## The Macrotheme Review

A multidisciplinary journal of global macro trends

# Conflict Management Styles and Values of Managers in Selected Filipino- owned Small Scale Business in the United Arab Emirates

Perfecto G. Aquino, Jr.

American University in the Emirates, United Arab Emirates

### **Abstract**

This study determines the conflict management styles and values of supervisors and managers in selected Filipino owned -small scale businesses in United Arab Emirates. The researcher chooses 120 respondents who participated in the survey questionnaire. The respondents are 20 supervisors and 100 employees from among reputable Filipino restaurants and saloons all over Dubai, UAE .The researcher used the percentage analysis and ranking to assess the responses of the respondents. The study concluded that supervisors and managers of small business should be done in order to prevent and avoid serious problems like accidents, staff tardiness and even resignations of employees before the expiration of their contract which affect the supposed smooth flow of operations of the restaurants and saloons as covered in this study. Furthermore, Management conflicts should be learn by every supervisor and manager in order to insure the workers' productivity and increase their level of motivation all the time. Restaurant and saloon managers and supervisors, like other human organizations, are prone to one or other type of conflict. Various conflict management strategies are adopted for handling conflict; the most important among these are, mediation, negotiation, avoidance, collaborating etc. Conflict is not the same as discomfort. The conflict is not the problem – it is when conflict is poorly managed that is the problem.

Keywords: conflict management, conflict management styles, conflict management strategies, values

## 1. Introduction

Concerns about the ability to manage service business like saloons, laundry shops ,groceries and restaurants are common among practicing managers and supervisors. Employees in most shops do not even finish their three years contract with their scary experience with their managers but once the managers have built an effective management system that works for their employees, their staff can begin to feel a bit more comfortable with their own management style. It is easy to look at other managers and try to imitate their styles of service management. Management styles usually are rooted from the values being imbibed by managers from their education, family background and even from their peers and friends. Unless conflicts between the staff and the manager can be successfully managed, they will certainly result in negative outcomes for the customers and for the staff themselves. The conflict management styles of the employees should be recognized in detail in order to attain positive outcomes in regard to the conflict management

styles. This process will not happen overnight of course, nor will it happen in a year or two. It takes a long time experimenting with different situations as they will uneventually pop up. In order to start thinking about your role as a manager, it is worthwhile your time to identify the concerns about shops management and discipline. Think about your values and your personality. Which aspects of your personality and which values do you think will help you become a good business manager? Which ones might interfere? Another good way to analyze your concerns about managing a small-scale business is to build your own management profile and thus your management styles which will set and evolve into the cultural patterns and standard in the organizations. Misconceptions however, do lie in each of these styles. Managers just dominate, which is descriptive of the authoritative style has been equalled with effective service management. Depending however on how you rank your personal characteristics and values as a manager, you might be pleasantly surprised at your obvious need to perhaps connect to all your staff, which isn't always affirmed by the authoritative approach and style of running a business. The main object of this research is to find out the common conflict and issues faced by both the managers and their staff and eventually fine the solutions on how their differences and their conflict can be solved. Arriving at the best remedies and solutions to their conflict will even hasten both parties to achieve organizational effectiveness and goals.

## 2. Literature Review

Since conflict is seemingly unavoidable, particularly in a business setting, it is obviously necessary for administrators/managers to be able to recognize conflict, to view its constructive as well as destructive potential, to learn how to manage conflict, and to apply conflict management strategies in a practical way. Conflict theory is significant to the role of the administrator, but it emanates primarily from fields such as business, sociology, and psychology, and not from communication or even education. Conflict is difficult to define, or rather it is difficult to come to a consensus concerning the definition of this term. Coser (2007, p. 8) says that conflict is "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals." Deutsch (2003) states that conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. An action which is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures, or in some way makes it less likely or less effective (p. 156).

Schmidt and Kochan (2002) define conflict by saying that a perceived opportunity exists for interfering with the other's goal attainment. Finally, Hocker and Wilmot (2005, p. 23) define conflict (from a communication perspective) as "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals." Obviously, there are many definitions of conflict. The sheer variety of definitions may make an analysis of conflict management episodes confusing. Therefore, in chapters four and five, Hocker, and Wilmot's (2005) definition is utilized because it is communication-based and also thorough.

Perhaps definitions of conflict vary so much because attitudes toward conflict and images of conflict's role also vary widely. Hocker and Wilmot (2005) asked people to respond to the word "conflict" and were given the following responses: destruction, anger, disagreement, hostility, war, anxiety, tension, alienation, violence, competition, threat, heartache, pain, and hopelessness. Obviously, these people viewed conflict as a concept which evoked negative images. Until the

early 2000s, even scholars primarily portrayed conflict as an undesirable process to be avoided (Simons, 2002). Hocker and Wilmot (2005) offer a list of negative assumptions about conflict that are widely held:

- 1) Harmony is normal and conflict is abnormal.
- 2) Conflicts and disagreements are the same phenomena.
- 3) Conflict is pathological.
- 4) Conflict should be reduced or avoided, never escalated.
- 5) Conflict can be the result of clashes of personality.

Emotions are different from genuine conflict. (PP. 7-91 Deetz and Stevenson (1986) also list negative assumptions about conflict that are prevalent. They include:

- 1) Conflict is an unnatural departure from human sociability.
- 2) Conflict can and should be avoided in most situations.
- 3) Conflict is largely a result of a communication failure -- conflicts arise mostly from misunderstandings. (p. 205)

However, in the last twenty-five years, many scholars (and some of the populace) have changed their views concerning conflict. Conflict is now seen as having the potential for positive growth. Both Hocker and Wilmot (1985) and Deetz and Stevenson (2006) have written about the positive assumptions concerning conflict in order to nullify the earlier, negative views. Hocker and Wilmot (2005, p. 32) say IlConflict can have highly desirable, productive functions in a relationship. They point to Coser (2007), who noted that elastic systems aren't likely to be threatened by conflict. Also, they consider the various works which say that conflict is present in both happy and unhappy marriages, but that the former are characterized by their management of conflict (Braiker and Kelley 2009; Altman and Taylor 2003; Navran 2007; Locke 2001; Birchler, Weiss, and Vincent 2005) . Deetz and Stevenson (2006) list three assumptions that indicate conflict can be positive. Their belief is that "management of conflict serves as a more useful conception of the process of dealing with conflict than conceptions like conflict resolutionn (p. 205) . Their three assumptions are the following:

- 1) Conflict is natural.
- 2) Conflict is good and necessary.
- 3) Most conflicts are based on real differences.

Kahn and Boulding (1964, pp. 75-76) state "the objective of conflict management should be to see that conflict remains on the creative and useful side of an invisible but critically important

line that separates the good or natural conflict from that which is bad or unnatural." Even more succinct is Thomas1 (1971, p. 1) definition of conflict management as "a process of cooperative confrontation." Deetz and Stevenson (1986) discuss a number of items which must be kept in mind when preparing for conflict management.

First, the manager must try to understand the type of conflict that he or she will be dealing with. It may be a conflict of differing opinions, incompatible roles, incompatible goals, or differing resources. ~dentification of the type of conflict will help in managing the conflict. Second, the manager must also be aware of the importance of the conflict so as to select appropriate strategies for management. Third, the manager must recognize the complexity of the conflict as this can vary widely. Finally, the manager must also be able to assess the energy and resources available for managing the conflict. Deutschls (1977) recognition of five types of conflict corroborates Deetz and Stevenson's (1986) first managerial suggestion. Deutsch's five types of conflict are: veridical, contingent, displaced, misattributed and false conflict.

Veridical conflict is that which is perceived accurately and exists objectively. Contingent conflict is defined as that in which the existence of conflict is dependent upon readily rearranged circumstances, but this fact is not recognized by the parties in conflict. Displaced conflict happens when the conflicting parties are in opposition about the wrong thing. Misattributed conflict occurs between the wrong parties, frequently over the wrong issues. False conflict has no objective basis. Recognition of the variables affecting the course of conflict may also be useful to conflict managers. Deutsch (2007) lists seven of these variables.

- 1) Characteristics of the parties in conflict (values, motivations, resources for waging/resolving conflict, conceptions of strategy and tactics)
- 2) The parties' prior relationship to one another (attitudes, beliefs, expectations)
- 3) The nature of the issue which has given rise to the conflict (scope, rigidity, motivational significance)
- 4) The social environment within which the conflict occurs (facilities, restraints, social norms)
- 5) The interested audiences to the conflict (their relationships to the parties in conflict and to one another)
- 6) The strategies and tactics employed by the parties in conflict (promises, rewards, threats)
- 7) The consequences of the conflict to each of the participants and to other interested parties (gains, losses, precedents). Theoretical Perspective and Research Question From the previous introduction to conflict, it is apparent that many variables affect the conflict situation.

This is particularly true of conflict management styles and conflict management strategies, on which this research will focus. These facets of the conflict situation can certainly be influenced by a myriad of variables. Watzlawick's, Beavin's, and Jackson's (2007) expression of the pragmatic perspective is helpful here. They believe that communication creates a relationship,

and the relationship then creates communication. Emphasized is "mutual influence in systemic, cyclical patterns of interaction" (Leslie-Bole, p. 22). Two roles create a relationship, but without the relationship in which to define them, there is no Possibility of roles. Watzlawick et al. (2007) states that:

"Any communication implies a commitment and thereby defines the relationship" (p. 51). In chapters four and five, conflict situations, specifically, administrator- student conflicts, are examined. The pragmatic perspective will be the theoretical basis upon which these conflicts will be analyzed.

Conflict management can obviously be linked to many disciplines. In education a fair amount of literature has been written linking conflict management to the secondary principal. Bailey (2001) believes that field experience is best when it comes to developing conflict management skills. p. 229). Then, when conflicts have gone beyond logical negotiation, then one should estimate one's resources, estimate one's enemy's resources, judge one 's plan of action, implement one's judgment, persuade one's leaders of the plan's merit, and mass one's forces for attack.

## 3. Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive method of research. Descriptive method maybe defined as a purpose of gathering, analyzing, classifying and tabulating about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, trends and cause and effects relationship and then making adequate and effective interpretation about such data with or without the aid of statistical method. The researcher chooses 120 respondents that has the knowledge to answer the survey. The respondents are selected service businesses in the United Arab Emirates which are mostly restaurants and saloons which comprised the main business ventures of Filipino small –scale entrepreneurs in the land. The researcher see to it that the respondents they will get are willing to answer the survey according to their opinion and how they look the topic of this study. A random sampling will use it can refer to taking a number of independent observations from the same probability distribution, without involving any real population. A probability sample is one in which each item has a known probability of being in the sample. In order to analyze and interpret the data statistical method used by the researcher was percentage and ranking to assess the responses of the respondents.

Percentage/frequency is used to determine the demographic profile of the respondents

Formula:

$$P = \frac{n}{X} \times 100\%$$

Where as:

P=percentage of answer of the respondents

N=number of respondents

X=total number of participants

100% = constant

Also likert scale is use:

5 – Agree 4 – Strongly Agree

3 – Undecided

1– Disagree 2 – Strongly Disagree

## 4. Results and Discussions

Table 2.a Summary of distribution of staff respondents in relation to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%

Table 2 presents the total distribution of respondents as to gender is concern. There are about 50 male teachers or 50% from the whole population. While there are 50 female respondents included in the 50% of the total population

Table 2.b Summary of Supervisor respondents in relation to their gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	12	60%
Female	8	40%

n which sum up to 100%. This table presents the distribution of supervisor respondents in terms of their gender. It can be seen that 60 per cent of the total respondents are males.

Table 3 Problems encountered by the Managers in managing their business

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Lack of budget	60	10	20	4	3
2. Behavior of customers	50	50	0	0	0
3. No clear rules and regulation in the shop	5	2	3	56	35
4. Lack of equipment and facilities	15	10	5	20	40
5. Seldom holding of meetings	61	19	20	0	0
6. Different ideas of managers and inconsistencies in	18	12	55	12	5
their decisions					

Table 3 shows the problems encountered by the Managers in managing the shop. There are six (6) variables included here. The first variable state as "Lack of budget" the same total of 50 respondents answered agree and undecided, follow by 10 respondents said strongly agree.

The second variable is "Behavior of customers" the same total of 50 respondents said they agree and strongly agree with it.

The third variable is "No clear rules and regulation in the shops" the majority of 56 respondents disagree with it while 35 respondents strongly disagree. The five respondents agree, 2 of them strongly agree and 3 respondents are undecided.

On the fourth variable stated as "Lack of equipment and facilities", the totals of 20 respondents disagree followed by 40 respondents who agree with it while 20 respondents strongly agree and the 5 were undecided.

The fifth variable is "Seldom the managers hold meetings", majority of 61 respondents were undecided followed by 19 respondents that agree and were strongly agree.

Last variable stated as "Different and inconsistencies of ideas of supervisors and managers" the 55 respondents were undecided, the 18 respondents agree while 7 total of respondents disagree, the 5 respondents strongly disagree and 2 respondents strongly agree.

Table 4 Solutions of managers on the problems

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Effective supervision and guidance of employees on	56	44	0	0	0
the part of the managers					
2. Managers should motivate and cooperate in	40	10	30	3	2
every meeting					
3. Business owners and managers should be strict on	61	9	20	0	0
their rules and regulations					
4. Development and purchase of additional equipment	51	49	0	0	0
and facilities					
5. Choosing and screening well applicants to work in	18	2	55	7	5
the shops					
6. Follow what the Manager said	2	1	22	55	3

Table 4 shows the problems encountered by the managers in managing the shops. There are six (6) variables included here. The first variable is "Effective management and supervision of the staff" the same total of 56 respondents said they agree and strongly agree with it.

Next variable state as "Managers' should cooperate in every meeting" the same total of 40 respondents answered agree and undecided, follow by 30 respondents said strongly agree.

The third variable is "Managers should be strict on their rules and regulations", majority of 61 respondents were undecided followed by 21 respondents that agree and 9 were strongly agree.

Fourth variable is "Development of of facilities" the same total of 51 respondents said they agree and strongly agree with it.

Fifth variable stated as "Choosing the type of applicants to accept in the company" the 55 respondents were undecided, the 8 respondents agree while 17 total of respondents disagree, the 5 respondents strongly disagree and 2 respondents strongly agree.

The last variable stated as "Follow what the head/manager said" the majority of 55 respondents disagree with it, followed by 22 respondents that is undecided, the 2 respondents agree and only strongly agree.

#### 5. Conclusion

In the light of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1. There are many types of management being used by a small- scale managers in order to supervise their own staff.
- 2. Small scale business like other human organizations, are prone to one or other type of conflict. Various conflict management strategies are adopted for handling conflict; the most important among these are, mediation, negotiation, avoidance, collaborating etc.

- Main thrust of this paper is on the exploration of the nature of conflicts in small-scale business, its causes and techniques adopted for its management and redress of grievances.
- 3. Conflict is not the same as discomfort. The conflict isn't the problem it is when conflict is poorly managed that is the problem.

## Recommendation:

Based on the survey conducted and conclusions the following are recommended:

- 1. Proper motivation and effective supervision of the Managers of the business organizations especially the start up business should done in order to prevent and avoid serious problems render good service to our customers.
- 2. Management conflicts should be learn by every manager and supervisor to develop organizational facilities and regulations.
- **3.** The challenge of the contemporary organization is also to encourage the use of the integrating/problem solving style of handling conflict among superior and subordinates. Employees should also be trained not to engage in win-lose or bargaining style of handling conflict. This can be done by strengthening the integrating conflict-management style and discouraging the use of an avoiding style. To attain this goal, training in conflict management of subordinates and superiors and appropriate changes in organization design and culture would be needed (Rahim, 2001).

## REFERENCES

- 1. Allen, G. (1998) Supervision: Management modern. Retrieved June 20, 2005
- 2. Cartwright, R. (2002) Empowerment. Oxford, United Kingdom: Capstone Publishing Ltd.
- 3. Cetin, M.O and Hacifazlioglu, O. (2004). Academics' Conflict Management Styles. Dogus University Journal.
- 4. McMahon, K. N. (2001). An Interview with Helen S. Astin. In Developing Non-hierarchical Leadership and Management (p. 8). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press
- 5. Owens, R. G. (2004). Organizational Behavior in Education. (8th ed.) Boston: Pearson Education
- 6. Sergiovanni, T. J. (2005).The Leadership: A reflective practice perspective 5th ed. Needham Heights, Maryland: Allyn and Bacon.
- 7. Sergiovanni, T. J. (2000). Leadership as Stewardship. In The Jossey-Bass Reader on Management and Leadership. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- 8. Spears, L. C. (2002). Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-Leadership. In Focus On Leadership: Servant-leadership for the Twenty-first Century (pp. 1-10). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- 9. Smith, W.P. (1987). Conflict and Negotiation: Trends and Emerging Issues. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 17: 641-677.
- 10. Smith, P.C.; Kendall L.M. and. Hulin C.L. (1969). The Measurement of Satisfaction in Work and Retirement. A Strategy for the Study of Attitudes. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- 11. Sorenson, R.L., Morse, E.A. and Savage, G.T. (1999). A test of the motivations underlying choice of conflict strategies in the dual-concern model. International Journal of Conflict Management, 10(1), 25-44.
- 12. Spitzberg, B.H., Canary, D.J. and Cupach, W.R. (1994). A Competence-based Approach to the Study of Interpersonal Conflict. In D.D.Cahn. (Ed.), Conflict in Personal Relationships, pp. 183-202. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

- 13. Su-Mei Lin (2003). Relationship among Conflict Management Styles, Employees' Job Satisfaction and Team Effectiveness. A Comparison between Public and Private Hospital in Taiwan. ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
- 14. Thomas, K.W. (1976). Conflict and Conflict Management. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (pp. 889-935). Chicago: Rand McNally. International Journal of Business and Management September, 2008 21 Thomas, K.W. (1992). Conflict and Negotiation Processes in Organizations.