Conflict Management in Organizations

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Abstract:
What matters the most for the achievement of success of the firm is the implementation of the strategy. But, there exist cases when the strategy cannot be applied. This happens for different reasons, among which is the conflict. An organization is successful when it applies its strategy in favorable and unfavorable conditions as well as in cases when it faces the conflicts that happen inside it. When the conflict appears, we should be aware of the methods, the way of access and conflict management in general. In the abovementioned points, the conflict management in firm appears in its clearest way. This study deals mainly with the conflict as a negative/positive phenomenon that appears inside a firm, types of conflicts, the way of access to it, causes that impact the achievement of the conflict and the ways of managing it, from the manager, as the person with the biggest responsibility and the main roles inside the firm.
Keywords: Conflict, Management, Group, Objectives, Strategy

Defining the problem

Conflict is a dispute between two parties, where one party causes the damage, while the other party is harmed. This phenomenon can be presented to individuals, within groups that function in the organization and within the organization as a whole. This problem arises due to various reasons such as lack of experience, inability to avoid conflict, and the tendency to dominate each of the group members, and then the organization. The nature of human beings is prone to avoid negative experiences as much as possible. Therefore, there is always a tendency to prevent conflicts before they occur. When the conflict occurs, the manager's responsibility for managing it is inevitable. But conflict can be both negative and positive. On the contrary, a conflict can affect creative ideas and solutions to the challenges of organization faces (Bass,2007, p.1). According to Manxhari (2013) conflict can be defined as a process where a party perceives that the other party is harmed or is trying to hurt something that matters to them (p.338). As Aritzeta et al. (2005) stressed that depending on the role of the team member, change also approaches to conflict management (p.159). Also, the skills for escaping the debate among members are a crucial aspect. According to Runde (2007), "[t]he skills that the leader should have in trying to escape the harsh debate among the members are:

• ability to stay calm,

• the ability to criticize ideas, not people,

• to listen to others,

• make efforts to understand all sides of the case, and

• Encourage civilization and justice." (p.131)

Study Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to study conflict, and its management within an organization since many managers in different organizations spend a lot of time trying to firstly prevent conflict, then trying to manage it better, rather than spending the time to increase the organization's profit. The ways of approaching conflict make the process of solution and management much easier. Therefore, with the help of a questionnaire, it was asked by the organization's representatives to answer how they understand conflict, what forms are presented, in what period of time, which forms of access are more reasonable, which causes affect more, which form of management can be more effective, etc.

Methodology

This study is largely based on literature review, including relevant online articles and books that cover the field of conflict management in the organization. Additionally, a questionnaire was carried out locally, with a total of 15 organizations mainly of service and merchant character. Representatives of these organizations, regardless of

their work positions, expressed their willingness to cooperate in order to achieve the results of this questionnaire.

The study is not experimental. The data obtained from the books and articles are analyzed and selected for treatment. Also, there is a link among hypotheses and theories to make the message of the topic clearer. The information provided in the form of the result is analyzed and described in accordance with the theoretical part of the paper. Correspondingly, the attempt is to go a step further in regards to the information about the conflict in the organization.

In a graphical presentation, the used methodology in this study would look like this:

Research Question => Theoretical Framework => Methodology compilation => Analysis (Research) => Conclusion

1. Approach to Conflict

Conflict management models have often linked to a dual interest model shared in self-interest and interest in others. Further, different approaches to conflict management are based on these two motives; some focus more on self-interest. From these motives, five main conflict management models are derived:
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- *Domination* – great self-interest and low regard for others,
- *Courtesy* – low self-interest and great interest towards others,
- *Avoiding* – low self-interest and interest for others,
- *Integration* – great self-interest and interest of others,
- *Agreement* – an average interest in yourself and others.

According to H. Desivilya, members of the group, choose more passive forms of the conflict management approach. Passive approach models account for courtesy and avoidance, while others account for active forms. From another perspective, conflict resolution can be divided into collaborative/ non-cooperative and persistent/unsustainable. From this division, there are 5 ways of access to conflict management:

Competition - represents the desire of one to achieve goals from the other. This dominance is otherwise known as victory-loss orientation. Compared to the other party, using any power to win, this style is based on a good position. Some authors call this style as the style of competition because in any way you should win in comparison to the other party, by imposing a solution for which you think it is right. To compete for means fighting for your rights, defending a position that you think is correct or simply trying to win.

The competitive style is applied like this:
- *When you think the agreement is possible and the situation in which you are in is very important to you.*
- *When others are very aggressive and use improper tactics, and in this way, you want to protect yourself and your interests.*
- *When you want to win the others.*
- *When the prompt reaction is needed, and you know exactly what to do.*
- *When an unacceptable decision brought by the other party may be unwanted and cost you dearly.*

Accommodation – presents an image of competition, giving it entirely to someone else's interest without making any effort in achieving its goals. This is a reconciliation tactic. It is a modest style where you do not try to protect your thoughts at all costs. In order to convince the other person that you are interested in maintaining your good relations, accommodation can take the form of charity. As a symbol or example of the style of adaptation is the chameleon, because it changes its color when it confronts other colors in the environment.

The style of accommodation is used:
- *When interest is small and when the consequences are not so great, especially for you.*
- *When maintaining relationships is very important to you.*
- *When you think that you are not right.*
- *When you are unsure of your information.*
- *When you want to enable others to learn from their mistakes.*

Sharing – represents an approach between domination and reconciliation, where both sides give and gain something in the form of compromise. Usually, the style of compromise is used when it is important to satisfy some of our interests, by fulfilling the interests of the other side as well. People who compromise think "something is better than nothing."

The compromising style is applied in this way:

➢ *When the parties have the same power towards the case in question.*
➢ *When we are limited in time and resources.*
➢ *When the goals of the parties are mutually important.*
➢ *When previous attempts have failed, and the resulting conclusions have not yielded results.*
➢ *When we need a temporary solution for any complex problem.*

Cooperation- represents an approach to solving the problem that requires the integration of the interests of both sides in order to satisfy both parties. In this approach, the goal is to have a winning-winning relationship. Cooperation is an attempt to work with the other party to find a solution that satisfies the interests of both parties. It involves the fundamental interests of both parties to find an alternative that meets the interests of both parties. In addition to this, cooperation can take the form of an agreement to share one another's knowledge, in order to find a creative solution to the problem in question. This is to say that this form of access encourages members to express their views openly and not to avoid the conflict that may result.

The cooperation style is applied:

➢ *When the problem is very important, and the need for its solution is great.*
➢ *When the pooling of resources of different groups is needed to solve common problems.*
➢ *When a high degree of understanding and engagement is needed.*
➢ *When the parties have a good relationship for a long time.*
➢ *When the parties are open to respecting the ideas of others.*

Avoiding- represents the difference between the interests of both parties, neglecting the interests of one of the parties. The style of conflict avoidance is used when you do not have to be involved in a conflict. Avoiding can be taken as a diplomatic form of postponing an issue up to a more suitable time or withdrawing from a threatening situation. However, there are also individuals who in every possible way tend to avoid participating in the conflict, choosing to agree with the decisions that are taken and are against the achieved results.

The avoiding style is applied:

➢ *When the importance of the problem is not significant for you.*
➢ *When you have bigger problems to be solved that attract your attention more.*
➢ *When the relationship is not important.*
➢ *When others can deal with the problem without your participation.*
➢ *When you think you are in a position where you can lose more.*

In approaching the conflict, the members of the group play an important role, for whose influence the following issues are important:

1. The configuration of the group,
2. Self-efficacy, and
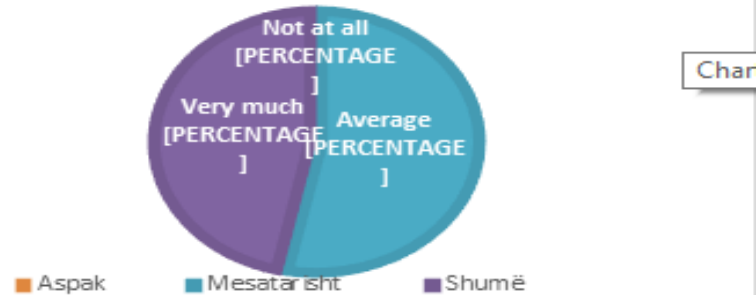3. The culture of conflict." (Kutllovci,2014, p.136)

Data Analysis

The concretization of these data has been attempted to be understood through the help of the questionnaire implemented locally, where managers or employees of various organizations, based on practice, have responded to questions regarding conflict, the types that are manifested within the organization, the ways of access, and the forms of management.

Organizations whose representatives replied to the questionnaire are mainly traded, and service organizations, with an average number of 10-49 employees and are cooperative.
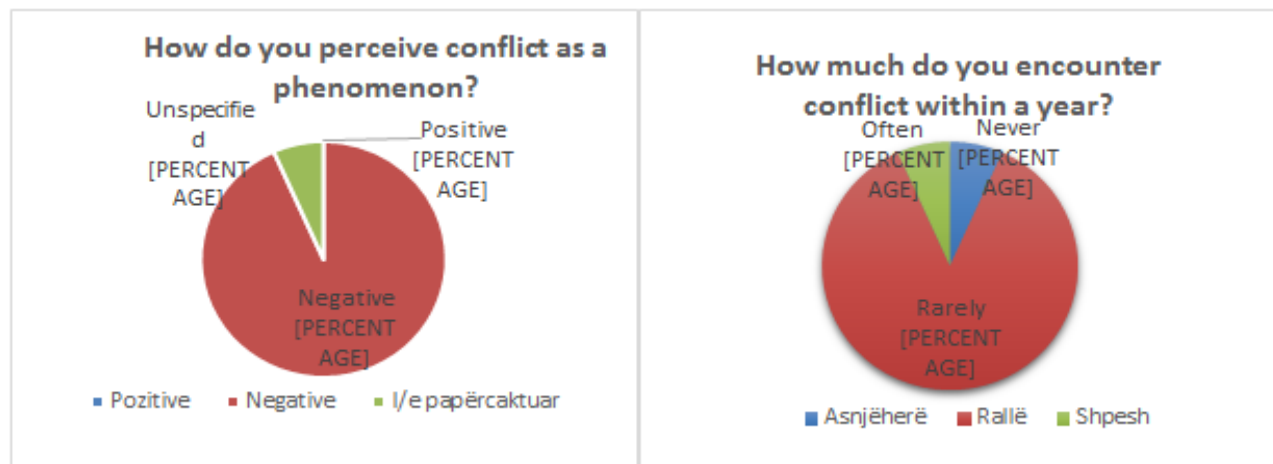
In a graphical presentation, the answers to how cooperative workers are within the organization, look like this:

HOW COOPERATIVE ARE THE EMPLOYEES IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Not at all [PERCENTAGE]

Very much [PERCENTAGE]

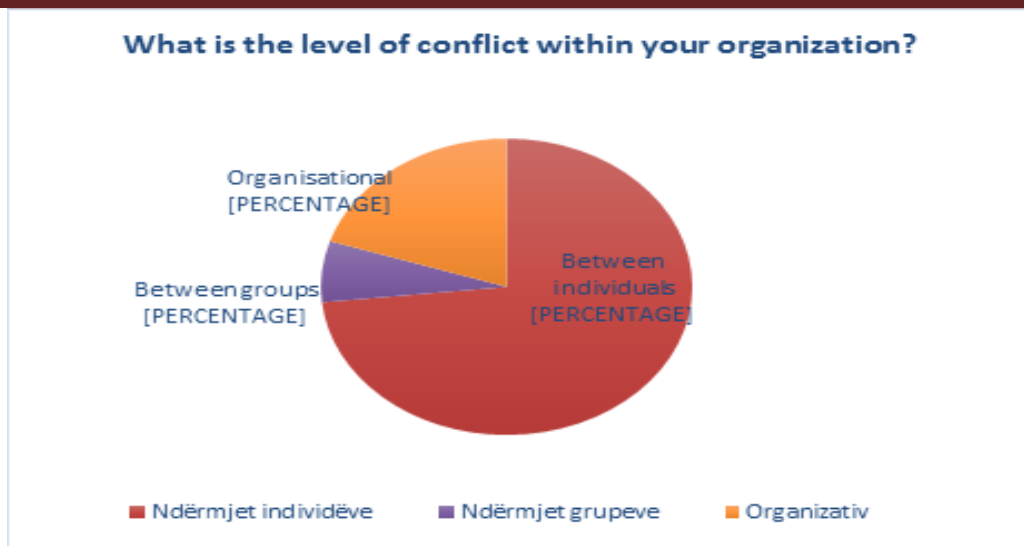Average [PERCENTAGE]

Char

■ Aspak　■ Mesatarisht　■ Shumë

Out of the three possible options, the two responses are possible. However, the organizations' representatives rely more on the average level of cooperation than the assurance that workers are cooperative. It can be clearly seen that although in a small number of possibilities, it is still possible for each member of the organization to place personal interest before group ones, which can easily result in conflict. On the positive aspect, the fact that there is a willingness to cooperate with a given organization is good.
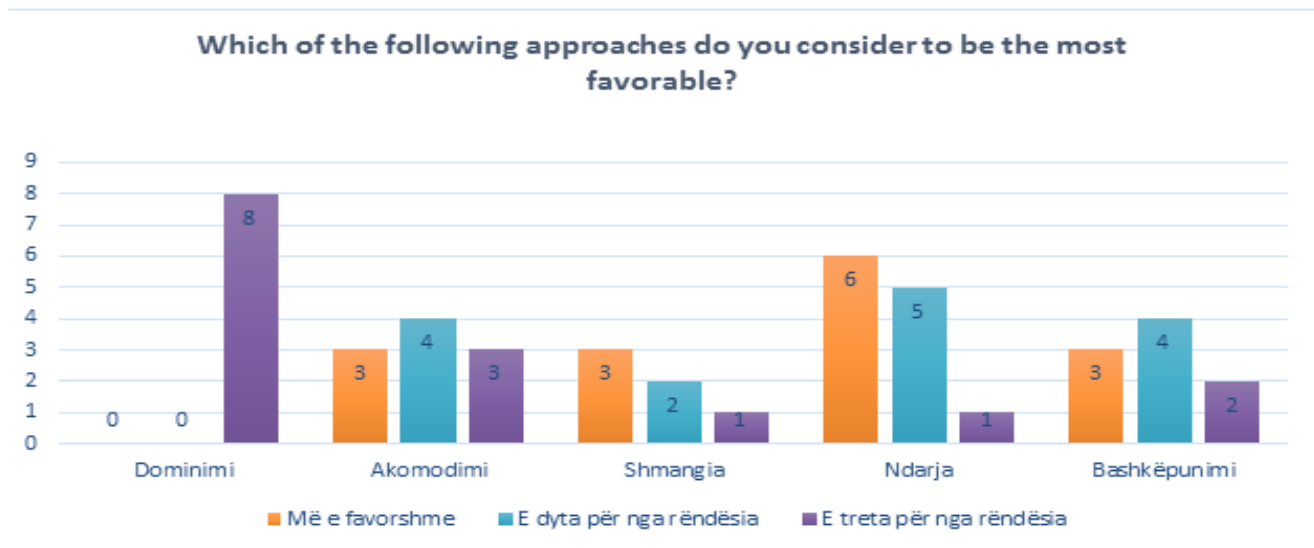
As for the question how they perceive conflict at the moment they hear about it as a phenomenon, no one has answered positively. So, in practice, there is a general awareness of stereotypical perception that conflict is always negative. But the answers are different when it comes to the issue of how often organizations face conflict.

How do you perceive conflict as a phenomenon?

Unspecified [PERCENTAGE]

Positive [PERCENTAGE]

Negative [PERCENTAGE]

■ Pozitive　■ Negative　■ I/e papërcaktuar

How much do you encounter conflict within a year?

Often [PERCENTAGE]　Never [PERCENTAGE]

Rarely [PERCENTAGE]

■ Asnjëherë　■ Rallë　■ Shpesh

Further, the questions are more concretized, and direct questions are raised about the levels, approaches, causes, and forms of conflict management. There are three main levels at which the conflict is manifested. According to the organizations that have participated in the questionnaire, the conflict takes place in all of them though not with the same intensity.

What is the level of conflict within your organization?

Organisational [PERCENTAGE]

Between groups [PERCENTAGE]

Between individuals [PERCENTAGE]

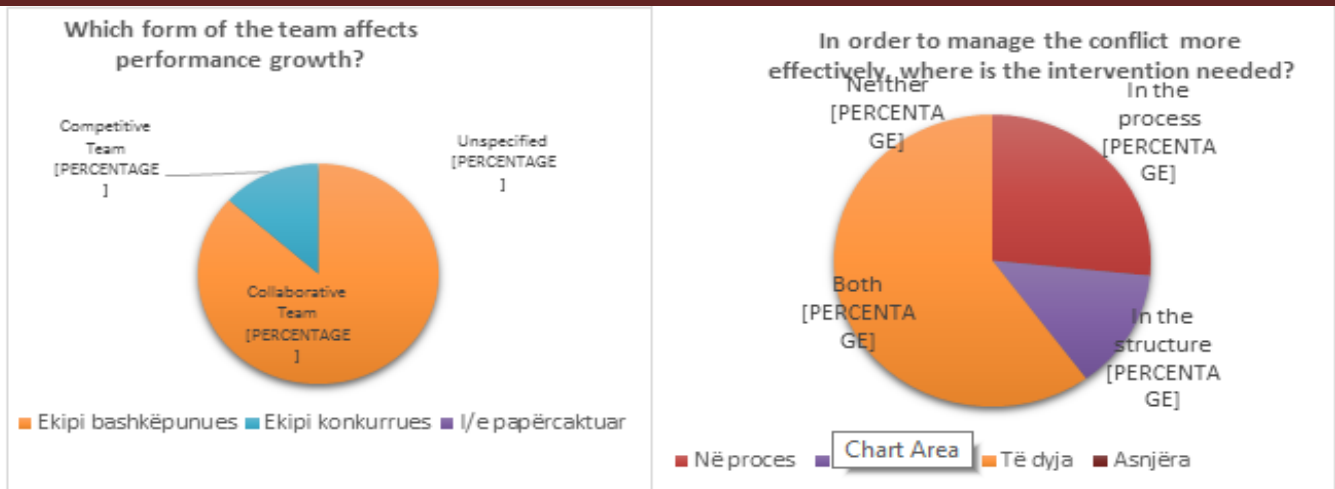■ Ndërmjet individëve ■ Ndërmjet grupeve ■ Organizativ

The division is considered as the most favorable form of access, which is manifested with great interest to both oneself and others, whereas domination is considered less favorable, which is manifested with great interest to oneself and very small to others.

Which of the following approaches do you consider to be the most favorable?

	Dominimi	Akomodimi	Shmangia	Ndarja	Bashkëpunimi
Më e favorshme	0	3	3	6	3
E dyta për nga rëndësia	0	4	2	5	4
E treta për nga rëndësia	8	3	1	1	2

■ Më e favorshme ■ E dyta për nga rëndësia ■ E treta për nga rëndësia

Domination/ Accommodation/ Avoiding/ Sharing/ Cooperation
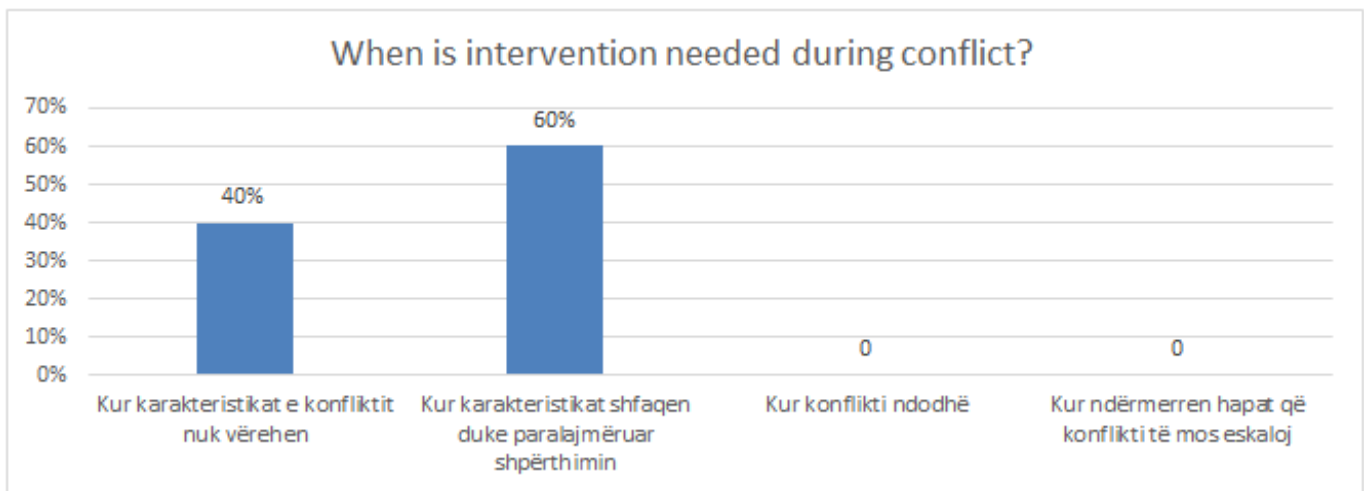
More favorable   The second most important   The third most important

A convincing majority have believed that the collaborative team is the type of team that enhances the organization's performance. The rest believe that it is the competitive team that gives this impact. As for the question of where the intervention should take place after the conflict occurs, in the process or in the structure, most of the organizations' representatives believe that both require intervention.

Which form of the team affects performance growth?

Competitive Team [PERCENTAGE]

Unspecified [PERCENTAGE]

Collaborative Team [PERCENTAGE]

■ Ekipi bashkëpunues ■ Ekipi konkurrues ■ I/e papërcaktuar

In order to manage the conflict more effectively, where is the intervention needed?

Neither [PERCENTAGE]

In the process [PERCENTAGE]

Both [PERCENTAGE]

In the structure [PERCENTAGE]

Chart Area

■ Në proces ■ Në strukturë ■ Të dyja ■ Asnjëra

Collaborative Team Competitive team In the process In the structure Both Neither

The abovementioned phases of conflict play an important role because conflict is often prevented due to the great importance of details that may result in conflict, but in general, it is necessary to intervene when the conflict occurs.

When is intervention needed during conflict?

- Kur karakteristikat e konfliktit nuk vërehen — 40%
- Kur karakteristikat shfaqen duke paralajmëruar shpërthimin — 60%
- Kur konflikti ndodhë — 0
- Kur ndërmerren hapat që konflikti të mos eskaloj — 0

 When the characteristics of conflict are unnoticeable

 When the characteristics appear by warning the explosion

When the conflict takes place

When measures are taken to make sure that the conflict does not escalate

Regarding conflict management forms, most agree that organizational justice followed by negotiation within the organization is important. While the profile of conflict dynamics and Vaaland's model is considered as a less favorable form.
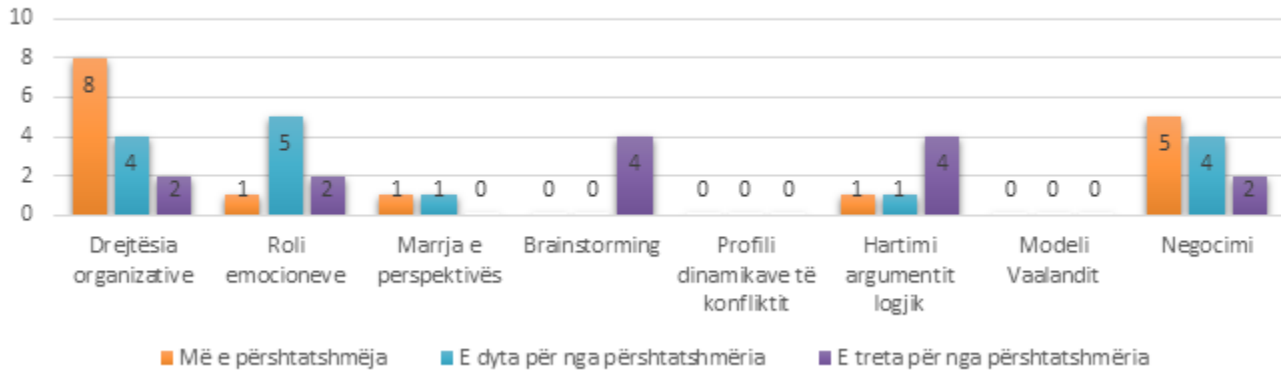
Organizational justice / The role of emotions/ Perspective / Brainstorming / The types of conflict dynamics/ Drawing up the logical argument/ Valaand's model/ Negotiation

According to Karabakkal (2016), organizational justice is defined as" "employment conditions that guide individuals to believe that they are treated fairly or unfairly within the organization" (p.8). In conclusion, respondents were asked questions regarding structural and personal causes, asking them to evaluate their impact and to evaluate what tools of managing the conflict is change necessary. Also, it was also required to assess how each of the conflict management forms affects the relevant organization. In each case, different answers were encountered.

Regarding the structural causes, 20% of the responses have been estimated to mostly affect the relationship of authority and status variability, while about 40% of respondents have responded to conflict management in their organization about how the structural cause has the least impact of the uncertainty of jurisdictions that follow with 33% of the specialization. Due to personal reasons, there is a greater unity, where 33% think that the value and ethics affect most as well as they affect the communication barriers. The personal reasons that do not pose a risk at all are considered personality and perception, with 0% chance of influence on conflict creation.

About 40% of people think that changes in human resources, personnel choices, resource allocation and employee behavior are most needed, whereas only a few think that the changes should take place in the hierarchy, a delegation of authority or de-institutionalization.

The variety of management forms is unified to a large number of similar thoughts that organizational justice affects the performance of the group. Additionally, 66.7% of people believe that open discussions among members increase potential options for creative solutions. However, no one sees the presence of a third party to resolve the conflict as indispensable, just as he or she do not consider it necessary to set the assessment criterion that links the conflict to the effects that affect relationships within the organization.

So, *according to these answers, the conflict is perceived as a negative issue with which Gjilan's organizations seldom face, but when it happens, it happens between individuals. As a more favorable form of access is separation, whereas intervention is needed both in structure and in the process. As the most appropriate time of intervention is considered the time when the conflict occurs when an escalation is announced. The main causes due to which conflict results are authority relationships, status variability, value and ethics, and barriers to communication. At the moment of confrontation and of taking conflict management measures, the organizational justice gives the greatest impact.*

Conclusion

According to some studies, regarding the conflict causes and why it develops, the conflict arises due to various reasons. Also, the results of the questionnaire show that the conflict is not merely caused by just one reason, rather than a variety of reasons that affect the appearance and development of the conflict. During its development, the conflict may escalate, and this often occurs due to the involved parties' influence on the emotional state. Prior to this, it is up to the manager to react and try to take advantage of the conflict. Conflicts occur when individuals and groups consider their objective to be too important and exclusive to others. (Kume,2010, p.285) Therefore, when conflict occurs, we need to use conflict approaches, in order to approach and manage the conflict. Regarding the forms of access, conflict access approach has positive forms of access, mainly of low self-interest and high interest to others, or of high interest to both parties. After the access, we reach the main part of the conflict, where we confront with conflict and need to manage it. The management process is not a simple process, rather than a process that needs to undergo some steps. Firstly, the problem should be diagnosed, then the intervention (in structure or process) should be done. In the case of intervention, the confrontation with the conflict occurs, and after the intervention, we understand the positive or negative effect that conflict gives in that case. In addition to this process, organizational justice, the role of emotions, the taking of perspective, brainstorming or "brain shake," the profile of conflict dynamics, the compilation of the logical argument, the Vaaland improvement model, and negotiation are of great importance in conflict management.

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