

# A Study on Leadership Challenges for Conflict Resolution in Software Industry

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## Abstract:

In the fast-paced world of business, conflicts are inevitable. However, how leaders and managers address these challenges defines their success. Conflict resolution in management and leadership is a vital skill that transforms disputes into opportunities for growth and collaboration. By mastering the art of resolving conflicts effectively, leaders can foster trust, enhance teamwork, and drive organizational success. This article explores the key strategies and tools that empower leaders to navigate and resolve conflicts with confidence and clarity. Conflict surface due to limitation of resources, competition and differences in values, goals, attitudes, expectations, etc. If conflicts are not managed properly they may adversely affect the organization. Effective Management of conflict requires the understanding of the concept of conflict. Various attempts to understand the conflict show that the conflict it is a process and moves from one stage to another and finally takes the form of individual, group or class conflicts. Conflict between individuals takes place owing to several factors, but most common are personal dislikes or personality differences. When there are only differences of opinion between individuals about task-related matters, it can be construed as technical conflict rather than interpersonal conflict. Conflicts between an Individual and Groups or intra group conflicts arise frequently due to an individual's inability to conform to the group norms. The present paper focus of what type of leadership qualified can resolve these problems in IT Projects.

**Keywords:** Time Management, Conflict Type, Mediation, Policies

## Introduction:

Conflict resolution solutions refer to strategies, techniques, or approaches to address and resolve conflicts or disputes effectively and peacefully. These solutions are designed to facilitate communication, understanding, and collaboration among parties involved in a conflict, aiming to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution. The main types of conflict resolution solutions include mediation, arbitration, negotiation, conflict coaching, conflict management system design and others. Mediation in conflict resolution involves a neutral third party assisting disputing parties in reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. These serve various mode of delivery such as Online, offline and hybrid.

Conflict resolution involves recognizing and managing the particular conflict. This is an essential part of building emotional intelligence, and nurturing relationships. Poorly handled conflict can affect both the employees and the clients thereby impacting the company's bottom-line. To maintain your competitive advantage, we need the entire organization to focus on developing conflict resolution strategies to quickly and effectively resolve conflict, while building trust and commitment with clients and colleagues. Leaders try to resolve problems and conflicts in any Software Projects as long as they have authority over those conflicts or issues in conflict by using the powers given to them such as Formal, Reward, Penalty, Referent etc.



## Research Significance

Conflict in the software projects and IT workplace can be incredibly destructive to good teamwork. Managed in the wrong way, real and legitimate differences between people can quickly spiral out of control, resulting in situations where co-operation breaks down and the team's mission is threatened. This is particularly the case where the wrong approaches to conflict resolution are used.

No leadership model exists that will totally eliminate disagreements or clashes of personality conflicts. In fact, the tension that comes from conflict can be healthy and beneficial to growth if dealt with correctly. But it has to be looked at wisely and humanly. When a Leader and other groups meet their mutual expectations, the relationship should produce mutual trust and favorable results and minimize conflicts between the parties.

In many cases, conflict in the workplace just seems to be a fact of life. Different people with different goals and needs have come into conflict. And it will result often-intense personal animosity that can result. The fact that conflict exists, however, is not necessarily a bad thing. As long as it is resolved effectively, it can lead to personal and professional growth. In many cases, effective conflict resolution skills can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes. However, if conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. Conflicting goals can quickly turn into personal dislike. Teamwork breaks down. Talent is wasted as people disengage from their work. And it's easy to end up in a vicious downward spiral of negativity and recrimination.

## Literature:

Mayasari et. al (2024) the ability to manage conflict is an essential skill for leaders, enabling them to cultivate a workplace that supports productivity and collaboration. A key factor is the leadership style adopted by leaders and its impact on conflict management approaches. Studies have shown that different leadership styles, such as team-oriented or authoritarian, can significantly influence the way in which conflicts are identified, addressed and ultimately resolved within organization. It indicates that main factors for organizational sustainability are conflict management and employee performance. The most frequently used conflict resolution techniques are: the technique of avoidance, the technique of compromise, the use of power, the technique of "organizing", the technique of confrontation and the mitigation

Kanavas et. al (2024) Different perceptions regarding these conflict resolutions approaches and leadership style can impact the dynamics of the workplace, the performance of the employees and their job satisfaction. Hussein et al. (2022) suggest that employees' views on their manager's leadership style, along with their self-confidence in achieving organizational objectives, play a crucial role. Building on these insights, the integration of sustainability into leadership

practices offers an innovative pathway to address such challenges. Sustainable leadership extends beyond traditional organizational goals, emphasizing the creation of a workplace culture that nurtures trust, collaboration, and long-term commitment.

Tzavella (2023) conflicts in the public sector are comparatively complicated to address because of the limitations that derive from the hierarchical and bureaucratic structure and from the wide range of the stakeholders (citizens, employees, elected officials, organized group with multiple interests). Conflict management involves integrating various factors that contribute to effectively resolving conflicts.

A number of studies have been conducted which discussed the influence of demographic variables on leadership styles. Krishnan and Park (2016) noted that demographic variables have considerable influence on the leadership styles of top managers. Hambrick and Mason (2019) proposed that demographic variables such as age, tenure as a leader, Primary Business Area the leader is working, and educational qualification are all important aspects of leadership that influence organizational success.

### Methodology:

The aim of the research design is to ensure empirical evidence to be obtained to satisfy the selected objectives of this study and the empirical data, which can be interpreted to determine if the research hypotheses set for this research study could be confidently accepted or not accepted. The approach followed consists of identifying specific variables, developing hypotheses, collecting data by survey method through a structurally predetermined questionnaire that will yield data which can be statically tested in support of the hypotheses or not supported.

### Objectives:

1. To understand conflicts during creation of career opportunities to employees.
2. To understand schedule conflicts during over all delivery of the project on time.
3. To understand conflicts regarding Rewards and Recognition of team member's achievements.
4. To study conflicts due to communication mechanisms defined in the project.

### Hypothesis

*H<sub>01</sub>*: There is no significant relation between specific project demographics (Company Type, Managerial Level, Primary Business Area, Software Organization, Project Management Certification, Project Management Experience, Number of people reporting, SDLC Phase, Management Style) and conflicts *on project schedules during integration leading in overall delivery of the project* as a Conflicting parameter during project implementation.

*H<sub>02</sub>*: There is no significant relation between specific project demographics and *Project Manager's Interaction with customers to free Requirements and sign-off of deliverables on time* as a performance management factor during project implementation.

### Research Sample

The target sample is from managers (Project Managers, Program Managers, Group Leaders and Delivery Managers) from different software organizations, who were well aware of the project management and implementation methodologies of the software projects in the organizations, which are located in Hyderabad and Secunderabad in Telangana, India. The researcher approached delivery heads and HR representative's software organizations to meet the respondents personally or by e-mail and distributed questionnaire and collected the filled questionnaires after one week period.

## Sample companies & Respondents

The sample for the present research includes certified / non-certified project managers from different software organizations. The sample companies include all major software organizations which are located in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. A sample 462 respondents data captured with a structured questionnaire.

## Data Analysis:

### Hypotheses based on “Frequently” occurring Conflicts

*H<sub>01</sub>*: There is no significant relation between specific project demographics (Company Type, Managerial Level, Primary Business Area, Software Organization, Project Management Certification, Project Management Experience, Number of people reporting, SDLC Phase, Management Style) and conflicts *on project schedules during integration leading in overall delivery of the project* as a Conflicting parameter during project implementation.

| Parameter: Conflicts on project schedules during integration leading to delay in overall delivery of the project.   |                                      |                      |     |                       |                   |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Hypotheses  | Demographic                          | Pearson Chi-Sq Value | df  | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Hypotheses Result |
| There is no significant relation between <u>specific project demographics</u> and conflicts on project schedules during integration leading in overall delivery of the project. | A. Company Type                      | 19.694               | 8   | .012                  | Rejected          |
|   | B. Managerial Level                  | 20.598               | 8   | .008                  | Rejected          |
|   | C. Primary Business Area             | 26.610               | 16  | .046                  | Rejected          |
|   | D. Software Organization             | 6.932                | 8   | .544                  | Accepted          |
|   | Hc. Project Management Certification | 18.078               | 4   | .001                  | Rejected          |
|   | I2. Project Management Experience    | 96.420               | 76  | .057                  | Accepted          |
|   | I3. Number of people reporting       | 323.550              | 200 | .000                  | Rejected          |
|   | J. SDLC Phase                        | 25.504               | 20  | .183                  | Accepted          |
|   | K. Management Style                  | 54.386               | 16  | .000                  | Rejected          |

It may be concluded that there is no relation between Software Organization, Gender, Project Manager’s experience and SDLC phase demographics and conflicts on project schedules during integration leading in overall delivery of the project. It may be concluded that there exist a relation between Company Type, Managerial Level, Primary Business Area, Project Management Certification, Span of Control demographics and conflicts on project schedules during integration leading in overall delivery of the project.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relation between specific project demographics and *Project Manager's Interaction with customers to freeze Requirements and sign-off of deliverables on time* as a performance management factor during project implementation.

| Parameter: PM's regular Interaction with customers to freeze requirements and sign-off off deliverables on time   |                                |                      |     |                       |                   |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Hypotheses  | Demographic                    | Pearson Chi-Sq Value | df  | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Hypotheses Result |
|   | A. Company Type                | 14.391               | 8   | .072                  | Accepted          |
|   | B. Managerial Level            | 13.074               | 8   | .109                  | Accepted          |
|   | C. Primary Business            | 39.799               | 16  | .001                  | Rejected          |
| <p>It may be concluded that there is no association between Company Type, Managerial Level, Software Organization, Project Management certification, Project Management Experience, Number of Projects Managed, SDLC Phase, Management style and Project Manager's regular interaction with customers discussing about requirements freezing on time, on time sign of deliverables.</p> |                                |                      |     |                       |                   |
|   | Management Experience          |                      |     |                       |                   |
|   | I4. Number of Projects Managed | 87.940               | 100 | .800                  | Accepted          |
|   | J. SDLC Phase                  | 26.764               | 20  | .142                  | Accepted          |
|   | K. Management Style            | 20.627               | 16  | .193                  | Accepted          |

It may be concluded that there is association between Primary Business Area and Project Manager's regular interaction with customers discussing about requirements freezing on time, on time sign of deliverables.

## Discussion of Results

The Analysis started with analyzing the conflicts occurring during software project implementation with respect to five dimensions (Schedule, Cost, Communication, Human Resource and Customers). In order to determine which groups are significantly different from the rest, researcher performed multiple comparison procedures. One of the procedures is *Post Hoc Duncan Analysis* Test, which arranges the group means in ascending order and provides subsets whose means are significantly different. Duncan Analysis was done for all the demographics for the conflicts parameters and top 10 conflicts occurring "Frequently" were extracted from this study and these were taken to frame hypotheses and for further study.



Conflict resolution processes and techniques provide a comprehensive and flexible system for maximizing delivery excellence and achieving better profitability for the projects. It has been considered as a inevitable approach to process improvements in the software organizations through effective use of statistical methods. This study resembles the key parameters any management team should consider before conflict resolution process is implemented in their projects. All these parameters are important for the successful implementation of conflict resolution process through appropriate leadership styles for any software project to consider.

### Conclusion

Interpersonal conflicts in organisational setup too can de-stabilize the amicable working environment of any organisation and can lead to productivity loss. Often personal traits of employees as well as external factors can enhance the chances of interpersonal conflicts. Here leadership has a vital role to play in demarcating employee autonomy and job task clarity. When the tasks are predetermined and reasonable deadlines for the same are clearly demarcated by the leadership along with certain autonomy to the team members to negotiate the task themselves, without much effort of micro-managing everything, the accountability of the employees is fixed, thereby reducing the chances of conflicts. Leaders should have faith in their team members and can thereby manage employees by establishing protocols and automated processes rather than overlooking everything. This approach can work wonders as the chances of conflicts reduce.

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