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# Introduction

This report analyses two videos of Dr Anthony Fauci where he answers questions asked to him in US Senate hearings. The report presents issues related to conflict management that are visible in the videos. Recently, the entire world witnessed spread of COVID-19. Various policymakers around the world came up with different measures to tackle the issue. There were also conflicts due to difference of opinions among policymakers. This report analyses one such difference of opinion among Dr Anthony Fauci, director- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and two republican politicians. In the first video, Dr Fauci answers questions of Senator Dr Rand Paul. In the second video, he answers questions of U.S. Representative James Jordan at the U.S. house of representatives.

The report identifies causes of conflict and discusses techniques to manage conflicts. After that, it presents a background of all three key speakers and their respective targeted audience. It is followed by a section on analysis of effectiveness, emotional aspects of the conflict, and steps that were taken to lighten the tension. It is followed by a conclusion that highlights conflict management lessons.

# Causes of Conflict

Political parties are often at crossroads. They are seen opposing policies made by opposition. It is part of the job. However, the conflict among political parties is a classic example of Halo and Horn effect (Nicolau et al., 2020). A political leader always finds policies enacted by their party as favourable policies and policies made by their adversaries as vilifying policies. Dr Fauci has been marked as a democrat by then American president Donald Trump (Behrmann, 2020). Therefore, it is natural that members of Republican party to feel horn effect towards him. This effect can influence decisions and might escalate tension when a person engages with someone, they have a feeling of horn effect.

According to Cashmore et al. (2011), conflict is a safety issue. Conflicts arise when people feel threatened. Therefore, it is important to manage safety to manage conflicts. Ways to bring back safety when a person feels threatened may include –

1. Apologising – According to Kim and Song (2021), it is important to reinstate trust whenever safety is threatened. According to Kim et al. (2004), an effective strategy to reinstate trust is apologising. Conversations are like negotiations. There is a ZOPA range. In conversations, ZOPA range is the range of arguments the parties in a conversation may be willing to pass without their sense of safety getting threated. However, at times, this ZOPA range in not known or well established. Therefore, one party might put an argument on the table that is outside the range of arguments that the other party can take without feeling threatened. Therefore, they may respond to it in an adversarial manner. Just as in negotiations, when one identifies that they have put an offer that is outside the range of the other parties, they try to counter their offer to fall within the range. Similarly, when one realises that they have made a comment that is outside the safety range of other parties, the best course of action is to apologise to maintain safety.
2. Use of contrasting statements – Another known technique to manage conflicts is use of contrasting statements. Contrasting statements have two components. The first component tries to reinstate the sense of safety. Meanwhile, the second component clarifies objectives of the conversation. For example, telling the other person that they are smart and you highly admire their presence of mind and wit followed by redeclaration of the purpose like, ‘We are here to make a deal and there are certain facts and evidence that should be looked in to keep the deal fair.

# Background

1. Dr Anthony Fauci – Dr Fauci is director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases of United States. He has held the post since 1984. He is an immunologist and a physician-scientist from training. He has been serving American public health sector for last 50 years. He has worked closely with three presidents and advised them over policies related to infectious diseases. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, Dr Fauci became a central figure in USA for policymaking related to control of the spread. He advised former president Donald Trump as part of white house’s coronavirus task team. He continued the job under Joe Biden’s administration. He has often been criticized by Republican leaders and party supporters for his stands related to COVID-19.
2. Dr Rand Paul – Dr Paul is a physician and an American politician. Currently, he is serving as a senator from Kentucky since 2011. He is affiliated with the republican party. Dr Paul is a celebrated figure in the republican party. He was amongst other republican candidates who made a presidential bid in 2016. Recently, Dr Paul came into limelight due to his opinions related to COVID-19. He has advocated that natural immunity is similar or even better a better solution for abridging the spread of COVID-19 virus.
3. Jim Jordan is an American politician who serves in the US house of representatives. He is affiliated with republican party. He also came under limelight after being an open critique of policies of Dr Fauci. He has often expressed that Dr Fauci’s policies are ineffective.

The target audience of both Jim Jordan and Dr Pail Ryan are people with conservative thoughts. Both Dr Paul and representative Jim Jordan are from republican party. Therefore On the other hand, Dr Fauci’s target audience is scientific communality and policy makers.

# Analysis

**Video – 1**

Dr Fauci was more effective in getting his key message across. Dr Paul asked Dr Fauci a question regarding significance of masks after developing natural or vaccine-based immunity. Dr Fauci clearly answered the question citing a study done in South Africa. Although, Dr Fauci provided scientific evidence, Dr Paul kept asking the same question persistently. After Dr Fauci presented a well-structured answer, Dr Paul became adversarial at 2:26. It seems like he did not have anything to add or counter. Therefore, he went ahead and gave an answer to his own question that was directly opposite of the one given by Dr Fauci. It seems like, that Dr Paul was not looking for an answer in first place. The question he asked to Dr Fauci was indented to corner Dr Fauci. Dr Paul became so defensive that instead of basing his next argument on facts, he based it on what he thought (2:34). At 3:54, tension increased when Dr Paul made a statement calling Dr Fauci walking with a mask on his face as a ‘theatre’. It was an attempt at vilifying Dr Fauci. Dr Paul projected as the people of USA are a victim of Dr Fauci’s incompetence and he is a hero who is trying to save them. Senator Murray who is affiliated with democratic party sensed the increasing tension and intervened to ensure that the matter does not escalate any further. It was a preventive measure. She re-stated the question and broke the direct communication that was going between Dr Paul and Dr Fauci. This way she restored safety.

**Video – 2**

Jim Jordan was more effective in getting his key message across. The hearing started with representative Jim Jordan demanding a quantitative answer on how long it would take to curb down COVID-19 restrictions. He introduced emotional elements in his opening remarks. Therefore, the discussion seemed to be emotional from the side of Jim Jordan since the beginning. However, Dr Fauci maintained his calm and he chose to only reply to scientific queries that were part of monologue of Jim Jordan. Jim Jordan became adversarial when Dr Fauci pointed out that he was ranting at 2:24. Meanwhile when Dr Fauci was providing an answer, Jim Jordan intervened and asked another loaded question. He seemed to be trying to escalate conflict. Chairman sensed the increasing tension and intervened at 5:29 by informing the representative that his time has expired. Representative demanded answer to the last loaded question that he had put forward in the house. Chairman intervened and mediated by letting the representative know that his question was already answered. Dr Fauci did not seem to be creating stories about Jim. However, Jim resort to few personal comments related to Dr Fauci which might not be true. For example, he commented that Dr Fauci seems to have answer about everything. These attempts only escalated the situation. The way Jim Jordan framed questions, can be explained using horns effect (Nicolau et al., 2020). He started the discussion with an existing bias, and he was not looking for any actual answers.

# Conclusion

In the two videos, both the senator and the representative were not looking for answers from Dr Fauci. They are elected representatives and therefore, their targeted audience were their voters. They made statements that would have gained them the most traction from their voters. On the other hand, Dr Fauci is not an elected representative, therefore, his agenda seemed concisely to present scientific evidence before the senate and the house of representatives to get his message through and defend policies enacted by CDC. In the senate hearing video, he seemed to be effective as he answered a question that he was expecting that Dr Fauci will not be able to answer. Meanwhile, in the second video, Dr Fauci was not able to be as effective as representative Jim Jordan put some loaded questions. However, those questions did not have much weight. But they were rightly delivered for the targeted populace. In both videos, a third person (another senator in the senate hearing and chairman in the house of representatives) of the house tried to diffuse tension.

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