Functional and dysfunctional conflict

A. Positive or functional pattern of conflict

Functional/Positive conflict is constructive in nature. It produces new ideas, continuously solve problems, provides an opportunity for people and teams to expand their skills, and fosters creativity. Followings are the positive or functional pattern of conflict: <u>(employee of the month competition)</u>

1. Major stimulant for change: conflict focuses the problem that demand attention.

2. Conflict foster creativity and innovation: it prevent stagnation, it stimulates interest and curiosity. Conflict can help individuals to test their capacities to learn and develop.

3. Cohesion and satisfaction: intergroup conflict and competition drives groups closer together. Under conditions of mild intergroup conflict, group membership can be very satisfying to members.

4. A minimal level of conflict is optimal: conflict is necessary for the internal stability of organizations. The occasional burst out of intergroup conflict serves to balance power relationships between departments.

B. Negative or dysfunctional pattern of conflict

Dysfunctional/negative conflict is a type of conflict which reduce groups performance. This type of conflict can cause emotional harm, distress, damage to relationships, and create a power struggle. The followings are the Negative or dysfunctional pattern of conflict:

1. It creates stress in people: conflict has its side effect on the physical and mental health of the employees. Intense conflicts generate feelings of anxiety, frustration and hostility. A climate of mistrust and suspicion develops.

2. Diversion of the group's time and efforts: it is one of the most dangerous consequences of conflict. The effort is usually toward winning the conflict rather than toward achieving organizational goals. Parties focus on <u>their own narrow interests rather put above organizational interest</u>.

3. Instability: under intense conflicts, collaboration across individuals, groups, and departments decreases. Tension will continue to grow. It breaks the normal work of an organization.

4. Creation of distrust: conflict may create a climate of suspicion and distrust among the people in the organization.

5. Goal displacement: conflict may divert the attention of the organizational members from the organizational goals. They may waste their time and energy in the continuation of conflict rather than resolving it.

6. Impact on organizational health: conflicts may weaken the organization as a whole if the management is not able to handle them properly. If the management does not interfere in the earlier stage, unnecessary trouble might be invited at the later stage.

Organizational stress

Concept

- Stress is a set of physiological or psychological changes in an individual <u>reacting</u> to certain changes in the environment.

- It refers to body's psychological, physiological and emotional response to any demand that is perceived as <u>threatening</u> to person's wellbeing.

- When you feel stress you feel worried, tensed, tired, frightened, depressed, anxious and anger.

- Causes of stress are large work load, long working hours, fewer resources, less job security etc.

- So, stress is an unavoidable fact in human life. It is not simple anxiety.

- Stress may have positive or negative effect.

- Stress person cannot make good decision and cannot concentrate in job.

- The stress that is the direct outcomes of organizational job is called organizational job stress.

Causes of stress

Causes of organizational stress:

1) Individual   2) Group   3) Organizational   4) Extra-organizational

1) Individual level stressors:

a. Role conflict and ambiguity: individual employees have multiple roles to play both within and outside the organization. Differences in expectations lead to role ambiguity. It cause stress to the employee.

b. Personality traits (type A and type B): personality traits differ from person to person. There are 2 types of personality A and B. It is evident from research that Type A individuals experience considerable stress. See book pg. 161 for personality types.

c. Life and career change: there are two types of life changes- <u>slow and sudden</u>. Sudden changes have a dramatic effect on people. The same also applies to career changes. If the career changes are frequent and sudden it can be stressed situation.

2) Group level stressors:

a. Lack of group cohesiveness (group unity): group cohesiveness provides satisfaction to the group members. Lack of this creates conflict which serves stress for the employees.

b. Lack of social support: in time of happiness and sorrows, we all look for support form society. Lack of this we feel stress.

c. Inter-group conflict: it define as conflict the occur between two or more group of people including families, schools, religious group etc. It is a type of dysfunctional conflicts so it create stress.

3) Organizational level stressors: book pg. 162 see table 6.12

a. Organizational policies & strategies

b. Organizational structure & design

c. Organizational processes

d. Working conditions.

4) Extra-organizational (environmental) stressors

a) Social/ technological change

b) Globalization

c) Economic and financial conditions

d) The family

e) Residential/community

f) Relocation (transfer/moving)

Managing stress

1) **Organizational stress management approach:**

a) <u>Goal setting</u>: for the better performance organization set specific, challenging and attainable goals to the employees. Goal setting technique can reduce employee frustration, role ambiguity, stress as well as increase the motivation.

b) <u>Job enlargement</u>: it can bring increased motivation and reducing stress among employees.

c) Job enrichment:

d) <u>Define employee role</u>: it means to reduce the stress caused by role ambiguity related stress. Manager should tell subordinate clearly what is expected of them and what their responsibilities are.

e) <u>Provide a supportive, team-oriented work environment</u>: some research show that having supportive colleagues, people who can help deal with stressful work situations. Team can help reduce worker's stress significantly.

f) <u>Improve organizational communication</u>: much of the stress at work is derived from difficulties in interpersonal relations with supervisors and coworkers. The better the communication among workers, the lower the stress created because of misunderstanding.

g) <u>Sabbaticals</u>: offering short term vacation allow employees to travel, relax or pursue personal projects that consume time beyond the normal vacation weeks.

h) <u>Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)</u>: these plans provide employees with assistance for various personal problems like substance abuse, carrier planning, financial and legal problems

i) <u>Wellness programs</u> (workshops on reduce stress & maintain mental & physical health)

j) Increase employee training & orientation programs

2. **Individual stress management approach**:

a) Management of time: work overload is a common source of stress. Avoiding overload is made possible by taking control over how you spend your time. For effective time management practice we can follow these

- Prioritize the activities: distinguish between urgent and important

- Allocate time realistically: how much time needs to be spent on each task

- Take control of time: make a 'to do' list and carefully keep track of what has to be accomplished.

b) Eat a healthy diet

c) Physical exercise/physical fitness

d) Relaxation and meditation

e) Social support network: friends, family and work colleagues provide a source to talk about problem and share them.

f) Get a good sleep at night

g) Avoid inappropriate self talk

h) Keep busy

i) Adopting balance life style: it refers to a life style which gives equal importance of job, home and personal activities. (work life balance). We need to have proper rest, food, exercise, entertainment etc. All those activities help to reduce unnecessary job stress.