Exploring Framework on Synchronising Behavioural Values to Achieve Functional Outcome in a Conflicting Environment

B. Prabu Christopher

VIT Business School, VIT University, Katpadi, 632007 Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract: Clear understanding on achieving functional outcome in a conflict process by means of value synchronisation in organisational context is still questioned by many academicians. If this has to be cleared, conflict has to be discussed in different stages starting from Antecedents to the conflicting environment, types of conflict, reaction to the conflict situation with special reference to different behaviours and the respective outcomes. By reviewing the literature, it has been found that each and every aspects have been clearly identified and discussed both in national and international context but failed to have clear explanations on the implicit link that is existing between each stages in terms of value synchronisation which is being highly considered as instrumental for functional or dysfunctional outcome. This review study tried to explain the link between each stages in a conflict process and proposed a framework to arrive functional outcome during conflicting environment. It has been identified with relevant literature that if an individual carries the values of low context, universalism, specific space and neutral, there are high chances for an individual to achieve functional outcome and thereby tries to fill aforesaid gap in literature review. By having this framework, further empirical studies can be made using the afore said behavioural variables. Findings of those studies can be used for framing behavioural training methodology to equip an individual to achieve functional outcome during conflicting situation.

Key words: Conflict process, values, functional outcome, framework, India

INTRODUCTION

It is observed by many scholars the means of arriving functional outcome during conflicting situation is highly being determined by individual values. But these research works seems to have lacuna in linking the stages of conflicting situation by means of of values in each stages. To fill this gap, this study has been segregated into two main parts. In the first part it tries to give broader understanding of not only the meaning of conflict but also the types and stages discussed for the past decades through intensive review of literature. Having these literatures as a lead, second part of this study tries to link all the stages of conflicting process through values which has been tried in past studies in miniature level. Further, it tries to justify why those values have been considered as an important variable through sufficient literature and gives a broader framework which gives the necessary value types that one has to have for not only the ability to view conflict mere as an environment rather negative but also to convert those conflicting situation into positive.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Understanding the real meaning and stages of conflict from literature review: Gone are the days where conflict has been considered as contrary to cooperation and always tend to see it as negative or dysfunctional (Pondy, 1966) from an organisation perspective. The reason behind this negativity has been latter on explained by giving definition for conflict, stating it as a process that has its beginning point when one individual or group has perceived the opposition party has affected negatively (Thomas, 1992). This kind of negative perception has been pondered in terms of incompatibilities under several dimensions like Decision making (March and Simon, 1959; Boulding, 1963,), goals (Schmidt and Kochan, 1972) conditions (Kolb and Putnam, 1992). Further argued that this incompatibilities has the potential to avoid conflicting situations to safeguard the performance. Also, it is argued that avoiding has the possibilities of having tensions, collapse in relationship, creativity, less cohesiveness in group (Wall and Nolan, 1986; Saavedra et al., 1993; Jehn, 1995).

Shift has happened in seeing conflict as a negative to either as a positive or inevitable. Certain times cognitive conflict may help individual or group to develop creativity which may improve performance at all levels as it may lead to think more on task rather relationship which is considered as affective (Simons and Peterson, 2000; Harat, 2002). This literature reviews on definitions of conflicts on two dimension gives clear insight that conflicts has its own continuum, starting from conditions
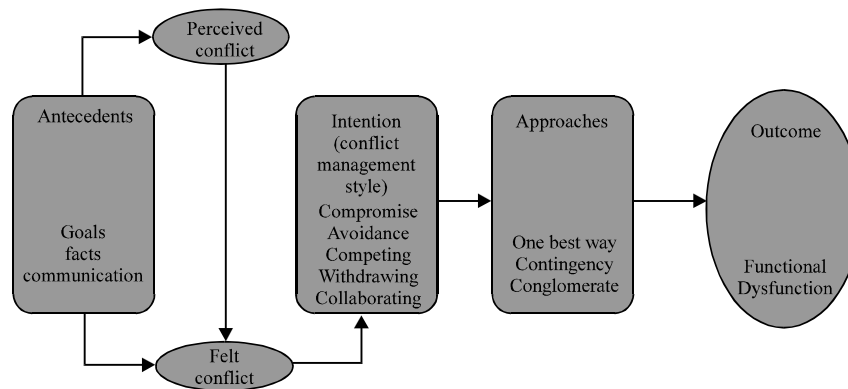
Fig. 1: Conflict stages (review of literature)

that are instrumental for conflict to the level of outcome of conflicting situation having conflict management behaviour as the midpoint. In conflict process its better to have clarity with the help of literature review on the stages of conflict process (Robbins and Judge, 2009) and the factors involved in each and every stages. Ideally speaking as and when conflict is coming under discussion from organisational perspective three factors have to be taken as vital, goals, facts and communication. Goal at first is set for an organisation which in turn segregated in to department and individual goals. When this goals became incompatible (Schmidt and Kochan, 1972) then there conflict arises. Same way, when the facts are not presented as what it is or manipulated there arises conflict. All these conflict has the path from cognitive to affective (Amason and Sapienz, 1997; Vliert *et al.*, 1999; Browaeys and Price, 2008). To be precise both the facts and goals are said to be an antecedent to a conflict environment when they are not properly communicated. When this miscommunication happens actually perceived conflict turn to be a affective.

The next stage of this affective conflict is the intention whether to cope up with the environment or to completely withdrawn from the conflict environment. This particular stage has been referred as conflict management behaviour under different nomenclature like emotional appeal, authoritative command, empathic understanding, manipulation, personal rejection, non negotiation (Robbins and Manasins, 1974; Fitzpatrik and winke, 1979). Basically, this strategies have been derived from the concepts developed by Follett (1940), Speakman and Ryals (2010). Later on, by Rahim (1983) this conflict management styles has been condensed to four types, integrating, obliging, dominating and avoiding based on two concerns, concern for self and concern for others. The same conflicting styles have been reframed as Avoiding, accommodating, competing collaborating and compromising based on the level on of assertiveness and cooperativeness tendencies (Thomas, 1992) (Fig. 1).

The choice of the afore said styles is then discussed by many experts to explore the outcome of the conflict. Choice of the styles has been classified in the literature as One best way approach, contingency approach and conglomerated approach. Each approach has its own argument on best strategies. One best way approach suggests collaborative as the best style among all other styles, whereas contingency approach advocates different styles according to changing environment but the third one, conglomerated approach differs from above two as it considers conflict as an several episodes happens simultaneously. At the same time, one conflict process will have all the chances to be a starting point of another conflict, termed as "Sequential Complexity "The main difference with this approach is the time gap between each conflict episodes (Sternberg and Soriano, 1984; Thomas, 1992; Nicotera, 1993; Vliert *et al.*, 1999; Euwema *et al.*, 2003). Hence, the choice of the conflict management styles determines the strategy which in turn determine whether outcome of conflict is functional or dysfunctional. How to make a conflict into functional conflict starting from the antecedent is what yet to be pondered.

Framework to understand the means of achieving functional outcome in a conflicting situation-with special reference to values: Cultural values has its influence on one's personality and it is said to be the best indicator while predicting one's personality. People are expected with cultural competency to be a part and parcel of globalisation (Butcher *et al.*, 1998; Paunonen *et al.*, 1996; Wu *et al.*, 2011; Marrewijk, 2010; Walle, 2010). Taking conflicts and its management from organisational perspective, though several studies have been made to understand the impact of choices on performance (Gladstein 1984; Wall and Nolan, 1986; Bourgeois, 1985; Eisenhardt, 1990). Research on understanding the

influences of values on conflict process as such starting from antecedent to the outcome of conflict (Fig. 1) is yet to be discussed and identified. Functional outcome and dysfunctional outcome related to performance from the effect of emotions, choice of the conflict management strategy has been discussed (Galbraith, 1973; Tushman and Nadler, 1978; Nair, 2008; Mundate *et al.*,1999). Also, the effect of Conflict and its management style on other organisational behaviour has also been discussed widely such as Negotiation Buying behvior (Tadepalli, 1992), global coordination (Weiss *et al.*, 2001). But how one can achieve functional outcome using suitable behaviour in conflict situation needs to be analyzed.

Hence, understanding the influence of right values throughout the process of conflict to enhance the performance is the need of the hour. For which understanding the values which are vital in influencing the entire conflict is seems to be reasonable. Values are one of the manifestation of the culture as (Geertz, 1973) Fisher and Lovell (2003) said it is the instrumental in guiding one action which later on deeply understood by means of values (Richard, 2005). Since, each and every Society has its own values, it is mandatory for us to understand the types of values which are existing across countries, so that if we face interpersonal conflict of any type, it will be easy for the one to resolve it productively. Thanks to scholars clyde Kluckhohn (1961) Halls (1959, 1992), Hofstede (2001), Triandis *et al.* (1985), Trompennars and Truner (1997) for their contributions in identifying the value and its differences and similarities among nations both in Conceptual and Empirical manner. They have used the dimension like time, environment, individual, space, rules, emotions, achievement tendency to identify the differences.

If we take time, Blake and Mouton (1970) discussed time, from the angle of past, present and future where countries differ in concentrating time, for an instance Indians where considered as fatalistic people and they always relate theory of Karma where past and future are interrelated whereas as anglo clusters they always tend to be futuristic people. But the same time dimension has been discussed as monchronic and polychronic or sequential vs synchronus by Trompennar and Truner (1997) and Halls (1959, 1992) where countries differs in terms of handling job whether they carrying one activity at a time or multiple task at a time and from which their bhaviour has been discussed further. For an instance, the people falls under Monochronic are tend to be low context and never prefer to give more importance to relationship. That leads to have clear cut private and public space and tend to be achievers by realising their own capability. Never rely on their background influence,

popularly termed as ascriptive. Regarding environment whether individual are controlling the environment or they submitting themselves to the environment is where societies differs if we take India, Indian always prefer to respect nature where as westerners prefer to control the environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By having the above literature review, it can be hypothesised that those who are low context can be universalistic and tend to control the environment and give less importance to collectivistic behaviours as they tend to be neutral. This is highly evidence from the Trompennars findings with regard to Anglo and Asian clusters (Table 1 and 2).

Since, goals, facts and communication are said to be an antecedents for a conflicting situation. How to interpret these three factors by having values so that conflicting environment can have better performance became mandatory (Fig. 2). Goal fixing also varies across cultures as per the application of content theory of motivation, for an instance, it is said that giving importance to the needs as per the Maslow (1962)'s Heirarchy theory various across culture. As per Sinha (1984) research work, it is said that Indian are having middle three level needs as interelated and interdependent, especially the need for affiliation and security, where both hygiene and intrinsic factors are mingled in Indian context. Whereas Sinha and Kanungo (1997) economically developed nations are giving more importance to intrinsic factors where achievement orientation speaks at the large.

Table 1: Asian cluster depicted from Trompenaars' cultural groups

Relationship	Japan	China	Indonesia	Hong kong	Singapore
Individualism					
Communitarianism	×	×	×	×	×
Specific relationship	×	×	×	×	×
Diffuse relationship	×	×	×	×	×
Universalism	×	×	×	×	×
Particularism	×	×	×	×	×
Neutral relationship	×		×	×	×
Emotional relationship		×			
Acheivement					
Ascription	×	×	×	×	×

Table 2: Cultural clusters depicted from trompennars cultural dimensions

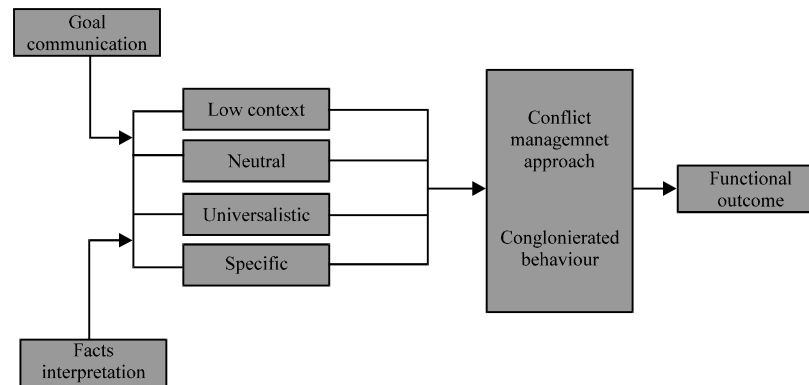| Relationship	United States	United Kingdom
Individualism	×	×
Communitarianism		
Specific relationship	×	×
Diffuse relationship		
Universalism	×	×
Particularism		
Neutral relationship		
Emotional relationship	×	×
Acheivement	×	
Ascription		×

Fig. 2: Proposed model for functional outcome in a conflict process

Same has been further proved by application of Lock and Latham theory where it has been proved that countries having individualistic in nature always prefer Individual goals than collectivistic goals (Ma, 2007; Madhavan, 2011). As far as facts and interpretations are concerned, it has been empirically evident that those cultures who are aggressive in nature are involving in better negotiations as they are able to produce their facts as what they intend to do, especially this has been discussed in terms of gender among Asian, American and Chinese culture (Adler, 1993; Buttery and Leung, 1998; Volkeman and Fluery, 2002; Mubarik *et al.*, 2015). Taking high context vs low context theory from Halls, one can be contended that people who are high context tend to be collectivistic and always prefer to have collectivistic goal where managers are responsible for fixing goals. Here, one may posit that higher the level of High context and collectivistic higher the possibility of low goal clarity and higher the level of incompatibility. The reason behind this incompatibility may arise due to the possibilities of failure in understanding the fact in low context way. This may lead to larger gap in perceived and felt conflict. This situation may lead to real conflicting environment. Here the application of conglomerated behaviour may be suitable as this behavioural approach suggested that all the conflict management styles is needed simultaneously. Unless, one is able to have optimum level of individualist and collectivistic behaviour having conglomerate approach in handling conflicting behaviour may became difficult. In order to overcome this difficulties, from the review of literature, it is understood that if goals are communicated in low context to have clarity and in neutral way forgetting the differences in terms of power distance and masculinity, facts can be communicated in universalistic terms avoiding manipulations and can be more specific (Fig. 2). If this can be achieved one can have conglomerate way of approaching conflict management

style where there is chance of applying five conflict management styles simultaneously. This will reduce the relationship influence in a negative way and enhance task related conflict by maintaining the relationship as such which may enhance the creativity and may yield functional outcome.

CONCLUSION

This review of literature has few limitations as it has not showed the citation indices for each variables identified and for the articles as such. Nevertheless this review has covered the literatures in a holistic perspective to understand the conflict process along with values that influences the entire process. Through this understanding of the existing literature review, it has filled up the gap that is existing in the literature and helped practitioners and academician in understanding the ways of arriving better performance in conflicting environment by applying suitable individual values in terms of fixing goals and interpreting the facts by means of proper communication with special reference to low context. It has its own scope of developing a training module which needs an vast empirical survey having variables discussed.

REFERENCES

Adler, N.J., 1993. Asian women in management. Int. Stud. Manag. Organiz., 23: 3-17.

Amason, A.C. and H.J. Sapienza, 1997. The effects of top management team size and interaction norms on cognitive and affective conflict. J. Manag., 23: 495-516.

Blake, R.R. and J.S. Mouton, 1970. The fifth achievement. J. Appl. Behav. Sci., 6: 413-426.

Boulding, K.E., 1962. Conflict and Defense: A General Theory. Vol. 3024, Harper & Row, New York, USA., Pages: 349.

Bourgeois, L.J., 1985. Strategic goals perceived uncertainty and economic performance in volatile environments. Acad. Manag. J., 28: 548-573.

Browaeys, M.J. and R. Price, 2008. Understanding Cross Cultural Management. Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, USA., ISBN: 9780273703365, Pages: 363.

Butcher, J.N., J. Lim and E. Nezami, 1998. Objective study of abnormal personality in cross-cultural settings the minnesota multiphasic personality inventory. J. Cross Cultural Psychol., 29: 189-211.

Buttery, E.A. and T.K.P. Leung, 1998. The difference between Chinese and Western negotiations. Eur. J. Market., 32: 374-389.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and C.B. Schoonhoven, 1990. Organizational growth: Linking founding team strategy environment and growth among US semiconductor ventures 1978-1988. Administrative Sci. Q., 35: 504-529.

Euwema, M.C., De Vliert, E.V. and A.B. Bakker, 2003. Substantive and relational effectiveness of organizational conflict behavior. Intl. J. Conflict Manag., 14: 119-139.

Fisher, C. and A. Lovell, 2003. Business Ethics and Values, Individual Corporate and International Perspectives. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, USA., ISBN: 9780273651949, Pages: 332.

Fitzpatrick, M.A. and J. Winke, 1979. You always hurt the one you love: Strategies and tactics in interpersonal conflict. Commun. Q., 27: 3-11.

Follett, M.P., 1940. Constructive Conflict. In: Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett. Metcalf, H.C. and L. Urwick (Eds.). Harper & Row, New York, USA., ISBN: 978-0-415-27985-7, pp: 1-22.

Galbraith, J.R., 1973. Designing Complex Organizations. Addison-Wesley, Boston, MA., USA., Pages: 150.

Geertz, C., 1973. The Interpretation of Cultures. Basic Books, New York, USA., ISBN-13: 9780465097197, Pages: 470.

Gladstein, D.L., 1984. Groups in context: A model of task group effectiveness. Admin. Sci. Quart., 29: 499-517.

Hall, E.T., 1959. The Silent Language. Henry Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York.

Hall, T.E., 1992. The Hidden Dimension. Anchor Books, Tehran, Iran.

Hardt, S.S., M. Jochims and D. Frey, 2002. Productive conflict in group decision making: Genuine and contrived dissent as strategies to counteract biased information seeking. Organizational Behav. Hum. Decis. Processes, 88: 563-586.

Jehn, K.A., 1995. A multimethod examination of the benefits and detriments of intragroup conflict. Administrative Sci. Q., 40: 256-282.

Kluckhohn, F.R. and F.L. Strodtbeck, 1961. Variations in Value Orientations. Row Peterson and Company, Evanston, IL., Pages: 450.

Kolb, D.M. and L.L. Putnam, 1992. The multiple faces of conflict in organizations. J. Organiz. Behav., 13: 311-324.

Ma, Z., 2007. Chinese conflict management styles and negotiation behaviours an empirical test. Int. J. Cross Cultural Manag., 7: 101-119.

Madhavan, S., 2011. Cross Cultural Management-Concepts and Cases. Oxford University Press, UK., ISBN: 9780198066293, Pages: 452.

March, J.G. and H.A Simon, 1958. Organizations Administrative Science Quarterly. 2nd Edn., Wiley, Hoboken, New Jersey, Pages: 262.

Marrewijk, A.V., 2010. European developments in business anthropology. Intl. J. Bus. Anthropol., 1: 26-44.

Maslow, A.H., 1962. Toward a Psychology of Being. Van Nostrand, Princeton, NJ., USA., Pages: 240.

Mubarik, S., M. Usman and V.G.R.C. Devadason, 2015. Human capital and growth does gender matter. Int. Bus. Manag., 9: 547-553.

Munduate, L., J. Ganaza, J.M. Peiro and M. Euwema, 1999. Patterns of styles in conflict management and effectiveness. Intl. J. Conflict Manag., 10: 5-24.

Nair, N., 2008. Towards understanding the role of emotions in conflict: A review and future directions. Intl. J. Conflict Manag., 19: 359-381.

Nicotera, A.M., 1993. Beyond two dimensions a grounded theory model of conflict-handling behavior. Manag. Commun. Q., 6: 282-306.

Paunonen, S.V., M. Keinonen, J. Trzebinski, F. Forsterling and N. Grishenkoroze et al., 1996. The structure of personality in six cultures. J. Cross Cultural Psychol., 27: 339-353.

Pondy, L.R., 1966. A systems theory of organizational conflict. Acad. Manag. J., 9: 246-256.

Rahim, M.A., 1983. A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. Acad. Manage. J., 26: 368-376.

Richard, T. and R.P. Lamn, 2005. Sociology. 5th Edn., Mc Grawhill, New York, USA.,.

Robbins, S. and P. Manasins, 1974. Organizational Conflict. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, USA., ISBN: 9780135504918, Pages: 156.

Robbins, S.P. and T.A. Judge, 2009. Organizational Behavior. 12th Edn., Salemba Four Publisher, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Saavedra, R., P.C. Earley and L. van Dyne, 1993. Complex interdependence in task-performing groups. J. Applied Psychol., 78: 61-72.

Schmidt, S.M. and T.A. Kochan, 1972. Conflict: Toward conceptual clarity. Administrative Sci. Q., 17: 359-370.

Simons, T.L. and R.S. Peterson, 2000. Task conflict and relationship conflict in top management teams: The pivotal role of intragroup trust. J. Applied Psychol., 85: 102-111.

Sinha, J.B. and R.N. Kanungo, 1997. Context sensitivity and balancing in Indian organizational behaviour. Intl. J. Psychol., 32: 93-105.

Sinha, J.B., 1984. A model of effective leadership styles in India. Intl. Stud. Manag. Organiz., 14: 86-98.

Speakman, J. and L. Ryals, 2010. A re-evaluation of conflict theory for the management of multiple, simultaneous conflict episodes. Intl. J. Conflict Manag., 21: 186-201.

Sternberg, R.J. and L.J. Soriano, 1984. Styles of conflict resolution. J. Personality Soc. Psychol., 47: 115-126.

Tadepalli, R., 1992. Conflict management in organizational buying behavior: The role of coalitions. Intl. J. Conflict Manag., 3: 5-30.

Thomas, K.W., 1992. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update. J. Organiz. Behav., 13: 265-274.

Triandis, H.C., K. Leung, M.J. Villareal and F.I. Clack, 1985. Allocentric versus idiocentric tendencies: Convergent and discriminant validation. J. Res. Personality, 19: 395-415.

Trompennars, F. and C.H. Truner, 1997. Riding the Waves of Culture Understanding Diversity in Global Business. 2nd End., Mc Graw Hill, New York, USA., ISBN: 9780786311255, Pages: 274.

Tushman, M.L. and D.A. Nadler, 1978.. Information processing as an integrating concept in organizational design. Acad. Manage. Rev., 3: 613-624.

Vliert, E.V.D., A. Nauta, E. Giebels and O. Janssen, 1999. Constructive conflict at work. J. Organiz. Behav., 20: 475-491.

Volkema, R.J. and M.T.L. Fleury, 2002. Alternative negotiating conditions and the choice of negotiation tactics: A cross-cultural comparison. J. Bus. Ethics, 36: 381-398.

Wall, V.D. and L.L. Nolan, 1986. Perceptions of inequity satisfaction and conflict in task-oriented groups. Hum. Relat., 39: 1033-1051.

Walle, A., 2010. Indigenous people and human resource management. Int. J. Bus. Anthropol., 1: 95-114.

Weiss, M.M.M., A.P. Massey and M. Song, 2001. Getting it together: Temporal coordination and conflict management in global virtual teams. Acad. Manag. J., 44: 1251-1262.

Wu, T.F., M.U. Batmunkh and A.S. Lai, 2011. Cross-cultural perspectives on personality and values: A case study of mongolian vs. Taiwanese doctors and nurses. Intl. J. Bus. Anthropol., 2: 68-92.