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Employee Conflicts at Peer Level and Their Implications for Workplace Harmony

Mohammad Azizur Rahman Shahid^{1*}, Sufal Chandra Goldar², Mostafa Kabir Siddiqui³, Md Maruf Hossain⁴

Md. Hasan Chowdhury⁵

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ABSTRACT

The study is an inquiry into the sources and outcomes of workplace conflicts in relation to teamwork and the organizational climate context of Bangladesh. Peer conflict is a frequent reality in Bangladeshi firms, yet little research has investigated the antecedents and broad implications of such conflicts on peaceful cohabitation at work. The purpose of this study is to help fill that gap by investigating how things such as miscommunication, competition for scarce resources, and lack of role clarity reflect workplace conflict and how these conflicts in turn are reflected back into the workplace setting with matters related to collaboration, trust, and morale among employees. This study follows a quantitative methodology. A cross-sectional random survey through a structured questionnaire was carried out on 400 employees of the public and private sectors in the metropolitan areas of Bangladesh. The findings indicate that miscommunication was the top contributor to conflict in the workplace, followed by resource competition and unclear job descriptions. These conflicts were seen to cause raised stress, drop in collaboration and morale, and as a result, a reduction in productivity. However, the research also reveals that effective leadership communication, a culture of dignity and respect, and supportive HR policy can prevent and resolve conflict. HR coverage, training for employees and clear-cut conflict resolution protocols were among the most effective tools in promoting a healthy work environment. The research concludes that good communication, role clarity and mutual respect among employees cause to decreases of workplace conflicts and develops an effective organizational climate in Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

A balanced work environment contributes to ease and comfort, eliminates unnecessary disputes and tensions, and generally builds better relationships among employees (Sultan, 2024). Harmonious workplace is that which works smoothly, through a system of good verbal, nonverbal and physical communication that keeps the peaceful environment promoting mutual respect among people on one hand, collaborative teamwork as part of this atmosphere and indeed unison for common objectives. And with harmony comes less friction, easier communication and higher job satisfaction for all involved. This offers opportunities for greater productivity and stronger, more successful teams (Manuel *et al.*, 2024). Workplace harmony is important because it contributes to employee happiness and fosters better relationships, as well as promotes creativity, adaptability, and productivity. Harmony, when supported by malleable and adaptable HR practices, can help drive the prosperity of both individuals and organizations (Al-Hasnawi *et al.*, 2024). Employee conflicts are differences of opinion or disagreements between two or more employees which can result in personal clashes, usually pertaining to their job role, duties and use of company resources. It will be a conflict of flares that rapidly ignites and extinguishes, or one that slowly starts up bit can generate enough

pressure for such behavior (Castellini *et al.*, 2022). Of these, peer-level conflicts are particularly prevalent in the public sector organizations. Sometimes, they emerge from competition for scarce resources, role ambiguity, miscommunication or just plain different types of personalities. Impact can endure and exacerbate in deep, bureaucratic bureaucracies, where decision-making is slow and open dialogue constrained (Belgasm *et al.*, 2025). Peer convergence is something we need to understand better because, while it's prevalent, it goes under the radar in terms of workplace stress. Their projections: diverging opinions can lead to an extended battle that undermines peace of mind, productivity and good relationships. Such conflicts are not always apparent but can generate invisible rifts between staff members it is often less assertive of employees who get snagged by them. (Bruce *et al.*, 2025). A positive, supportive office environment can be a huge factor in employees' performance because it also fosters strong work relationships. They're giving us their time eight hours, 10 hours a day. "When people feel heard and respected and supported by their managers even if they never meet some of them in person they draw closer to the organization, become more committed to it, and are more motivated to meet personal goals. Good social exchange relationships with colleagues and organization enhance this effect, hence the role of workplace in impacting on

¹ Department of Human Resources, Windy Terrace Hotel, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

² Department of Management Studies, Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Patuakhali, Bangladesh

³ Department of Islamic Studies, Uttara University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

⁴ METSELL, Chittagong, Bangladesh

⁵ Independent Researcher, Dhaka, Bangladesh

* Corresponding author's e-mail: hr.mdshahid@gmail.com

performance becomes stronger (Zhenjing *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, supervisors or employees may also engage in conflicts of interest (e.g., disputes regarding work assignments) which could ultimately harm workplace harmony if they lead to exclusionary processes. A person who feels left out loses trust, their communication with others breaks down and teamwork collapses. In the long run, it can have significant negative impact on employees' mental health and work performance (Liu *et al.*, 2023). As more and more public and private organizations are growing in Bangladesh, workplaces are larger, diverse and competitive which is more prone to peer level conflict. In health care, particularly for nurses, these issues frequently appear in the form of work-life balance concerns: through excessive demands grueling schedules or staff shortages that can make it hard to maintain a family life. The pressure on IT these pressures is moderated, however, by the support of both supervisors and coworkers; the more that technostress has risen, though, the less effective supervisor support was (Siddiqi, 2025). Employee engagement and retention have never been of so much importance in the context of organizational growth than in Bangladesh, where workplace involvement and retention are the most significant factors influencing employee engagement. Meanwhile, work-life balance has the smallest effect. Involvement significantly increases the commitment of employees and their loyalty to organizations. However, the effects on performance are more modest that demonstrating despite engaged employees remaining productivity is also a function of others (Islam & Islam, 2021). Workplace culture and traditional patterns dominate the expression and resolution of conflicts in Bangladesh. Whereas reverence for authority and group consensus is a high priority, conflicts among peers are seldom verbalized. Instead, they may manifest themselves in small ways, through indirect communication or casual conversation that management might not pick up on. Though it is an easy way to avoid conflict, mulled over animosities can rob trust, collaboration and the overall quality of the work environment (Rabbani *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, the main aim of the study is to find out the causes and effects of peer-level employee conflicts and explore strategies that promote harmony, collaboration, and positive relationships in the workplace. Moreover, this study is significant as it suggests paths that organizations can take to increase the collaboration, respect, and positivity levels in their environment, leading to improved productivity and well-being of employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on the impact of peer conflicts on workplace harmony in Bangladesh. A survey by Uddin *et al.* (2024) found that leaders that promote teamwork and collaborative dispute resolution can establish trust, open communication, and continuous workplace harmony in Bangladesh. On the contrary, leaders who are average or compromise oriented focus

on both sides of a situation they field-fix problems and ignore tensions. Leadership style was an important factor in addressing conflict, but its effect size was small, indicating that social and cultural influences were also significant. Another study by Sidiqqi (2024), though focused on the relationship between technostress and work-family conflict, also conveyed how these strains influence relationships among peers in the Bangladesh context. When workers are bogged down with heavy workloads, frustrating technology and unmet family demands, stress spills into their interactions with colleagues. This frequently causes coworkers to be less friendly, more irritable and more prone to misinterpret each other, which disrupts workplace harmony. Further, a study by Arefin *et al.* (2020) underlined the role of a co-worker's perceived organizational politics (POPs) in relation to workplace harmony in Bangladesh's hospitality industry. POPs in response to colleagues' self-serving behavior at others expense were found to increase the intentions to leave and reduce both the task performance and helping behaviors. Part of the reason for this is that political stress can start to leak into employees' personal lives, which leads to work-family conflict as time and energy get siphoned off by office politics. Another study conducted by Cai and Ali (2024) revealed that, in Bangladesh workplaces, peer conflicts generally come in two shapes. Task conflicts, disagreements over work ideas, can be the source of creativity when managed well, while relationship conflicts often undermine teamwork and workplace harmony. When employees are highly engaged in their roles, they resolve conflict more productively, they transform task disagreements into cooperation and mitigate personal tension. Digital communication tools can also minimize confusion and build trust among coworkers. Similarly, another important study of Siddiqi *et al.* (2024) indicated that strong organizational/supervisor support helps the nurses in Bangladesh to cope with WFC situation and, thus decreases their intention to leave and increases relationship with colleagues and overall ecological harmony. Heavy workloads and family burden are elements of WFC, which can become drivers of stress and strain; moderated by supportive policies and understanding supervisors. Versatile, adequately staffed recognition yields improved collaboration, reduced turnover and more enjoyable work environments. The purpose of this investigation is to explore antecedents of peer conflict, a relation largely ignored in the literature Uddin *et al.* (2024) and Siddiqi *et al.* (2025), at which the film merely took a quick peek but never really gazed in. It will also consider the consequences of these conflicts on employee morale and team work, which has not been explored in depth. It will provide practical, actionable solutions on conflict resolution which many previous research have failed to offer and is particularly developed for the context of the workplace in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

- How do personal differences and workplace dynamics

contribute to conflicts between peers, and how do these tensions affect the overall harmony of the team?

- How can leadership style, workplace culture, and policies ease or escalate interpersonal conflicts at work; what are some of the practices that organizations can do to foster respect and collaboration?

Research Objectives

Identify and analyze the major causes of peer-level conflicts in the workplace, considering both individual and organizational factors.

- Examine the broader implications of peer-level discord on teamwork, communication, staff morale, and workplace cohesion.
- Analyzing organizational culture, leadership, and workplace policies can threaten conflicts among colleagues or induce conflict escalation.
- Recommend comprehensive conflict resolution strategies that foster mutual respect, collaboration, and a favorable organizational climate.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which demonstrates how our identification with various groups impacts our actions/interactions. The idea helps explain why disagreements between colleagues happen in the workplace and how they affect the overall environment.

Social Categorization and Workplace Conflict

The theory postulates that people tend to divide themselves into in-groups and out-groups, which at times may result in misunderstanding and competition. With this framework we could study how workers' divisions play out and cause conflicts for the teams, especially when it is not clear who is responsible, or they lack resources.

In-Group vs. Out-Group Dynamics

If employees have a strong sense of belonging to their team, they can see others as external parties which causes distrust and friction. This theory underpins the research that it assists in explaining how such group dynamics bring about peer pressure and ultimately impact job satisfaction.

Social Comparison and Perceived Inequities

We are constantly comparing ourselves to others, and when employees think they're mistreated or overlooked, frustration takes over and things get contentious. The theory will assist in examining how these feelings of inequality, such as imbalanced rewards or recognition, result in workplace stress and tension.

Conflict Escalation and Group Cohesion

A strong sense of cohesion within a group is generally good, but it also can make disputes feel more extreme. This idea will allow us to understand how leadership and

organization culture influence the way in which problems escalate as well as a successful process of conflict resolution, namely collaboration and emotions.

Practical Implications for Conflict Resolution

The theory stresses the importance of promoting a common group identity to decrease divisions. Such as these then will the study suggest ways to provide practical mechanisms that would lead to a more inclusive working environment where conflicts are minimized and a spirit of cooperation is fostered.

These chapters are employed to help understand peer-level conflicts through the lens of Social Identity Theory. It offers a concrete model for just why things go wrong in those inevitable battles, how they impact morale and team and what leaders can do to change that.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative look at how co-worker conflicts among employee's impact workplace peace. Primary aims are to investigate antecedents and consequences of coworker conflict as well as to promote a more cooperative and positive work climate. To do so, the study will begin with an exploration of organizational culture, leadership styles, and personal differences as they emerge in these conflicts and their effects on team dynamics. A structured survey instrument was designed to gather information. We also developed items related to peer constructs, communication, perception of roles and attention to organizational policy. The survey will be formatted on a 5-point Likert scale to assess agreement of statements regarding workplace conflict and harmony from "Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly".

To calculate the appropriate sample size for the survey, Cronbach's formula is applied. The formula takes into account the margin of error, confidence level, and the estimated variability within the population to ensure that the sample size is statistically valid for the generalization of the findings.

To determine the appropriate sample size for this study, Cronbach's formula for sample size calculation will be used. The formula is as follows:

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$$n = (Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)) / E^2$$

Where:

n = Required sample size

Z Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (for example, a 95% confidence level would correspond to Z=1.96

p = Estimated proportion of the population that exhibits the characteristic of interest (since we don't know the exact proportion, p is usually set at 0.5 for maximum variability)

E = Margin of error (expressed as a decimal, for example, 0.05 for a 5% margin of error)

Step-by-Step Process

Determine Confidence Level

A standard confidence level for social research is 95%, which corresponds to a Z-score of 1.96.

Estimate Proportion (p)

If the proportion of employees exhibiting the characteristic is unknown, it is conservative to use $p = 0.5$, as it maximizes the sample size.

Set Margin of Error (E)

The margin of error represents the precision of the estimate. A common choice is $E = 0.05$ (i.e., 5% margin of error).

Apply Formula

Plugging these values into the formula, the sample size will be calculated.

For example, assuming a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), an estimated proportion of 0.5 ($p = 0.5$), and a margin of error of 5% ($E = 0.05$):

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16$$

Hence, the sample size needed was 384 subjects. But as regards the nature of study and possibility of non-responses or under responses, a sample size of 400 may be appropriate to guard against any lack in quality data. This sample is of an acceptable size to provide statistically

reliable findings and to represent the views of employees from different types of organizations in Bangladesh.

The population is Public and Private sector employees of Bangladesh, particularly those that are already working at Jobs which have high levels of Peer-level conflicts (e.g., Health service providers or different types of administrative jobs). This sample will be stratified for representative of the broad sectoral and organizational levels. The estimates are based on a sample of about 400 respondents to make them statistically reliable and generalizable.

The collected data is analyzed using SPSS (version 25). Summary statistics like mean, median standard deviation, etc. are used to analyze the data and observe the patterns in responses. Demographics including age, sex and educational background are presented as frequencies and percentages. Before consenting the purpose of this study is explained to all staff participating. The participation is voluntary and confidentiality will be assured. Written consent is given by all participants, and the study complies with ethical standards in the treatment of human subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Information

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic information that we have obtained through our questionnaire.

Table 1: Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 -30	103	25.75%
	31-40	81	20.25%
	41-50	111	27.75%
	51-60	105	26.25%
Gender	Male	212	53%
	Female	188	47%
Job Role	Senior	136	34%
	Mid	130	32.5%
	Junior	134	33.5%
Years of Experience	1-10	158	39.5%
	11-20	114	28.5%
	21-30	128	32%
Sector	Public	208	52%
	Private	192	48%
Department	HR	101	25.3%
	Finance	108	27%
	Operator	92	23%
	Sales	99	24.7%

Table 1 shows the participants who represent each main age group from 18 to more than 50, with the largest percentage for people aged 41–50 (27.75%). This could indicate a workforce that is older and, perhaps consequently, whose workplace interactions have become richer and more diverse. In regard to gender distribution,

participants are slightly overrepresented with males compared to females (53% vs.47%), thus maintaining a close balance that enables the examination of conflict perception and resolution with respect to gender. Ages based on senior (34%), midlevel (32.5%), and junior (33.5%) staff to show the full experience from exposure

at all levels of the organization-lines. Regarding years of experience, the majority of people belong to domain 1–10 as regard decision leader (at about a percentage of 39.5) which allows a reasonable view from inexperienced and experienced employees both. The public to private sector ratio (52%:48%) is a reasonable proxy for industry, therefore this study should be especially pertinent to the broader context of public sector organizations in Canada where transparency may tend to be a greater concern than it would within the commercial space. Finally, the departmental distribution also has high representation

from Finance (27%) and HR (25.3%), areas that are particularly relevant when it comes to conflict mediation and organizational culture.

Causes of Peer-level Conflicts

This chart will help analyze challenges at work including roles not defined, conflicting work styles or personalities, resource competition and issues with peer communication. The means, medians and standard deviation of the data for each issue are shown in comparisons.

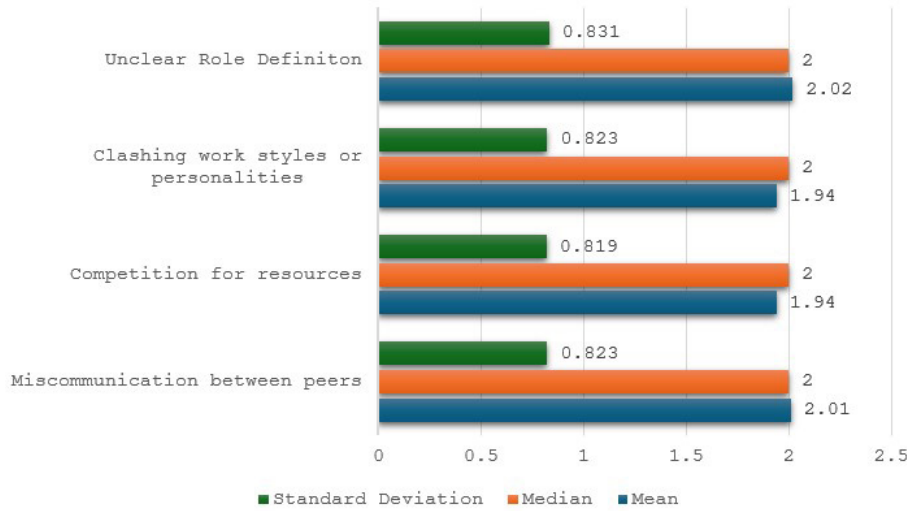


Figure 1: Causes of Peer-level Conflicts

The most prevalent reasons for peer-level conflicts are listed in Figure 1 and include miscommunication, competition for resources, and unclear roles. Misunderstanding is the most critical problem with an average score of 2.01, closely followed by resource competition (1.94) and blurred roles (2.02). There’s some variation in response, but generally people seem to think these factors are the underpinning of workplace tension. As with Sidiqqi (2024), workload

and tech stress, have some levels of contributing as to the problem, indicating that poor communication is still a major issue.

Implications of Peer-level Conflicts

The following chart shows how the effects of variations in stress, team collaboration, worker morale and job productivity were perceived. Means and medians, etc., of Insufflating factors.

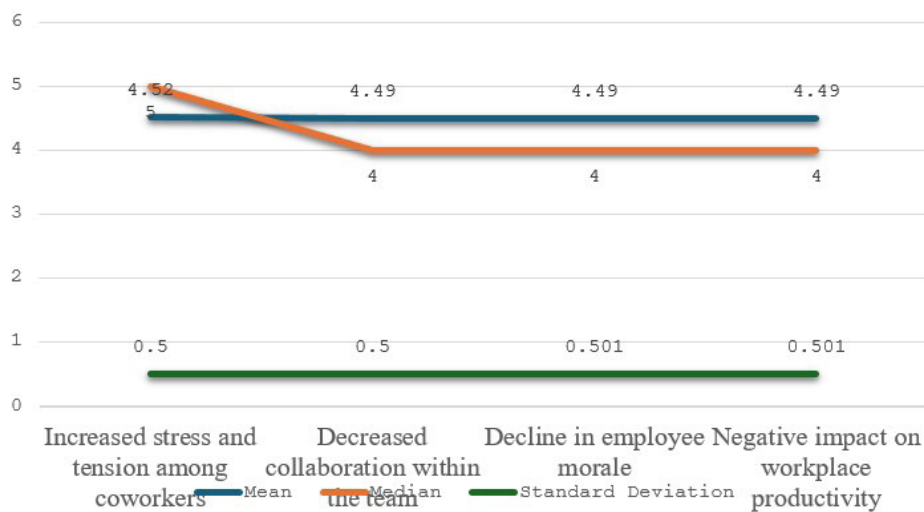


Figure 2: Implications of Peer-level Conflicts

According to Figure 2, the impact of peer-level conflicts among employees in a workplace is profound resulting in increased stress and tension among workers as reported with the highest mean value (4.52) and median (4), implying general rather than divergent consensus. Closely following is a lack of team performance characterized by moderate standard deviation among respondents with the mean=4.49, median = 4 meaning all those that responded agree to this statement. Conversely, those staff that lost morale suddenly and took their productivity with them have the means of 4.49 and 4 respectively (with stdevs:.501) The majority of human encoding frames also agree to some extent, but there is a lot of agreement as most points are within ± 1 standard deviation from the mean Figure 2. The answers overall reflect a consensus

that peer conflicts harm team dynamics and have fat tails of very little spread on either side. Our results are in agreement with those reported by Siddiqi et al. (2024): luminant dissonance may impact on the increased level of burnout withdrawal and can even enter private life. It also underscores how important it is for businesses to have a model in place for fighting both professional and personal stresses.

Role of Organizational Culture and Leadership

The chart contrasts organizational elements including leadership communication, organization culture, workplace policies, and management conflict resolution skills. And it actually looks at the mean, median and SD for each variable.

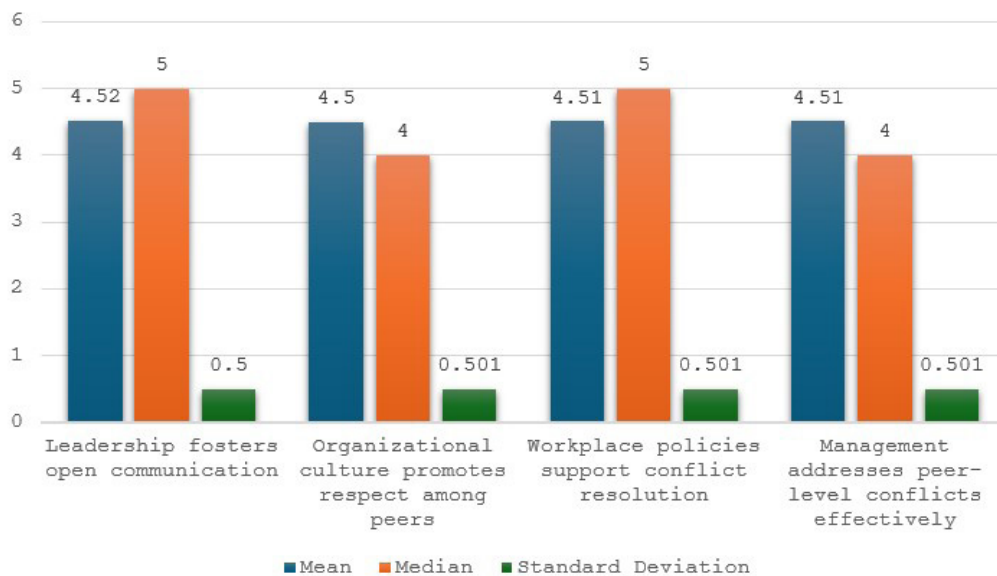


Figure 3: Role of Organizational Culture and Leadership

The importance of leadership communication and organizational culture on addressing peer-level conflicts is highlighted in Figure 3. Leadership communication is rated high (mean = 4.52, SD=0.5), which implies that clear and effective communication by the leadership can prevent conflicts from arising. Also in the polite workplace group, peer respect promoting culture mean score is 4.5 (SD 0.501), which implies that politeness at work place is mandatory and crucial for stress reduction. As in the domestic sphere, workplace rules that make it easier to resolution dispute also score well (mean of 4.51, median 5) this underscores the importance of having a clear rule structure in place ... and Senior management's treatment of conflicts similarly receives a positive rating (mean 4.51, median 4), but responses were a bit more mixed. The bottom line is that strong leadership and a collaborative culture in the workplace are likely

to result in fewer conflicts. Referring back to Figure 1, this implies that the better leaders we have and the more nurturing our leadership culture is, the less potential for misunderstanding and havoc-being-wreaked on resources there is. This supports Uddin et al. Our findings are in line with that of Uddin and colleagues. (2024), according to whom leadership behaviour will help in creating a positive work climate and also diminish peer level conflicts.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

This chart measures workplace conflict resolution on a variety of points such as (a) Supportive human resource management practices, (b) Training opportunities programs, (c) Clear guidelines for resolving disputes and (e) Value mutual respect and working cooperatively. Difference in mean, median and standard deviation under the same factors is also tested.



Figure 4: Conflict Resolution Strategies

The most successful conflict resolution strategies are shown in Figure 4. Both supportive HR practices and mutual respect and collaboration (which show substantial concurrence since they have small in the variability), obtain mean of 4.56 and 4.61 respectively. Programs Training and Explicit Conflict Resolution Principles Studies had a mean score of 4.48 (SD =.64), suggesting general agreement, but across studies the variance was high. These results suggest a positive response to the resolution of workplace conflict; most participants value approaches such as teambuilding activities, communication training and mediation. Contrast this with Figure 2 in which unresolved conflict destroys morale and productivity, it should be quite clear that active methods of intervention such as training programs (particularly when coordinated with explicit conflict guidelines and related tools) can do much to avoid these issues. This is consistent with the study by Cai and Ali (2024) which discussed the importance of structured conflict resolution in maintaining a peaceful and productive work climate.

Findings

The findings shed light on some common difficulties employees experience and suggest ways to strengthen a workplace culture.

The study interviewed 400 employees working in the public and private sector with a spread of ages, experience and job roles. Male (53%) and female (47%) employees were almost evenly distributed. The diversity among the two group of participants (senior and mid-level, junior employee) across HR, Finance, Sales participating in this study provided a wide range on how peer level conflicts varying in different work contexts.

Misunderstanding, resource scramble and ambiguous roles were the main reasons of conflicts. Miscommunication was the most prevalent cause among them all. Which brings us back full circle: Those attempts to improve your communication at work also constitute attempts to combat misunderstanding, before they lead to even worse conflicts. It was workers’ in large part reaction to

the essential strain they experienced, indicating a clear boundary of half of expansion.

The findings of the study reveal some important implications for unresolved wars. The trade disagreements on peer-level had affected their stress and suffering to generate higher negative effect, drop in co-ordination, de-motivating and lower job behaviors as described by the subordinates. These are important results, as they demonstrate that when conflicts go unattended to, they can subtly but powerfully undercut the working climate, with implications for both the individual and for the team as a whole.

Both leadership and organizational culture would have prevented those conflicts. Respondents believed that strong leadership, a culture of respect in the workplace and effective policy support are key to avoiding or resolving disputes. And that just goes to show a good, supportive culture and good leadership can make all the difference in how conflict is handled and the workplace overall much more pleasant for us all.

Several successful tactics in resolving conflicts were also determined by the research. Users perceived positive HR practices, mutual respect and working together to be the most effective strategies for dealing with conflict. Staff indicated the importance of having formal training programs and conflict resolution guidelines; creating a work environment based on respect was central to ongoing success.

Recommendations

The implications, which can be derived from the findings of this study, give organisations an idea about what they can do to handle and resolve peer-level conflicts, so that they may reduce the uncertainty at work:

Lack of communication and role definition was the biggest cause for tension according to them. This can come from the structure of team meetings, to job roles, and communication channels; these all play a key part in preventing misunderstandings, as well as avoiding such arguments snowballing into the possible battlefield that

every conflict situation could be. Promote collaboration, recognition programs and leadership development that promotes and maintains a respectful and collaborative work environment. It will be less friction and more collaboration.

Cultivate a respectful and collaborative workplace through team-building, recognition programs, and leadership training. That should wean tensions and foster support.

Train staff to respond to negative behaviour and give clear guidelines on what is/is not OK. It will assist them in solving the problem before it reaches a critical issue.

HR's focus should be on employee welfare, by giving flexible work and mental health support. Supportive HR system can lower the stress level, prevent conflict, too.

Then leaders must be trained in how to communicate well and in the development of relationships, and have a clear understanding that they are transparent. Opt for routine check-ins with teams, which can spot potential problems and act on them early on.

Adopt an explicit and defined mechanism for conflict resolution. It promotes fair treatment and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Encourage collaboration between departments to lessen the battle for resources and share a common purpose.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. For one thing, it's based on surveys and therefore susceptible to both response bias and social desirability biases, in which the respondents may feel compelled either to exaggerate or understate how much conflict they experience at work. Second, the findings may not be generalized to workers of other countries worldwide as it was conducted only among Bangladeshi employees. Additionally, the sample is taken from a stratified random method and does not sufficiently represent various industries at organization's level. In this respect the present study was cross-sectional and did not consider longitudinal peer-level conflicts, and therefore might fall short of giving a full account of the dynamic work environment processes over time.

CONCLUSIONS

The need to attend to peer-level conflicts in workplaces especially in a city like Dhaka; given the piecemeal and copious nature of communication and many workers seen performing roles that overlap with their peers along with having conflicts with them. This data confirms the primary sources of conflict to be: miscommunication, competition for resources and ambiguity in roles leading to stress, poor teamwork and reduced productivity respectively. However, strong leadership combined with a respectful atmosphere and standardized methods for resolving conflicts are high on the lists of what employees appreciate. Policies that enabled more participatory work practices as well as training in how to resolve interpersonal conflicts on an individual basis in a general reduction of tensions at work. The study also indicates better communication, clear role definition and conflict

resolution for increased collaboration at the workplace. It turns out that these tactics can create a more respectful and generous workplace, the research found. These approaches will foster a friendlier and more productive work environment, that is the conclusion of the study. Further study is needed to assess the effect of these strategies in actual organizational settings and overtime.

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