human welfare, they might use what they know about motivation or communication.

V.   Future Suggestions
A good way of reducing discrimination is to help people develop stronger ties with members of different groups. People would be more welcoming towards others if they see them in a similar light; As closer in identity, leading to interpersonal concern.
To take it forward, the future directions to organisational analysis is working in unity. The more that groups work together, the more there will be cooperation, contact and most importantly a boost in confidence. The organisational structure can become more rigid, and sectors can work in harmony with each other and study the effectiveness of conflict management methods and techniques in the organizations.

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