

**ASSESSMENT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
PRACTICE:**

A CASE STUDY OF ADMAS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

PREPARED BY: MULATU MEBRATU

ADVISOR: Dr. G.K. MURTHY

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is the situation in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party which is in the same group, in another group, in the same organization or in another organization. Accordingly, we can classify those conflicts in to: intragroup conflict, intergroup conflict, intraorganizational conflict and interorganizational conflict. There is also other type of conflict which happens within one self and between peoples who came from different cultures, which are called intrapersonal conflict and cross cultural conflict respectively.

The fact that individuals have different backgrounds, point of views, values, needs, personalities and other additional realities prevailing in an organizational environment made an organization a place where conflict is common. Regardless of the quality of a manger's leadership or his or her style of management and regardless of how well planned the organizational structure is, conflicts will occasionally arise within an organization. These conflicts can be functional or dysfunctional in nature. This study is conducted on Admas University College under a title of "Assessment of Conflict Management Practice". The major problems which initiate this research are: the prevalence of conflict between several parties in the University College, problem on perception of conflict and the unsatisfactorieness of the conflict management system of the institution. The out comes of all these problems made conflict an issue at Admas University College.

The major objectives of the research are: Assessing the conflict resolution practice of Admas University College, assessing the major sources of conflict in the organization, assessing the attitudes that an employees of the organization have towards conflict and

forwarding possible solutions for the problems identified from the collected and analyzed data.

The major limitations faced in conducting this research are: Some respondents did not give the required full information because of the fear that they have on this area and insufficiency of time that is provided to conduct this research.

Both primary and secondary sources of information are used in collecting the data. Questionnaires are distributed to the institution's academic, non academic and administrative staff members and the information gathered is analyzed accordingly.

According to the analysis made, there is a wide range of conflict in the organization, a problem of conflict perception is also observed but, there is no special training and orientation prepared to change this perception. The conflict management practice of the organization is found to be poor. There is also a tendency to relate the effectiveness in conflict management to gender difference.

To avoid the above problems; the organization should prepare several occasions in which the employees can develop the relation ship between them, a special training and orientation program should be prepared in order to create better grasping on conflict related issues. Additionally, several points are forwarded as a recommendation to solve the problems observed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACK GROUND

1.1.1. Back ground of the study

Conflict is being taken as an inevitable aspect of modern life. For any organizations to perform effectively, interdependent individuals and groups must establish working relationships across organizational boundaries, between individuals and among groups. Individuals or groups may depend on one another for information, assistance or coordinated action. Such interdependence may foster cooperation or conflict. As people with different backgrounds, points of view, values, needs and personalities interact; a variety of conflicts often develop. This situation holds true specifically in higher educational institutions because of the fact that most of the people have different backgrounds and personalities. There are several factors that contribute for the existence of conflict. These factors are broadly classified in to three: communication factors, structural factors and personal behavior factors.

After all, what is conflict? There are large numbers of definition which is given by several scholars on the area. But the most common comprehensive definition that we all can agree up on is: conflict is the situation in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party which is in the same group, in another group, in the same organization or in another organization. Accordingly, we can classify those conflicts in to: intragroup conflict, intergroup conflict, intraorganizational conflict and interorganizational conflict. There is also other type of conflict which

happens within one self and between peoples who came from different cultures, which are called intrapersonal conflict and cross cultural conflict respectively.

Conflicts are either functional or dysfunctional. Functional conflict is a confrontation between groups that enhances and benefits the organization's performance. Those conflicts which refer to a confrontation or interaction between groups that harm the organization or hinder the achievement of organizational goals are dysfunctional conflicts. To this end, the managers of the organization are supposed to avoid those dysfunctionals and motivate the functional ones.

Recent ideas on conflict recognize that conflict is neither inherently good nor bad but can be either depending on how it is dealt with. Rather than eliminating conflict this view stresses that what is important is that conflict should be effectively managed. So managers are required to acquire effective know how on how to solve the conflicts encountered by the organization.

In order to solve dysfunctional conflicts existed in an organization; there are conflict management tools to be applied. These tools are commonly called "conflict management styles" which incorporates; avoiding, collaborating, accommodating, competing and compromising. In addition to these, negotiations and third party's interventions are also used as potential means of resolving conflicts.

Even though the foundation of private higher educational institution in Ethiopia counts only one decade and half, there are lots of conflicts which are observed between these institutions and within the institutions. There are several reasons that can be cited as the source of these conflicts. For instance; the infancy of the sector, the fact that most of these institutions share the same resources like instructors, the existence of parties who have a deliberate intention to create a conflict between these institutions...etc can be cited as the potential reasons. There are also several reasons that aggravate the conflicts between parties within the institutions. To this end, this study takes into consideration all the above facts regarding conflict and conflict management and assessed the overall situation prevailing in Admas University College.

1.1.2. Organizational back ground

Admas University College commenced its operation on October 11, 1998 G.C with a name "Admas Business Training Center". The center started delivering training services in certain tailor made six-month duration (short-term) programs. By undertaking deep objective assessments of further training needs and making preparations in terms of the required materials as well as human resources, the center was upgraded to a college level as of April 9, 1999 G.C. Since then the college has graduated more than 10,000 (ten thousand) students in various fields of study with Certificate, Diploma and Degree in regular and extension modes.

With the objective of expanding its quality service to the country, the university college opened six campuses. Three of these campuses are found in Addis Ababa and the rest are in Debrezeit, Dessie and Adwa towns. Besides, the university college's Distance

Education college has established more than 31 (thirty one) coordination offices in all of the regions of the country.

The institution was upgraded to University College as of March 2007 and is strengthening its ability of rendering training and education services with its fully accredited disciplines by the Ministry of Education, Education Bureaus, & Education Departments of regions and sub cities respectively.

Vision

The vision of Admas University College is to be a highly recognized institution of higher learning nationally as well as internationally identified by its quality education, research output, competence of graduates, and fulfillment of social responsibilities with maximum devotion.

Mission

Admas University College, being a privately owned higher learning institution, has the following missions to accomplish:

- Provide quality higher education at all levels and at affordable price through regular, continuing (extension) and distance education modes so as to produce competent professionals who can support the development endeavor of the country.
- Undertake scientific research that helps to solve the socio-economic problems of the country and that can also add new values & knowledge to the society.

- Render consultancy and short term training services to businesses, government and non government organizations to help them accomplish their objectives.
- Render various community services to fulfill social responsibilities which are expected of it as an academic institution.

Values

Admas University College believes in the paramount importance of promoting the following values at the institution level and among the staff of the college:

Equal opportunity	Honesty
Transparency	Healthy academic environment
Gender equality	Respect to people (society) and
Impartiality	

(A broacher prepared by Admas University College, 2007, p. 4)

1.2. Statement of the problem

The fact that individuals have different backgrounds, point of views, values, needs, personalities and other additional realities prevailing in an organizational environment made an organization a battle in which conflict is common. Regardless of the quality of a

manger's leadership or his or her style of management and regardless of how well planned the organizational structure is, conflicts will occasionally arise within an organization. In fact every organization undergoes a certain amount of internal conflict that must be recognized and dealt with in a positive fashion if the organization is to prosper. In neither case, if the organization is tends to recognize all the conflicts encountered in a negative way, it will most likely loose some of the benefits that it can obtain. It may be said that it is the mismanagement of conflict rather than conflict itself that causes real trouble in an organization. Management's task is to recognize conflict whenever it occurs and use it whenever possible to secure the organization's best advantage.

With this regard, Admas University College encountered several conflicts since its existence which are existed between different parties in the institution. As far as the institution's conflict history is concerned, several individuals who were its employees were resigned from it because of the conflict that they confronted with different parties in the organization. Currently also, there are several dysfunctional conflicts which are observed between several parties in the organization. For instance frequent conflicts are being observed between academic staff members of the institution and campus deans. There is also a conflict which is often observed between the academic staff members with the rest of the institution's administrative staffs like personnel and finance department heads. The non academic staff members of the organization are also faced several conflicts in between themselves and with administrative and academic staff members of

the organization because of existence of several sources of conflict and a wide range of conflict of interest between these parties.

Because of this fact, employees of an organization are being less committed to their responsibilities, there is also an increasing rate of turn over, there is low level of worker's job satisfaction ...etc. this in turn creates some gap in quality service provision and the over all effectiveness of the organization,

On the other hand, there is a tendency to recognize all conflicts encountered in an organization as a destructive conflict. There is also failure to apply an appropriate style or mechanism of conflict management to solve the conflicts.

These problems made conflict management an issue at Admas University College. To this end, the institution called for any interested researcher who is willing to conduct a research on several organizational issues including the one under which this research is conducted six months ago

All these realities provoke this research to assess the conflict and conflict management practice of Admas University College so that some useful recommendations will be forwarded.

1.3. Objectives of the study

This study has the following objectives to attain:

- ✓ Assessing the conflict resolution practice of the university college.
- ✓ Assessing the major sources of conflict in the organization.
- ✓ Assessing the attitudes that an employees of the organization have towards conflict

- ✓ Identifying the types of conflict which are commonly existed in the University College.
- ✓ Evaluating the out comes of the conflicts confronted by the organization.
- ✓ Measuring the success of these conflict resolution techniques in resolving the conflicts encountered by the organization.
- ✓ Identifying the parties who are frequently involved in conflicting situation.
- ✓ Identifying the parties who are involved in conflict resolution.
- ✓ Forwarding possible solutions for the problems identified from the collected and analyzed data.

1.4. Significance of the study

This research is believed to have the following significances for parties who have direct or indirect interest on it;

- ❖ It enables the researcher to acquire basic experiences regarding several issues on areas of conflict management and related aspects
- ❖ The out put from the research can help the organization to take some remedial actions or corrective measures on the problems identified in the research
- ❖ The tentative solutions provided by the researcher can also enable the organization to solve the conflicts in the organization.
- ❖ This research can serve as potential reference for those individuals who want to conduct further studies on the same or related areas.

1.5. Scope of the study

This research is conducted on Admas University College, which is one of the private higher educational institutions in Ethiopia, with specific area of conflict management. Because of the pervasiveness in organizational environment in which they are operating, the out put from this research may be inferable for other private higher educational institutions in the country.

This study is focusing on the conflicts that the organization's employees faced with several parties. To this end, the required information is gathered only from the workers of the organization (not from other parties like students, and other customers in the community) for manageability of the study. More over, since the study is paying a due attention on the conflict management aspect, it is believed that, information from employees of the organization is valuable in view of the fact that they are participated in conflict management. This study is also confined it self in the area of conflict management only. So, several organizational matters beyond this area are not incorporated for sake of specificity.

1.6. Limitations of the study

The following are the major limitations of the study:

- Some respondents did not give the required full information because of the fear that they have on this area.
- Insufficiency of time that is provided to conduct this research is also one potential limitation of the study.

1.7. Research Methodology

Data sources

In order to get all the necessary information on the area under which the research is conducted, both the primary and secondary sources of information are used

Data collection

Several Books, Magazines, Newspapers. Journals, articles, Internet sources and materials which are prepared by an organization like organizational manuals, brochures---etc. were used to collect necessary information from secondary sources. Information from primary source was collected by using questionnaire.

Sampling design

In order to make the sample representative, the researcher applied a combination of random, convenience and stratified sampling methods. Hundred (100) questionnaires were prepared. Thirty five (35) questionnaires were distributed to all of the administrative staffs (including the top leadership of the University College) of the organization. Twenty four (24) questionnaires were distributed to the non academic (supportive) staff members of the institution randomly and the rest forty one (41) questionnaires were distributed to the academic staff members of the institution using stratified sampling technique which bases the department to which they are belongs to.

Data presentation

The data collected from the respondents is analyzed and presented by using analytical tools like; tabulations and descriptions that make it graspable.

1.8. Organization of the study

This research report has four major chapters. The first chapter is an Introductory chapter which consists of Back ground of the study, back ground of the organization, statement of

the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, the research methodology and organization of the study. The review of the related literature will be given in the second chapter. The Analysis and presentation of the data collected from respondents constitutes the third chapter. The last chapter incorporates the summary, conclusion and recommendation. Other supplementary parts of the research report will be given before and after these four chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. Definition and nature of conflict

Several scholars provided a wide range of definitions for the term conflict and they are also provided several natures of conflict that are supposed to be taken in to consideration while dealing with it. The following few paragraphs present some of definitions and natures of conflict given by the scholars.

There has been no shortage of definitions of conflict. But despite the divergent meanings the term has acquired, several common themes underlie most definitions. Conflict must be perceived by the parties to it; whether or not conflict exists is a perception issue. If no one is aware of a conflict, then it is generally agreed no conflict exists. Additional commonalities in the definitions are opposition or incompatibility and some form of interaction. These factors set the conditions that determine the beginning point of the conflict process.

We can define conflict, then, as a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something the first party cares about.¹

Conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party.²

.A conflict may be defined as the pursuit by two different persons of goals that are incompatible so that gains by one person must inevitably come about at the expense of the other.³

¹ Stephen Robbins, *Organizational Behavior*, 7th Ed., Prentice Hall Inc., USA, 1996

² Steven L. McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinov, *Organizational behavior*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill, Higher Education, USA, 2003.

³ Rashid and Archer, *Organizational Behavior*, Methuen Publication, Canada, 1985

The term conflict has many meanings and has been used to refer to events ranging from the inner turmoil produced by competing needs or desires (inner conflict) to open violence between entire societies (warfare). In the context of OB, however, conflict refers primarily to instances in which units or individuals within an organization work against rather than with one another. More formally, according to one widely accepted definition, conflict is a process in which one party perceives that another party has taken some action which will exert negative effects on its major interests, or is about to take such action. In other words, the key elements in conflict seem to include: (1) opposing interests between individuals or groups, (2) recognition of such opposition, (3) the belief by each side that the other will thwart (or has already thwarted) these interests, and (4) actions that actually produce such thwarting⁴.

The term conflict has been used at times to describe the antecedent conditions to the conflict episode (for example, scarcity of resources), affective states of individuals such as hostility or anxiety, cognitive states of individuals relative to their awareness of conflict situations and conflict behavior states ranging from passive resistance to overt aggression. So conflict refers to all types of opposition or antagonistic interaction.⁵

Conflict is when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and haven't been aligned or agreed about yet.⁶

In political terms, "conflict" refers to an ongoing state of hostility between two or more groups of people. Conflict as taught for graduate and professional work in conflict

⁴ Robert A. Baron and Jerald Greenberg, Behavior in Organizations- understanding and managing the Human Side of Work

⁵ Callahan, Fleenor and Knodson, Understanding Organizational Behavior- Management view point, Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co. USA, 19986

⁶ Carter MC Namara, MBA, PhD, Authenticity Consulting, LLC, 1997

resolution commonly has the definition: "when two or more parties, with perceived incompatible goals, seek to undermine each other's goal-seeking capability".⁷

2.2 Views of conflict

It is entirely appropriate to say there has been “Conflict” over the role of conflict in groups and organizations. One school of thought has argued that conflict must be avoided, that it indicates a malfunctioning within the group. We call this the traditional view. Another school of thought, the human relations view, argues that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group and that it need not be evil, but rather has the potential to be a positive force in determining group performance. The third, and most recent, perspective proposes that conflict can be a positive force in a group but explicitly argues that some conflict is absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively. We label this third school the interactions approach. Let’s take a closer look at each of these views.

2.2.1 The Traditional view

The early approach to conflict assumed all conflict was bad. Conflict was viewed negatively, and it was used synonymously with such terms as violence, destruction, and irrationality to reinforce its negative connotation. Conflict, by definition, was harmful and was to be avoided.

The traditional view was consistent with the attitudes that prevailed about group behavior in the 1930s and 1940s. Conflict was seen as a dysfunctional outcome resulting from

⁷ <http://www.wikipedia.com>

poor communication, a lack of openness and trust between people, and the failure of managers to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees.

The view that all conflict is bad certainly offers a simple approach to looking at the behavior of people who create conflict. Since all conflict is to be avoided, we need merely direct out attention to the causes of conflict and correct these malfunctioning in order to improve group and organizational performance. Although research studies now provide strong evidence to dispute that this approach to conflict reduction results in high group performance, many of us still evaluate conflict situations utilizing this outmoded standard..

2.2.2 The Human Relations View

The human relations position argued that conflict was a natural occurrence in all groups and organizations. Since conflict was inevitable, the inhuman relations school advocated acceptance of conflict. They rationalized its existence: It cannot be eliminated, and there are even times when conflict may benefit a group's performance. The human relations view dominated conflict theory from the late 1940s through the mid-1970s.

2.2.3 The Interactions View

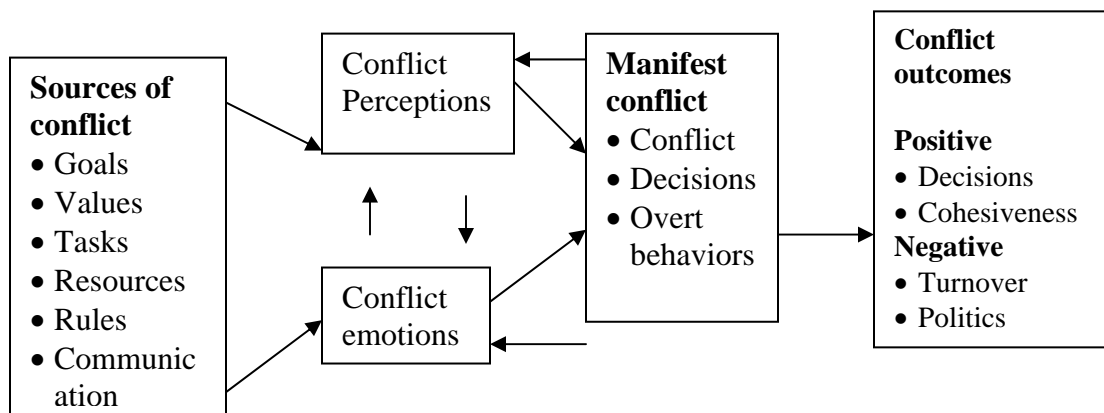
While the human relations approach accepted conflict, the interactions approach encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, and cooperative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and no responsive to needs for change and innovation. The major contribution of the interactions approach, therefore, is encouraging group leaders to maintain an ongoing minimum level of conflict-enough to keep the group viable, self-critical, and creative.

Given the interactions view, it becomes evident that to say conflict is all good or bad is inappropriate and naïve. Whether a conflict is good or bad depends on the type of conflict. Specifically, it's necessary to differentiate between functional and dysfunctional conflict.⁸

2.3 The conflict process

When we describe an incident involving conflict, we are usually referring to the observable part of conflict-the angry words, shouting matches, and actions that symbolize opposition. But this manifest conflict is only a small part of the conflict process. As Exhibit 1 below illustrates, the conflict process begins with the sources of conflict like; Incompatible goals, different values, and other conditions lead one or both parties to perceive that conflict exists. We will look closely at these sources of conflict later because understanding and changing the root causes is the key to effective conflict management

Figure 1. The conflict process



⁸ ibid

Source- Steven L. Mcshane and Mary Ann Von Glinov, Organizational Behavior, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, USA, 2003. pp387

2.3.1 Sources of conflict in organizations

Incompatible Goals A common source of conflict is goal incompatibility. Goal incompatibility occurs when one employee's or department's personal or work goals seem to interfere with another person's or department's goals.

Differentiation:-differences in personal values, attitudes, perceptions, cultures, educational back ground, and other related factors may result in conflict

Task interdependence:-Conflict tends to increase with the level of task interdependence. Task interdependence exists when team members must share common inputs to their individual tasks, need to interact in the process of executing their work, or receive outcomes (such as rewards) that are determined partly by the performance of other. The higher the level of task interdependence, the greater the risk of conflict, because there is a greater chance that each side will disrupt or interfere with the other side's goals.

i. Pooled interdependence- This is the weakest form of interdependence (other than independence), in which work units operate independently except for reliance on a common resource or authority.

ii. Sequential interdependence- This occurs when the output of one person or unit is becomes the direct input for another person or unit.

iii. Reciprocal interdependence- This is the highest level of interdependence, in which work output is exchanged back and forth among individuals or work units. For example, bus drivers are dependent on the maintenance crews to keep the buses in good repair, and the maintenance crews are dependent on the drivers to operate the vehicles wisely so that their work is minimized.

Scarce Resources:- Scarce resources generate conflict because scarcity motivates people to compete with other who also need those resources to achieve their objectives.

Ambiguous Rules:- Ambiguous rules-or the complete lack of rules-breed conflict, because uncertainty increases the risk that one party intends to interfere with the other party's goals. Ambiguity also encourages political tactics, and in some cases, employees enter a free-for-all battle to win decisions in their favor. This explains why conflict is more common during mergers and acquisitions. Employees from both companies have conflicting practices and values, and few rules have developed to minimize the maneuvering for power and resources. On the other hand, when clear rules exist, employees know what to expect from each other and have agreed to abide by those rules.

Communication problems:- Conflict often occurs as a result of the lack of opportunity, ability, or motivation to communicate effectively. Let's look at each of these causes. First, when two parties lack the opportunity to communicate, they tend to explain past behaviors and anticipate future actions. Unfortunately, stereotypes are sufficiently subjective that emotions can negatively distort the meaning of an opponent's actions, there by escalating perceptions of conflict. Moreover, without direct interaction, the two sides have less psychological empathy for each other.

Second, some people lack the necessary skills to communicate in a diplomatic, non confrontational manner. When one party communicates its disagreement in an arrogant way, opponents are more likely to heighten their perception of the conflict. Arrogant behavior also sends a message that one side intends to be competitive rather than cooperative. This attitude may lead the other party to reciprocate with a similar conflict management style. Consequently, as we explained earlier, ineffective communication often leads to an escalation in the conflict cycle.

Ineffective communication can also lead to a third problem: less motivation to communicate in the future. For example, an accountant was verbally abused by an information services manager soon after he was hired. Since then, he has avoided the manager, leaving some problems undetected and unresolved. Another employee reported that the relationship with his manager deteriorated to such an extent that for five months they communicated only by e-mail. These reactions aren't surprising. Socio emotional conflict is uncomfortable, so people are less motivated to interact with others in a conflicting relationship.

Unfortunately, less communication can further escalate the conflict because there is less opportunity to empathize with the opponent's situation and opponents are more likely to rely on distorted stereotypes of the other party. In fact, conflict tends to further distort these stereotypes through the process of social identity we begin to see competitors less favorably so that our self-identity remains strong during these uncertain times.

The lack of motivation to communicate also explains (along with different values and beliefs, described earlier) why conflict is more common in cross-cultural relationships.

People tend to feel uncomfortable or awkward interacting with co-workers from different cultures, so they are less motivated to engage in dialogue with them. With limited communication, people rely more on stereotypes to fill in missing information. They also tend to misunderstand each other's verbal and nonverbal signals, further escalating the conflict.

2.3.2 Manifest Conflict

Conflict perceptions and emotions usually manifest themselves in the decisions and overt behaviors of one party toward the other. These conflict episodes may range from subtle nonverbal behaviors to warlike aggression. Conflict is also manifested by the style each side uses to resolve the conflict, such as whether one side tries to defeat the other or find a mutually beneficial solution. These styles influence each side's decisions and behaviors. Consequently, they play a critical role in determining whether the conflict will escalate or be resolved quickly.

2.3.3 Conflict Escalation cycle

The conflict process in Exhibit above shows arrows looping back from manifest conflict to conflict perceptions and emotions. These loops represent the fact that the conflict process is really a series of episodes that potentially come together into an escalation cycle or spiral. It doesn't take much to start this conflict cycle-just an inappropriate comment, a misunderstanding, or undiplomatic action. These behaviors communicate to the other party in a way that creates a perception of conflict. Even if the first party did not intend to demonstrate conflict, the second party's response may create that perception.

If the conflict remains task-related, both parties may resolve the conflict through logical analysis. However, the communication process has enough ambiguity that a wrong look or word may trigger an emotional response by the other side and set the stage for socioemotional conflict. These distorted beliefs and emotions reduce each side's motivation to communicate, making it more difficult for them to discover common ground and ultimately resolve the conflict. The parties then rely more on stereotypes and emotions to reinforce their perceptions of the other party. Some structural conditions increase the likelihood of conflict escalation. Employees who are more confrontational and less diplomatic also tend to escalate conflict.

2.3.4 Conflict outcomes

It's not surprising that people normally associate conflict management with reducing or removing conflict. However, task related conflict should be encouraged under some conditions. Conflict management isn't necessarily about minimizing conflict. It refers to interventions that alter the level and form of conflict in ways that maximize its benefits and minimize its dysfunctional consequences. This sometimes means increasing the level of task-related conflict, which helps people recognize problems, identify a variety of solutions, and better understand the relevant issues. This positive conflict encourages people to consider new perspectives and debate these emerging views.

Conflict is also beneficial where intergroup conflict improves team dynamics within those units. Teams increase their cohesiveness and task orientation when they face an

external threat. Conditions of moderate conflict motivate team members to work more efficiently toward their goals, there by increasing the team's productivity.⁹

Functional Vs Dysfunctional Conflict out comes

Generally, conflict out comes can be classified in to functional and dysfunctional. These can be discussed over the next few paragraphs:

Modern views on conflict recognize that there are both negative and positive consequences of conflict. Some conflicts support the goals of the group and improve its performance; these are functional, constructive forms of conflict. Additionally, there are conflicts that hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict.

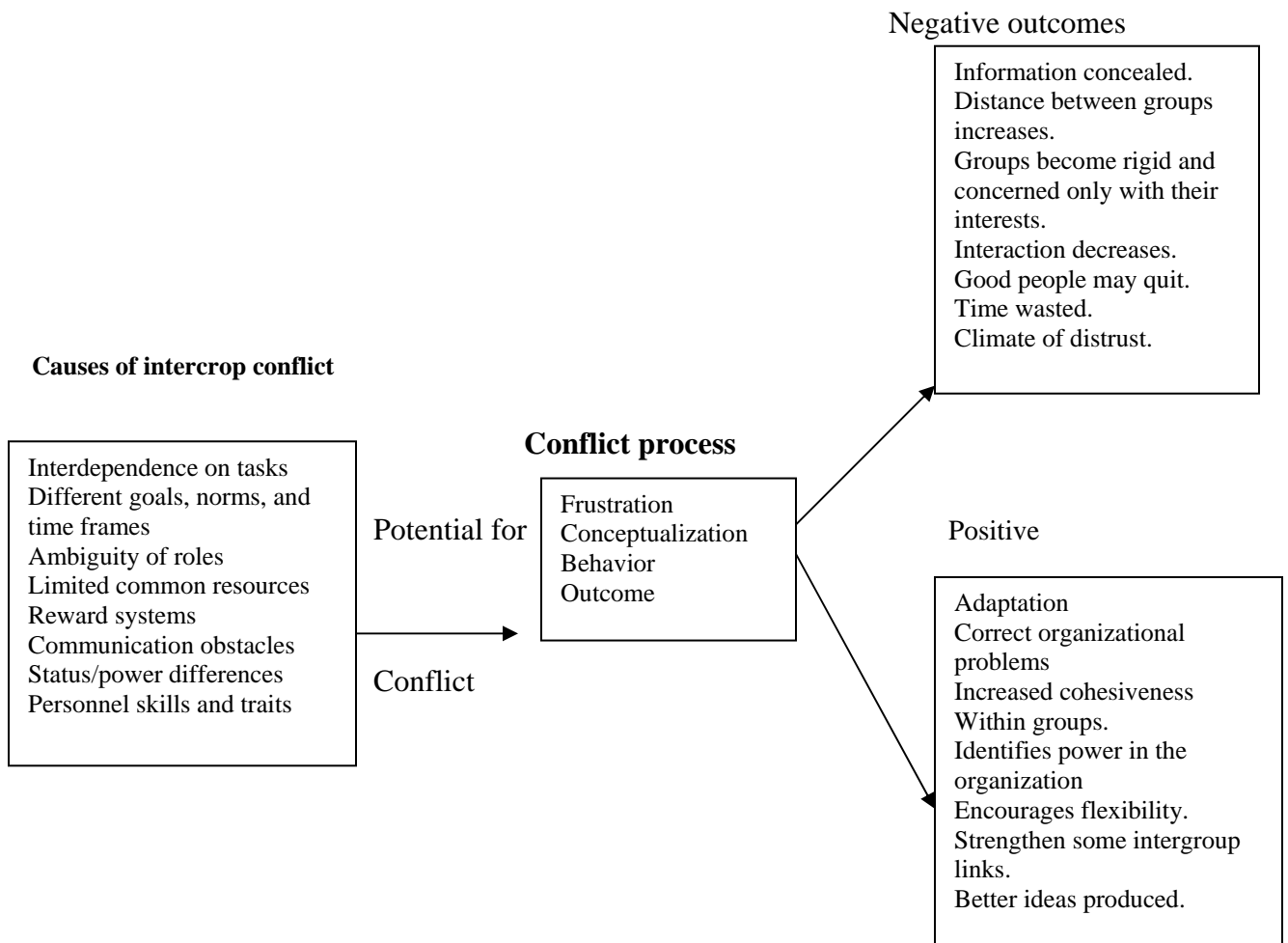
Of course, it is one thing to argue that conflict can be valuable for the group, and another to be able to tell if a conflict is functional or dysfunctional. The demarcation between functional and dysfunctional is neither clear nor precise. No one level of conflict can be adopted as acceptable or unacceptable under all conditions. The type and level of conflict that creates healthy and positive involvement toward one group's goals today may, in another group or in the same group at another time, be highly dysfunctional.

The criterion that differentiates functional from dysfunctional conflict is group performance. Since groups exist to attain a goal or goals, it is the impact the conflict has on the group, rather than on any individual member, that determines functionality. Of course, the impact of conflict on the individual and its impact on the group are rarely mutually exclusive, so the ways that individuals perceive a conflict may have an

⁹ ibid

important influence of its effect on the group. However, this need not be the case, and when it is not, our focus will be on the group. So whether an individual group member perceives a given conflict as being personally disturbing or positive is irrelevant. For example, a group member may perceive an action as dysfunctional, in that the outcome is personally dissatisfying to him or her. However, for our analysis, that action would be functional if it furthers the objectives of the group.¹⁰

Figure 2 Conflict causes, process and out comes



¹⁰ Op .cit

Source-Randolph & Blackburn, Managing Organizational Behavior, Richard D.Irwin, inc., USA, 1989 pp 574

2.4 Types of conflict

There are different types of conflict based on the parties involved in it. The following classification is the commonly accepted ones.

2.4.1 Intrapersonal conflict

At one time or another, every employee experiences conflict within himself or herself. A person may have conflicting goals. He or she may lack the required ability for a particular job. His or her path may be blocked by other people, lack of facilities, rules and regulations, etc. Regardless of the source, these conflicts can cause a person frustrations, tension and anxiety. There is in fact no such thing as “the perfect job” there is no job which provides total satisfaction. All jobs entail some degree of stress and in fact, some tension may be considered desirable. However, if the tension, anxiety and frustration are too great, serious personal harm may follow.

Basic Types of Intrapersonal Conflict

Four basic types of conflict that may take place within a person are as follows:

1. Approach-Approach Conflict (++)
2. Approach-Avoidance Conflict (+-)
3. Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict (- -)
4. Double Approach-Avoidance Conflict (+ -- -)

Approach-Approach Conflict:- Here a person is faced with the problem of choosing from two equally powerful positive goals. He or she would like to have both but must choose only one. This limitation of choice causes internal conflict which leads to frustrated behavior. A young lady has two young men who both want to marry? A woman has two jobs open to her, both equally attractive. Which should she choose?

Approach-avoidance conflict:- This refers to a goal which has some strong positive features and some strong negative features. On the one hand, a person would like to move towards the goal but on the other hand he or she would like to stay away from it. An employee is offered a promotion in another department. The job is very interesting but there is a lousy boss”. What should he or she do?

Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict:- In this situation, there are two alternatives to choose from but both are negative. A worker has to choose between two boring jobs. A manager has to reach the office before 9 A.M. for an important meeting. He is already late. If he takes the highway he is likely to be held up in the rush hour traffic. If he takes the city route, he will have so many traffic lights to cross, he may still not make it on time. What should he do?

Double approach – avoidance conflict:- this refers to a situation in which the individual is faced with two goals to choose from, both of which have some negative and some positive features. A high performer might find himself or herself in this “double bind” if management, being impressed by his performance, offers him two higher level positions have some discouraging features even though they pay higher salaries. What he or she do? Here a person is faced with the problem of choosing from two equally powerful positive goals

2.4.2 Interpersonal conflict

The second basic type of conflict that we consider in this chapter is that which occurs between one individual and another or between an individual and the group to which he or she belongs, or between different groups within an organization. Most employees are concerned about their position, status, power, etc., within the organization and resent any encroachment of them. Also, they are often competing with each other for recognition, approval, and promotion. Quite often, interpersonal conflicts are also interdepartmental—for example, between a manager of one department and a manager of another, or between one department and another. Many people find interpersonal conflict stimulating and challenging. But not all do, particularly the losers.

Sometimes, to promote his or her own interests, or through foolishness, an individual will break the norms of the group to which he or she belongs. For example, a person may work too hard, ignore a strike call, or inform on a colleague. This will invite hostility and retaliation from the rest of the group. And so another type of interpersonal conflict comes into existence.¹¹

2.4.3. Intergroup conflict

Intergroup conflict exists when one group attempts to achieve its goals at the expense of the goal attainment of another group in the organization. Thus, conflict is the opposite of the desired cooperation and coordination between groups in an organization. Unfortunately, it is all too common. To complete the definition of conflict, managers need to recognize that intergroup conflict is a cyclical process involving four repeated steps: frustration, conceptualization, behavior, and outcome.

¹¹ *ibid*

2.4.4 Intragroup conflict

Is a type of conflict which is created between parties within a given group. This type of conflict happen because of various reasons pertaining to personal, group or organization as a whole

2.4.5 Intraorganizational conflict

This is a type of conflict which happens between several parties within an organization. It is not uncommon to see several parties and departments which fight over limited resources, conduct an interdependent work, communicate several times over the works for which they are responsible together...etc. All these can be sited as potential sources of this type of conflict. It can be intergroup conflict or intragroup conflict.

2.4.6 Interorganizational conflict

Several organizations encountered conflicts between themselves because of different reasons. This type of conflict is called interorganizational conflict.

2.4.7 Cross cultural conflict

Doing business with people from different cultures is commonplace in our global company where cross- boarder mergers, joint ventures, and alliances are the order of the day. Because of differing assumptions about how to think and act, the potential for cross cultural conflict is both immediate and huge. Success and failure, when conducting business across cultures, often hinges on avoiding and minimizing actual or perceived conflict. Awareness of the cross cultural differences (individualism/collectivism,

perceptions of time, interpersonal space, language, religion and Universalists (rules) particularists/ relationships.) is an important first step. Beyond that, the cross cultural conflict can be moderated by using international consultants and building cross cultural relationships.

2.5. Dysfunctional conflict management styles

People tend to handle negative conflict in patterned ways referred to as styles. Several conflict styles have been categorized over the years. According to conflict specialist Afzalur Rahim's model, five different conflict-handling styles are identified. There is no single best style; each has strengths and limitations and is subject to situational constraint.

Integrating:- in this style interested parties confronted the issue and cooperatively identify the problem, generate and weigh alternative solutions, and select a solution. Integrating is appropriate for complex issues plagued by misunderstanding. However, it is inappropriate for resolving conflicts rooted in opposing value systems. Its primary strength is its longer lasting impact because it deals with the underlying problem rather than merely with symptoms. The primary weakness of this style is that it is very time consuming.

Obliging (smoothing):- an obliging person neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concern of the other party. This style, often called smoothing, involves playing down differences while emphasizing communalities. Obliging may be an appropriate conflict handling strategy when it is possible to eventually get something in return. But it is inappropriate for complex or worsening problems. Its primary strength is that it encourages cooperation. Its main weakness is that it's temporary fix that fails to confront the underlying problem.

Dominating (forcing):- high concern for self and low concern for others encourages “I win you lose” tactics. The other party’s need is largely ignored. This style is often called forcing because it relies on formal authority to force compliance. Dominating is appropriate when an unpopular solution must be implemented, the issue is minor or a deadline is near. It is appropriate in an open and participative climate. Speed is its primary strength. Primary weakness of this domineering style is that it often breeds resentment.

Avoiding:- This tactic may involve either passive withdrawal from the problem or active suppression of the issue. Avoidance is appropriate for trivial issues or when the costs of confrontation outweigh the benefits of resolving the conflict. It is inappropriate for difficult and worsening problems. The main strength of this style is that it buys time in unfolding or ambiguous situations. The primary weakness is that the tactic provides a temporary fix that sidesteps the underlying problem.

Compromising:- This is a give-and-take approach involving moderate concern for both self and others. Compromise is appropriate when parties have opposite goals or possess equal power. But compromise is inappropriate when overuse would lead to inconclusive action (e.g., failure to meet production deadlines). The primary strength of this tactic is that the democratic process has no losers, but it’s a temporary fix that can stifle creative problem solving.¹²

2.6 Choosing the best conflict management style

¹² Robert Kreitner and Angelo Kinicki, Organizational Behavior 5th Ed., McGraw-Hill Higher Education,, USA, 2001

The collaborative style is usually recognized as the preferred approach to conflict resolution. For example, the collaborative conflict management style results in better joint venture performance. The parties discuss concerns more quickly and openly, seek their partners opinions, and explain their course of action more fully than when a non collaborative style is used. However, this style works only under certain conditions. Specifically, it is best when the parties do not have perfectly opposing interests and when they have enough trust and openness to share information. Collaborating is usually desirable because organizational conflicts are rarely won-lose situations. There is usually some opportunity for mutual gain if the parties search for creative solutions.

You might think that avoiding is an ineffective conflict management strategy, but it may be the best approach when the issue is trivial or as a temporary tactic to cool down heated disputes. However, conflict avoidance should not be a long-term solution because it increases the other party's frustration.

The competing style of conflict resolution is usually inappropriate because organizational relationships rarely involve complete opposition. However, competing may be necessary when you know you are correct and the dispute requires a quick solution. For example, you might use the competing style when you believe the other party's position is unethical or when it otherwise violates your fundamental values. The competing style may also be necessary when the other party would take advantage of more cooperative strategies.

The accommodating style may be appropriate when the other party has substantially more power or the issue is not as important to you as to the other party. On the other hand,

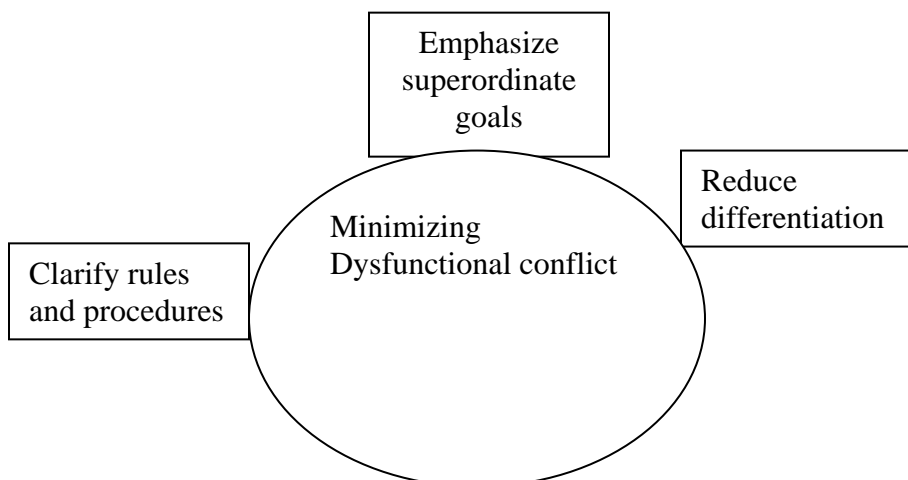
accommodating behaviors may give the other side unrealistically high expectations, thereby motivating that party to seek more from you in the future. In the long run, accommodating may produce more conflict rather than resolve it.

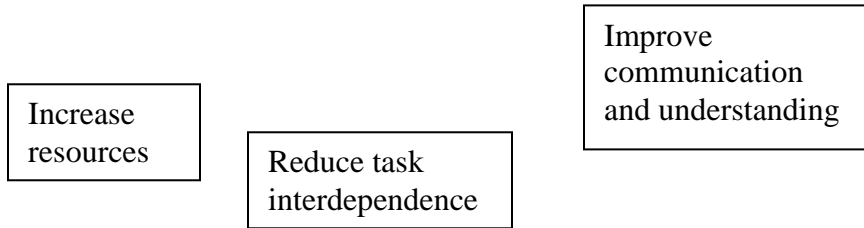
The compromising style may be best when there is little hope for mutual gain through problem solving, both parties have equal power, and both are under time pressure to settle their differences. However, compromise is rarely a final solution and may cause the parties to overlook options for mutual gain.

2.7 Structural approaches to conflict management

Conflict management styles refer to how we approach the other party in a conflict situation. But conflict management also involves altering the underlying structural causes of potential conflict. The main structural approaches are identified in Exhibit below. Although this section discusses ways to reduce conflict, we should keep in mind that conflict management sometimes calls for increasing conflict, mainly by reversing the strategies described over the next few pages.

Figure 3 - structural approach to conflict management





Source- Steven L. Mcshane and Mary Ann Von Glinov, *Organizational Behavior*, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, USA, 2003, pp397

2.7.1 Emphasizing superordinate Goals

Superordinate goals are common objectives held by conflicting parties that are more important than the departmental or individual goals on which the conflict is based. By increasing commitment to corporate wide goals, employees place less emphasis on and therefore feel less conflict with co-workers regarding competing individual or departmental-level goals. Super ordinate goals also potentially reduce the problem of differentiation because they establish a common frame of reference. Heterogeneous team members still perceive different ways to achieve corporate objectives, but superordinate goals ensure they mutually understand and agree on the objectives themselves.

2.7.2 Reducing Differentiation

Another way to minimize dysfunctional conflict is to reduce the differences that produce the conflict in the first place.

2.7.3 Improving Communication and Understanding

Communication is critical to effective conflict management. Communication can range from casual gatherings among employees who rarely meet otherwise to formal processes where differences are identified and discussed. Multinational peacekeeping forces work together more effectively when troops eat and socialize together. Given increased opportunity, ability, and motivation to share information, employees develop less extreme perceptions of each other than if they rely on stereotypes and emotions. Direct communication provides a better understanding of the other person's or department's work environment and resource limitations. Ongoing communication is particularly important where the need for functional specialization makes it difficult to reduce differentiation.

2.7.4 Reducing Task interdependence

Conflict increases with the level of interdependence, so minimizing dysfunctional conflict might involve reducing the level of interdependence between the parties. If cost-effective, this strategy might occur by dividing the shared resource so that each party has exclusive use of part of it. Sequentially or reciprocally interdependent jobs might be combined so that they form a pooled interdependence. For example, rather than having one employee serve customers and another operate the cash register, each employee could handle both customer activities alone. Buffers also help reduce task interdependence inventory between people who perform sequential tasks. We also find human buffers in organizations-people who intervene between highly interdependent people or work units.

2.7.5 Increasing Resources

An obvious way to reduce conflict due to resource scarcity is to increase the amount of resources available. Corporate decision makers might dismiss this solution quickly because of the costs involved. However, they need to compare these costs carefully with the costs of dysfunctional conflict arising out of resource scarcity.

2.7.6 Clarifying Rules and Procedures

Some conflicts arise from ambiguous decision rules regarding the allocation of scarce resources. Consequently, these conflicts can be minimized by establishing rules and procedures. Rules clarify the distribution of resources, such as when students can use the laser printer or for how long they can borrow library books.

Rules establish changes to the terms of interdependence, such as an employee's hours of work or a supplier's fulfillment of an order. In most cases, the parties affected by these rules are involved in the process of deciding these terms of interdependence. Because it redefines the terms of interdependence, the strategy of clarifying rules is part of the larger process of negotiation.

2.8 Cultural and Gender Differences in Conflict Management styles

Cultural differences are more than just a source of conflict. Cultural background also affects the conflict management style we prefer using, because we are more comfortable

with conflict management styles that are consistent with our personal and cultural value system.

Research suggests that people from collectivist cultures-where group goals are valued more than individual goals-are motivated to maintain harmonious relations. Consequently they tend to rely on avoidance or collaboration to resolve disagreements. In contrast, people from individualistic cultures more frequently apply a compromising or competing style. People from collectivist cultures can be just as competitive as are individualists with people outside their group. However, collectivists are generally more likely to avoid confrontation, where possible.

Some writers suggest that men and women also tend to rely on different conflict management styles. Generally speaking, women pay more attention than do men to the relationship between the parties. Consequently, they tend to adopt a collaborative style in business settings and are more willing to compromise to protect the relationship. Men tend to be more competitive and take a short-term orientation to the relationship. Of course, we must be cautious about these observations because gender has a weak influence on conflict management style.¹³

2.9 Stimulating Functional Conflict

Sometimes committees and decision-making groups become so bogged down in details and procedures that nothing substantive is accomplished. Carefully monitored functional conflict can help get the creative juices flowing once again. Managers basically have two

¹³ op.cit

options. They can fan the fires of naturally occurring conflict-but this approach can be unreliable and slow. Alternatively, managers can resort to programmed conflict. Experts in the field define programmed conflict as “conflict that raises different opinions regardless of the personal feelings of the managers. The trick is to get contributors to either defend or criticize ideas based on relevant facts rather than on the basis of personal preference or political interests. This requires disciplined role playing. Two programmed conflict techniques with proven track records are devil’s advocacy and the dialectic method. Let us explore these two ways of simulating functional conflict.

Devil’s Advocacy:- This technique gets its name from a traditional practice within the roman Catholic Church. When someone’s name came before the College of Cardinals for elevation to sainthood, it was absolutely essential to ensure that he or she had a spotless record. Consequently, one individual was assigned the role of devil’s advocate to uncover and air all possible objections to the person’s canonization. In accordance with this practice, devil’s advocacy in today’s organizations involves assigning someone the role of critic.

This approach to programmed conflict is intended to generate critical thinking and reality testing. It is a good idea to rotate the job of devil’s advocate so no one person or group develops a strictly negative reputation. Moreover, periodic devil’s advocacy role-playing is good training for developing analytical and communication skills.

The Dialectic Method:- Like devil’s advocacy, the dialectic method is time honored practice. This particular approach to programmed conflict traces back to the dialectic school of philosophy in ancient Greece. Plato and his followers attempted to synthesize

truths by exploring opposite positions (called thesis and antithesis). Court systems in the United States and elsewhere rely on directly opposing points of view for determining guilt or innocence. Accordingly, today's dialectic method calls for managers to foster a structured debate of opposing viewpoints prior to making a decision.

A major drawback of the dialectic method is that "winning the debate" may overshadow the issue at hand. Also, the dialectic method requires more skill training than does devil's advocacy. Regarding the comparative effectiveness of these two approaches to stimulating functional conflict, however, a laboratory study ended in a tie. Compared with groups that strived to reach a consensus, decision-making groups using either devil's advocacy or the dialectic method yield equally higher quality decisions.

But, in more recent laboratory study, groups using devil's advocacy produced more potential solutions and made better recommendations for a case problem than did groups using the dialectic method. In light of this mixed evidence, managers have some latitude in using either devil's Advocacy or dialectic method for pumping creative life back into stalled deliberations. Personal preference and the role players' experience may well be the deciding factors in choosing one approach over the other. The important thing is to actively stimulate functional conflict when necessary (such as when the risk of blind conformity or groupthink is high).¹⁴

2.10 Resolving Conflict through Negotiation

Negotiation occurs whenever two or more conflicting parties attempt to resolve their divergent goals by redefining the terms of their interdependence. In other words, people

¹⁴ *ibid*

negotiate when they think that discussion can produce a more satisfactory arrangement (at least for them) in their exchange of goods or services.

As you can see, negotiation is not an obscure practice reserved for labor and management bosses when hammering out a workplace agreement. Everyone negotiates-every day. Most of the time, you often don't even realize that you are in negotiations. Negotiation is particularly evident in the workplace because employees work interdependently. They negotiate with their supervisors over next month's work assignments, with customers over the sale and delivery schedules of their product, and with co-workers over when to have lunch. And yes, they occasionally negotiate with each other in labor dispute and workplace agreements.

Some writers suggest that negotiations are more successful when the parties adopt a collaborative style, whereas others caution that this conflict management style is sometimes costly. We know that any win-lose style (competing, accommodating, etc.) is unlikely to produce the optimal solution, because the parties have not shared information necessary to discover a mutually satisfactory solution. On the other hand, we must be careful about adopting an openly collaborative style until mutual trust has been established.

The concern with collaboration is that information is power, so information sharing gives the other party more power to leverage a better deal if the opportunity occurs. Skilled negotiators often adopt a cautiously collaborative style at the outset by sharing information slowly and determining whether the other side will reciprocate. In this

respect, they try to establish trust with the apparent that a win-win solution is not possible or the other party is unwilling to share information with a cooperative orientation.

2.10.1 Situational influences on Negotiations

The effectiveness of negotiating depends on both the situation and the behaviors of the negotiators. Four of the most important situational factors are location, physical setting, time, and audience.

Location:- It is easier to negotiate on your own turf because you are familiar with the negotiating environment and are able to maintain comfortable routines. Also, there is no need to cope with travel-related stress or depend on others for resources during the negotiation. Of course, you can't walk out of negotiations as easily when on your own turf, but this is usually a minor issue. Considering these strategic benefits of home turf, many negotiators agree to neutral territory. Telephones, videoconferences, and other forms of information technology potentially avoid territorial issues, but skilled negotiators usually prefer the media richness of face-to-face meetings.

Physical setting:- The physical distance between the parties and the formality of the setting can influence the parties' orientation toward each other and the disputed issues.. People who sit face-to-face are more likely to develop a win-lose orientation toward the conflict situation. In contrast, some negotiation groups deliberately intersperse

participants around the table to convey a win-win orientation. Others arrange the seating so that both parties face a whiteboard, reflecting the notion that both parties face the same problem or issue.

Time Passage and Deadlines:- The more time people invest in negotiations, the stronger is their commitment to reaching an agreement. The passage of time increases the motivation to resolve the conflict, but it also fuels the escalation increase the motivation to resolve the conflict, but it also fuels the escalation of commitment problems. For example, the more time put into negotiations, the stronger the tendency to make unwarranted concessions so that the negotiations do not fall.

Time deadlines may be useful to the extent that they motivate the parties to complete negotiations. However, time deadlines may become a liability when exceeding deadlines is costly. Negotiators make concessions and soften their demands more rapidly as the deadline approaches. Moreover, time pressure inhibits a collaborative conflict management style, because the parties have less time to exchange information or present flexible offers.

Audience Characteristics:- Most negotiators have audiences-anyone with a vested interest in the negotiation outcomes, such as executives, other team members, or the general public. Negotiators tend to act differently when their process, compared with situations in which the audience sees only the end results. When the audience has direct surveillance over the proceedings, negotiators tend to be more competitive, less willing to make concessions, and more likely to engage in political tactics against the other party. This hardliner behavior shows the audience that the negotiator is working for their

interest. With their audience watching, negotiators also have more interest in saving face. Sometimes audiences are drawn into the negotiations by acting as a source of indirect appeals. The general public often takes on this role when groups negotiate with governments.

2.10.2. Negotiator Behaviors influence on negotiation

Negotiator behaviors play an important role in resolving conflict. Four of the most important behaviors are setting goals, Gathering information, communicating effectively, and making concessions.

Planning and setting goals:-Research has consistently reported that people have more favorable negotiation results when they plan and set goals. In particular, negotiators should carefully think through their initial offer, target, and resistance points. They need to check their underlying assumptions, as well as goals and values. Equally important is the need to research what the other party wants from the negotiation.

Gathering information:- “Seek to understand before you see to be understood.” This popular philosophy from management guru Stephen Covey applies to effective negotiations. It means that we should spend more time listening closely to the other party and asking them for details of their position. One way to improve the information-

gathering process is to have a team of people participate in negotiations. With more information about the opponent's interests and needs, negotiators are better able to discover low-cost concessions or proposals that will satisfy the other side.

Communicating effectively:- Effective negotiators communicate in a way that maintains effective relationships between the parties. Specifically, they minimize socio emotional conflict by focusing on issues rather than people. Effective negotiators also avoid irritating statements such as “I think you’ll agree that this is a generous offer.” Effective negotiators are masters of persuasive communication. In particular, negotiators structure the content of their messages so that their goals are accepted by others, not merely understood.

Making concessions:- Concessions are important because they (1) enable the parties to move toward the area of potential agreement, (2) symbolize each party's motivation to bargain in good faith, and (3) tell the other party of the relative importance of the negotiating items. How many concessions should you make? The answer varies with the other party's expectations and the level of trust between you. Being too tough can undermine relations between the parties; giving too many concessions implies weakness and encourages the other party to use power and resistance.¹⁵

2.11 Third-Party Interventions

Many disputes in organizational settings are also resolved with the assistance of a third party. Third-party conflict resolution is any attempt by a relatively neutral person to help

¹⁵ op.cit

the parties resolve their differences-ranging from formal labor arbitration to informal managerial interventions to resolve disagreements among employees.

There are four main objectives in third-party conflict resolution. One objective is efficiency. Those who take the third-party role try to resolve the dispute quickly and with minimum expenditure of organizational resources. Second, conflict resolutions should be effective, meaning that the process should find the best long-term solution that will correct the underlying causes of the conflict. Third, this process should have outcome fairness. This objective ensures that the parties feel the solution provided by the third-party intervention is fair. Although outcome fairness is similar to effectiveness, they are not the same, because people sometimes think that a solution is fair even though it does not work well in the long term.

Finally, third-party conflict resolution should ensure that the parties feel the dispute resolution process is fair, whether or not the outcome is favorable to them. This objective, known as procedural fairness, is particularly important when the third party makes a binding decision to resolve the dispute. In such situations, procedural fairness increases when the third party isn't biased (e.g., doesn't have vested interest toward one party), is well informed about the facts of the situation, and has listened to all sides of the dispute. It also increases when the decision can be appealed to a higher authority and the third party applies existing policies consistently.¹⁶

¹⁶ op.cit

There are two major third parties conflict resolution method:

A. Conflict triangles:-occurs when two peoples are having a problem and instead of addressing the problem directly with each other, one of them gets a third person involved.

B.Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):- Disputes between employees, between employees and their employer, and between companies too often end up in lengthy and costly court battles. A more constructive, less expensive approach called alternative dispute resolution has enjoyed enthusiastic growth in recent years. In fact, the widely imitated people's Court-type television shows operating outside the formal judicial system are part of this trend toward what called calls "do-it-yourself justice." Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) uses faster, more user-friendly methods of dispute resolution, instead of traditional, adversarial approaches (such as unilateral decision making or litigation). The following ADR techniques represent a progression of steps third parties can take to resolve organizational conflicts. They are ranked from easiest and least expensive to most difficult and costly. A growing number of organizations have formal ADR policies involving an established sequence of various combinations of these techniques:

- **Facilitation:-** A third party, usually a manager, informally urges disputing parties to deal directly with each other in a positive and constructive manner. This can be a form of detriangling, as discussed earlier.
- **Conciliation:-** A neutral third party informally acts as a communication conduit between disputing parties. This is appropriate when conflicting parties refuse to

meet face to face. The immediate goal is to establish direct communication, with the broader aim of finding common ground and a constructive solution.

- **Peer review:-** A panel of trustworthy co-workers, selected for their ability to remain objective, hears both sides of a dispute in an informal and confidential meeting. Any decision by the review panel may or may not be binding, depending on the company's ADR policy. Membership on the peer review panel often is rotated among employees.
- **Ombudsman:-** Someone who works for the organization, and is widely respected and trusted by his or her co-workers, hears grievances on a confidential basis and attempts to arrange a solution. This approach permits someone to get help from above without relying on the formal hierarchy chain.
- **Mediation:-** "The mediator-a trained, third-party neutral-actively guides the disputing parties in exploring innovative solutions to the conflict. Although some companies have in-house mediators who have received ADR training, most also use external mediators who have no ties to the company. Unlike an arbitrator, a mediator does not render a decision. It is up to the disputants to reach mutually acceptable decision.

Arbitration:-disputing parties agreed ahead of time to accept the decision of a neutral arbitrator in a formal art like setting, often complete with evidence and witness. Participation in this form of ADR is voluntary, and statements are confidential. Decisions are based on legal merits.¹⁷

¹⁷ Op.cit

CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

3.1 Introduction

As it was already mentioned in the research methodology part, questionnaire is used as primary data collection method. It is distributed to the respondents by categorizing them in to two. The *first* type of the questionnaire is distributed to Administrative staff and the

second type of questionnaire is distributed to Academic staff and respondents who are neither academic staff nor administrative staff, (which we call them “Non academic staff” now onwards for sake of consistency). Out of 35 questionnaires distributed to Administrative staff of the organization, only 31 of them are returned back and out of 65 questionnaires distributed to Academic and non academic staff, only 60 of them was returned back. So In this chapter the information gathered from the respondents is analyzed

3.2 analysis and presentation of Data gathered from Administrative staff.

3.2.1 General bio data of respondents

The first part of the questionnaire solicited the respondents about their general bio data.

Accordingly the response of the respondents is depicted on the table 1, 2 &3 below.

Table 1 profile of respondents from Administrative staff

	Sex			Age				
	Male	Female	Total	21-25	26-30	31-40	Above 40	Total
Number	22	9	31	4	6	13	8	31
Percentage	71	29	100	13	19	42	26	100

Source- survey 2007

According to the table 1 above 22 (71%) of the respondents are males and 9(29%) of the respondents are females. From this data, we can easily observe as most of the organization’s administrative staff members are males.

Out of the total respondents, 4(13%) of them are lies between an age of 21-25, 6(19%), of them are between 31-40 years and the rest 8 (26%) of the respondents are aged above 40. From this reality we can cascade the conclusion that most of the respondents are between aged above 26. As it can be easily understandable, most of the time companies prefer to take in to consideration the maturity level of the given individual in addition to his/her knowledge and potential to provide some status. To this end, individuals whose age is above 26 are better to solve problems faced by the organizations systematically. With this regard, the organization’s Administrative staff combination is some how promising.

Table 2-Educational and marital status

	Education status					Marital status		
	Diploma	BA (BSC)	MA (MSc)	PhD	Total	Single	Married	Total
number	5	10	15	1	31	13	18	31
percentage	16	32	48	4	100	42	58	100

Source- survey 2007

As far as their educational status is concerned, (depicted in the above table 2), 5(16%) of the respondents are diploma holders, 10(32%) of them are BA (BSC) holders, 15(48%) of the respondents are MA (MSC) holders and the rest 1 (4%) of them is PhD holder.

It is definite that the educational status of the given individual has a great thing to do with the efficiency and effectiveness of what he/she performs. So the fact that Most of the administrative staff of the organization holds good academic status can contribute a lot towards the effectiveness of the organization.

With regard to respondent's marital status, 13(42%) of them are single and 18 (58%) of them are married.

The number of years of experience of an individual can contribute a lot towards the way he/she thinks, the method he/she performs his/her duty and the like. To this end, it is believed that the more an individual stays on administrative portion, the more he/she can acquire an experience of how to deal with several problems in an organization which intern leads to minimization of conflict management problems. With this regard the data collected from the respondents resembles that 14 (45%) of them have an experience of 1-2 years, 5(17%) of them have an experience of 3-4 years, 4(13%) of them has an experience of shears, 4(13%) of them have an experience of 5 years 4(13%) of the respondents have an experience of 7-8 years, 2(6%) of them have an experience of 9-10 years and the rest 2(6%) of the respondents accumulated an experience of above 10 years.

This information is clearly shown on table 3 below

Table 3 years of experience of respondents from administrative staff

Experience (in years)	Number	Percentage (%)
1-2	14	45
3-4	5	17
5-6	4	13
7-8	4	13
9-10	2	6
Above 10 years	2	6
Total	31	100

Source- survey 2007

As it is shown on the above table 3 most of the administrative staff of the organization have limited years of experience in an organization. This may create some gap in an organization with respect to managing and controlling organizational resources consistently.

3.2.2 Existence of conflict and perception on conflict

As it is already said in the introductory part and literature review part of this paper now a days, conflict becomes an inevitable aspect of organizations. So it is undoubtful for every organization and almost every individual in an organization to get involved in conflict with people around him/her. With this regard, the respondents are asked as to whether they have ever encountered conflict with people in their work place. Accordingly, 18(58%) of them respond as they encountered conflict with people with which they

worked. The rest 13(42%) of the respondents respond as if they are not ever get in to conflict with people. This figure shows that most of the Administrative staff in an organization are get in to conflict with one or another party.

The next question solicited was the frequency in which they get into conflict with people in their work place accordingly out of 18 respondents who responded as they get in to conflict with people in work place 3(16%) of them replied very often, 4(6%) of the respondents said often and the rest 9(50%) of them said respond as the conflict arises rarely. From this data we can conclude that most of the respondents get in to conflict with people in their work place rarely. But this does not mean that they are free of conflict. It is solely a comparative explanation for existence and frequency of conflict. The information and additional issues are depicted on table 4 below

Table 4- existence of conflict (response of administrative staff)

	Have you ever encountered conflict with people?	How often is the conflict	With whom do you get in conflict?
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	Yes	No	Total	Very often	Often	Rarely	Total	Ads	Students	Subordinates	ACS	NACS	Total
Number	18	13	31	3	6	9	18	5	4	3	3	3	18
%	58	42	100	16	34	50	100	27	22	17	17	17	100

Source- survey 2007

Key

Ads- Administrative staff

Acs- Academic staff

NACS- Non Academic staff

As it is shown on the above table, 5(27%) of the respondents who encountered conflict with people in work place are get in to conflict with Administrative staff members of the organization, 4(22%) of them are get in to conflict with students of the institution, 3(17%) of them are felt in to conflict with their subordinates, 3(17%) of them are with Academic Staff of the organization and the rest 3(17%) of them are felt in to conflict with Non Academic staff members of the institution. From this given information it can be said that there is greater tendency of conflict between administrative staff members of the organization because of different reasons that they can mention. What ever is the case, every individual in an organization is supposed to give a due attention for those frequent four les of conflict.

The proceeding questions are solicited in an intention of knowing the perceptions of the respondents on conflict. From general reality point of view, it can be said that “even though people look towards the same thing, they may interpret it differently” because of difference in perception that they have. To this end, every individual is expected to examine his/her perception towards conflict so that he/she can get benefits from functional conflicts and protect himself/herself her self from being a victim of dysfunctional conflicts.

With this regard, the respondents are asked several questions which are intended to know their perceptions towards conflict. The following table 5 reveals the information collected from the respondents.

Table 5- perception on conflict (response of Administrative staff).

No	Questions	Number			Percentage		
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
1	Do you think all conflicts harm the organization?	12	19	31	39	61	100
2	Have you ever tried to create conflict among people?	1	30	31	3	97	100
3	Do you think absence of conflict shows effectiveness of the organization?	10	21	31	32	68	200

Source-servey 2007

As we already said earlier, most of recent literatures on conflict states that all the conflicts encountered by the given organization may not hamper the organization's overall efficiency and effectiveness, rather there are conflicts which enable the organization to attain and exceed the earlier set objectives. In any case, the extent to which the organization can be benefited from helpful conflicts is by large determined by how the parties in the given organization perceive it. To this end, the above table 4 shows that 12 (39%) of the respondents perceives as if all the conflicts in an organization harm the organization's effectiveness and the rest 19(61%) of them replied that all conflicts may not harm the organizational efficiency and effectiveness. This data clearly shows that there is a problem on perception conflict.

The other question which were solicited to know the respondents perception towards conflict is whether or not the respondents have ever tried to create conflict among people accordingly, 30(97%) of he respondents respond as if they never induce conflict among

people and the rest 1(3%) individual respond as some thing was done by the person to induce conflict among people. As it is said above, individuals (especially persons who hold and perform administrative tasks in an organization are required to differentiate between harmful and useful conflicts in an organization. Then they should have to induce these usable conflicts to happen and they are also required to avoid those harmful conflicts but, this is not holds true in most this organization's administrative staff case.

The last question asked to know the perception of respondents on conflict is whether they think as absence of conflict shows organizational effectiveness. Accordingly 10(32%) of them replied that yes, absence of conflict shows effectiveness of an organization and the rest 21(68%) respond as the absence of conflict may not reveal an organizational effectiveness. From this data again we can conclude that there is a perception problem on conflict on an administrative staff of the institution.

3.2.3 Frequency of conflict in an organization and parties involved in it

The essence of this information is to identify how often a conflict is encountered at organizational level, (not at individual level, which is discussed above). It is obvious that the frequency in which a conflict exists in an organization shows the extent to which the organization is capable of taking remedial actions (corrective measures) to correct the conflicting situations, if they lead to in efficiency. With this regard 5(16%) of the respondents replied that the conflict is exists in an organization very frequently, 20(65%) of them respond as it happens frequently and the rest 6(19%) respond as it happens not frequently (rarely). This data reveals that the existence of conflict in an organization is mostly frequent.

The next question asked the respondents about the parties which are frequently get in to conflict in the organization. Accordingly, 3(10%) of them replied that the conflict is frequent between Academic staff and academic staff, 14 (45%) of them said between academic staff and students 12(39%) of them respond between academic staff and administrative staff and the rest 2(6%) replied between Academic staff and Non academic staff. This information is revealed on the following table 6 precisely.

Table 6. Frequency of conflict in the organization and parties involve in it.

	How frequent is conflict in the organization?				Which parties are frequently get involved in conflict				
	Very frequent	Frequent	Not frequent	Total	Acs with Acs	Acs with students	Acs with Ads	Acs with Nacs	Total
No	5	20	6	31	3	14	12	2	31
%	16	65	19	100	10	45	39	6	100

Source- survey 2007

Key

Ads- Administrative staff

Acs- Academic staff

NAcs- Non Academic staff

3.2.4 The way an administrative staff get information about existence of conflict

There are several ways through which the given individual can get on information regarding existence of conflict. The *first* way is through hearsay. This is the method in which the given individual gets information through several chains of message which may be expected or not. This method of transmitting information is highly susceptible to distortion of the message i.e., the message transmitted via this line may miss its original nature and content. Additionally the individual who provide us information may not have full confidence in providing the whole information to us appropriately. The *second* way of getting information about existence of conflict is from friends and collageous. As we all know, our friends and collageous are our potential sources of several types of information, including information regarding existence of conflict. The *third* method of obtaining information about existence of conflict in the organization is through formal report. The given individual can also get the necessary information about conflict existence from several formal reports presented to him/her. The *fourth* potential source of information about existence of conflict is from the parties felt in conflict themselves. Several times, the parties get in to conflict by themselves may provide the information to the party that they think as providing them a solution or sharing their mental stress. With this regard 10(32%) of the respondents respond that they get an information through hearsay, 8(26%) of them replied that they get an information from friends and collageous, 9(29%) of them get through formal report and the rest 4(13%) get from parties felt in conflict. This information is depicted on the following table 7

Table 7. The way administrative staff gets information about existence of conflict

No	Ways of getting an information	Number	Percentage
1	Through hearsay	10	32
2	From friends and Collageous	8	26
3	Through formal report	9	29
4	From parties felt in conflict	4	13
	Total	31	100

Source- survey 2007

3.2.5 Sources of conflict

The sources of conflict in an organization are broadly classified in to three. The *first one* is *personal factors* which include emotions of the individual, values and ethics of the person, attitudes and perceptions, skills and responsibility diversity of the person jealousy and the like. To this end, all of the respondents (31 or 100% of them) replied that all of those factors are the personal sources of conflict in the organization.

The *second* group of source of conflict in an organization is *structural factors*. The typical factors under this are Goal differences, status inconsistencies, scarcity of resources, interdependence, unclear job boundary and relation ship among authorities. To this end, all of the respondents replied again as if all of these structural factors mentioned above are source of conflict in an organization. Specially, interdependence (relation ship between several works and work units) in an organization and unclear job boundary

(absence of demarcation between the responsibility that each parties in an organization are supposed to assume) are the two most prominent sources for most of the conflicts happen in the organization.

The *third* source of conflict in Admas University College is a communication factors. The major communication factors brings conflict in an organization includes: distorted message (a message which missed its original nature and content because of length of communication channel and parties involved in the channel), Information overload (sending a lot of information at once which creates difficulty to grasp and catch all the sent message), Emotional state, lack of communications skill, use of Jargon (technical words which are only related to some fields), information late delivery, error in perception and empathy (recognizing all individuals to be communicated as if he have equal understanding ability with the sender and the rest of receivers). With this regard also, all of the solicited respondents replied as if all of these communication factors are the sources conflict in the organization.

In addition to the aforementioned three major sources of conflict, several other factors can also sited as sources of conflict in an organization. These are: penalties, policies and procedures, reward system, cultural differences, less obedience, performance appraisal system and result and assignment of task. All of these factors are recognized by 31(100%) of the respondents as a possible sources of conflict in an organization. Specially, penalties, reward system and problems on policies and procedures are the upper most three reasons that are resulting in conflict in the organization.

3.2.6 Conflict out comes

The out comes of any conflict can be functional or dysfunctional. A given conflict out come is functional if it results in some useful or beneficial outcomes for the organization. The conflict is dysfunctional if it brings some harmful out comes which may hampers the over all organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

To this end, the respondents are solicited about the out comes of conflicts that are encountered by the organization accordingly, 6(19%) of them said that the conflict's out come was functional, 11(35%) of them replied as it was dysfunctional and the rest 14(46%) respond as if it resulted in both functional and dysfunctional out comes. This information is depicted on the table 8 below

Table 8. Conflict out comes

No	What are the out comes of conflicts encountered by the organization?	Number	Percentage
1	Functional	6	19
2	Dysfunctional	11	35
3	Both	14	46
	Total	31	100

Source survey 2007

The next question asked the respondents about the possible functional outcomes of the conflict. Actually, there are large number of functional out comes of conflict. The typical ones are promotion of organizational vitality, motivation of change, increased commitment, and it can leads to new ideas and innovation. Accordingly, all (31 or 100%) of the respondents replied as all of these can be cited as a functional outcomes of conflict in the organization.

The other question requested the respondents to identify dysfunctional out comes of conflict. Basically, the dysfunctional outcomes of conflict incorporate, Employee turn over, customer dissatisfaction, distorted group cooperation, increased job dissatisfaction, resource wastage, diversion of energy form work, creation of negative climate and it also results in inefficiency. Accordingly 31 (100%) of the respondents replied as if all of these can be taken as potential dysfunctional conflict out comes in an organization. specially, employee turn over and an increased job dissatisfaction becomes the major head ache of the organization.

3.2.7 Conflict management styles.

Majority of organizational behaviorists and psychologists recognized the fact that conflict management is a difficult task to perform. Actually this reality pertains to several reasons like difference in personality, cultural differences between parties involved in conflict, lack of conflict management skill, difference in status between all the parties. Accordingly, the respondents are asked about whether they think as if conflict management is difficult task or not. Accordingly all of the respondents replied that it is difficult task because of all the reasons mentioned above.

The proceeding question requested the respondents to identify the best conflict management style for them out of the alternatives provided. Accordingly, 5(16%) of them replied that Avoiding (ignoring) is best, 7(23%) selected negotiation, 7(23%) selected integration (coordination) 5(16%) selects compromising, 3(10%) third party intervention and the rest 4(12%) selected obliging (smoothing). This information is depicted clearly on Table 9 below.

Table 9. Conflict management styles

No	Which conflict management style do you think is best?	Number	Percentage
1	Avoiding (ignoring)	5	16
2	Negotiation	7	23
3	Integrating (cooperating)	7	23
4	Compromising	5	16
5	Third party intervention	3	10
6	Dominating (forcing)	0	0
7	Obliging (smoothing)	4	12
	Total	31	100

Source-survey 2007

3.2.8 Conflict management practice of the organization

The respondents are asked about the conflict management practice of the organization. Accordingly, 3(10%) of them replied it is excellent 3(10%) of them said it is very good,

4(13%) of them respond it is fair and the rest 21(67%) of them said it is poor .From this we can say that majority of the respondents feel as the management practice of the organization is poor.

3.2.9 Training on conflict management

In order to equip their workers with the required necessary skill, it is a must for every organization to prepare special training programs. Specifically organizations are required to provide special training for their worker on areas of conflict management to enable an individuals to develop a skill of managing conflicts arise in an organization between several partied and to enable them to grasp the essence of conflict appropriately. With this regard, the respondents were asked whether they ever got any chance to participate on a training which is prepared on area of conflict management, accordingly 5 (16%) of them replied as they get the chance to participate and the rest 26(84%) of them replied as they didn't get a chance to participate on such trainings. From this data we can easily observe that the organization is poor at coordinating and preparing trainings on conflict management areas, even though the area is too sensitive and necessary.

The next question solicits those individuals who got the chance to participate on training prepared on areas of conflict management about how they find the training. Accordingly 4 of them said it is poor and 1 of them said it is good. So this again brings us to the conclusion that the trainings ever given also lack quality.

The last question the respondents requested in this part is whether or not they applied what they learnt on training. Accordingly 5 of them (all of them) replied they did not apply it.

3.2.10 Effect of Gender on conflict management

Several individual perceives that gender have an effect on conflict management effectiveness. To this end, the respondents are asked whether they think as if gender has an impact on effectiveness on conflict management or not. Accordingly, 11 (48%) of them said as gender have an impact on conflict management effectiveness. The rest 12 (52%) of them respond as gender have no impact on conflict management.

The last question asked the respondents about which gender they think in effective in managing conflict. Accordingly 7(22%) of them said male, 8(26%) of them said female and the rest 16(52%) respond as it depends on situations. This information is depicted precisely on table 10 below.

Table 10. Effect of gender on conflict management

	Do you think gender have an impact on conflict management			Which gender do you think is better			
	Yes	No	Total	Male	Female	Depending on situations	total
Number	15	16	31	7	8	16	31
%	48	52	100	22	26	52	100

Source survey 2007

3.3 Analysis and presentation of information gathered from Academic and Non Academic staff

In this part the data collected from Academic and non academic staff of the organization in analyzed and presented.

3.3.1 General Bio data of respondents

In this part a general bio data of the respondents from Academic and Non Academic staff members of the organization is collected. The following table 11, 12 & 13 below depicts this information.

Table 11-general Bio-data of respondents (from Academic and non academic staff).

	Sex			Age				
	Male	Female	Total	21-25	26-30	31-40	Above 40	Total
Number	33	27	60	18	30	6	6	60
Percentage	55	45	100	30	50	10	10	100

Source- survey 2007

According to the information given on the above table, 33 (55%) of the respondents are male and 27 (45%) of them are female. Regarding the age distribution of the respondents, 18(30%) of the respondents lies between 21-25, 30 (50%) of them are aged between 26-30, 6(10%) of them are between 31-40 and the rest 6(10%) are aged above 40. From this fact we can say that most of the Academic and non- academic staff of the organization

are youngsters aged between 25-30 years. As previously said, this age is an age in which peoples are more reactive to conflict. So this can contribute a lot towards determining the level of conflict in an organization.

Regarding the respondents educational status, 2(3%) of them are grade 12 complete, 6(10%) of them are certificate holders, 16(27%) of them are diploma holders, 20(33%) of the respondent are BA (BSC) holders, 14 (24%) of the respondent are MA (MSC) holders and the rest 2(3%) of the respondents are PhD holders. From this information, we can easily observe the fact that most of the workers in an organization have good educational status.

With respect to the marital status of the respondents, 42(70%) of them are single and only 18(30%) of the respondents are married. This information is shown on table 12 below.

Table 12 educational marital status of respondents from academic and non academic staff

	Education status							Marital status		
	Grade 12 complete	Certificate	Diploma	BA (BSC)	MA (Msc)	PhD	Total	Single	Married	Total
Number	2	6	16	20	14	2	60	42	18	60
Percentage	3	10	27	33	24	3	100	70	30	100

Source-survey 2007

The next question provided for the respondents is the number of years of experience that the accumulated in the organization. The response obtained is depicted on table 13 below.

Table 13.years of experience of respondents from academic and Nonacademic staff

No	Years of experience	Number	Percentage
1	1-2	32	53
2	3-4	19	32
3	5-6	8	13
4	7-8	1	2
5	9-10	0	0
6	Above 10	0	0
	Total	60	100

Source survey 2007

According to the information given above, 32 (53%) of the respondents have 1-2 years of experience, 19(32%) of them have an experience of 3-4 years in the organization, 8(13%) of them have an experience of 5-6 years and the rest 1(2%) of the respondent has an experience of 8 years. This information shows that most of the academic and non academic staff members of the organization are new for the organization. As it is already known, new entrants to the organization are more exposed to conflict because of the fact that they may not get informed and well introduced and convinced with the organizational rules and procedures. Additionally this can also reflect that an organization is highly suffering from turn-over of its post employees.

3.3.2 Conflict existence.

In this part information regarding the existence of conflict is solicited through the following three major questions depicted on table-14 below.

Table 14- conflict existence (response from Academic staff and Non Academic staff)

	Have you ever encountered conflict with people			How often is the conflict arise				With whom do your get in conflict?				
	Yes	No	Total	Very often	Often	Rarely	Total	Ads	Students	Acs	Nacs	Total
Number	42	18	60	6	19	35	60	22	23	9	6	60
%	70	30	100	10	32	58	100	37	38	15	10	100

Source –survey 2007

Key

Ads- Administrative staff

Acs- Academic staff

NAcs- Non Academic staff

From the information given on the above table, 42 (70%) of the respondents replied as they have encountered conflict with people in work place and 18(30%) of them respond as they did not faced conflict with people in work place.

Regarding the frequency of conflict, 6(10%) of them respond as they very often get in to conflict, 19(32%) of them respond as they often get in to conflict and the rest 35 (58%) respond as they rarely get in to conflict.

With regard to the party with whom they get in to conflict, 22(37%) of t them respond as they get in to conflict with Administrative staff of the organization, 23(38%) of them replied as they get in to conflict with students, 9(15%) of them said that they get in to conflict with academic staffs and the rest 6 (10%) said that they get in to conflict with Non Academic staff. From this information we can conclude that workers are highly get in to conflict with students and Administrative staff of the organization.

The next questions intended to know the perception of the respondents on conflict. The data obtained from respondents is shown on table 15 below.

Table 15- perception on conflict (response form Academic and Non Academic staff)

No	Questions	Number			Percentage		
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
1	Do you think all conflicts harm the organization?	28	32	60	47	13	100
2	Have you ever tried to create conflict among people?	15	45	60	25	75	100
3	Do you think absence of conflict shows effectiveness of the organization	17	43	60	28	72	100

Source- survey 2007

According to the information given on the above table, 28 (47%) of the respondents think as all the conflicts harm the organization, 32 (53%) of them replied that all conflicts are not harming the organization. The figure shows the fact that there is conflict perception problem.

For the question which says “have you ever tried to create conflict among people, 15 (25%) of the respondents replied as they induced conflict among people. The rest 45(75%) of the respondents responds as they did not ever induced conflict among people. This can also be regarded as one indicator of perception problem of respondents on conflict.

Respondents are also requested whether they think as absence of conflict shows effectiveness of the organization. Accordingly 17(28%) of them replied as absence of conflict shows normality and effectiveness of the organization. The rest 43(72%) of the respondents answered that absence of conflict in an organization may not reveal effectiveness of the organization. This information can also be taken as a witness for the presence of problem on conflict perception.

3.3.3 Frequency of conflict and parties involved in it in the organization

Respondents are solicited an information regarding the frequency of conflict in the organization. Accordingly 7(12%) the respondents replied as it is very frequent, 23(38%) of them respond as it is frequent and the rest 30(50%) of the respondents answered that conflict is not frequent in the organization. This information is precisely given on the table 16 below.

Table 16. Frequency of conflict and parties involved in it in the organization

	How frequent is conflict in your organization?				Which parties are frequently get in to conflict in your organization?					
	very frequent	frequent	not frequent	total	ACS with ACS	Acs with students	Acs with Ads	Ads with Ads	Acs with Nacs	total
Number	7	23	30	60	8	20	17	10	5	60
%	12	38	50	100	13	33	28	17	9	100

Source- survey 2007

Key

Ads- Administrative staff

Acs- Academic staff

NAcs- Non Academic staff

Regarding the parties get in to conflict 8(13%) of the respondents respond as the conflict is between academic staffs of the organization, 20(33%) of the respondents respond as the conflict is exists between academic staff and students, 17(28%) of the respondent replied as the conflict is frequent between academic staff an administrative staff of the organization, 10(17%) of them said the conflict is observed often between administrative staff of the organization, the rest 5(9%) of the respondents replied that the conflict is also observed between academic staff and non academic staff of the organization.

3.3.4. The way academic and non academic staff members obtain information about an existence of conflict

The respondents are asked about the way they get information about the existence of conflict. Accordingly, the following information depicted on table17 is obtained.

Table 17. The way academic and non academic staff members obtain information about an existence of Conflict

no	ways of getting information	number	percentage
1	through hearsay	28	47
2	from friends and collageous	10	17
3	through formal report	9	15
4	form parties felt in conflict	13	21
	total	60	100%

Source-survey 2007

According to the information given above 28(47%) of the respondents respond as they get an information regarding existence of conflict through hearsay, 10(17%) of respondents replied that they get an information from friends and collageous, 9(15%) respond as they get through formal report, 13(21%) answered as they get an information from parties felt in conflict. From this information, we can conclude that most of the individuals get information about existence of conflict though informal way, which is more exposed to message distortion.

3.3.5 Conflict sources

As we said earlier, there are three major categories of sources of conflict these are *personal factors*, *structural factors* and *communication factors*. There are also additional sources of conflict out of the above three categories. Regarding the respondents reply, all of the respondents (60 or 100% of them) recognized all of the aforementioned sources of conflict as sources of conflict in an organization. Those sources of conflict are clearly

defined in our previous part, i.e. analysis and presentation of data gathered from administrative staff members. So no detail explanation is given here to avoid redundancy.

3.3.6. Conflict out comes

In this part the respondents are solicited about an out comes of conflicts in the organization. Acordingly13 (22%) of the respondents said it is functional, 17(28%) said the out come is dysfunctional, 30(50%) of them replied as the out come is both functional and dysfunctional. This information is clearly shown on table 18 below.

Table 18 Conflict out comes

No	What were the out comes of conflict encountered by the organization?	number	percentage
1	functional	13	22
2	dysfunctional	17	28
3	both	30	50
	total	60	100

Source- survey 2007.

Additionally, the respondents are requested to identify the possible types of functional and dysfunctional out comes of conflicts in the organization. Accordingly all of the respondents respond as all of what is listed down in the previous part are the possible functional and dysfunction out comes in the organization. Again the detail explanation is escaped to avoid redundancy.

3.3.7. Style of conflict management

All the respondents recognized the difficulty of conflict management because of the reasons stated in the previous part. Additionally, the respondents are requested about the conflict management style that they recognize as the best one. Their response is presented on table 19 below.

Table 19 Conflict management styles

no	which conflict management style do you think is best	number	percentage
1	avoiding (ignoring)	8	13
2	negotiation	15	25
3	integrating (coordinating)	15	25
4	compromising	8	13
5	third party intervention	9	15
6	dominating (forcing)	0	0

7	obliging (smoothing)	5	9
	Total	60	100

According to the information given above 8(3%) of the respondents replied as avoiding (ignoring) is the best style, 15(25%) of them replied as Negotiation is the best, 15(25%) replied as integrating (coordinating) is best, 8(13%) respond as compromising is the best style,9(15%) respond as third party intervention is best and the rest 5(9%) respond as obliging (smoothing) is the best style.

3.3.8 The institution's conflict management practice

The respondents are requested about the conflict management practice of the institution. Accordingly, 15(25%) of them replied as it is good, 9(15%) of the respondents replied as it is fair and the rest 34(60%) of the respondents replied as it is poor. This data shows that the organizations conflict management method is too problematic.

3.3.9 Training on issues related to conflict

The respondents are requested whether they are provided with training on issues related to conflict. Accordingly, all of the respondents replied as no training is given to them on the issue.. This information shows that the institution is really overlooking area.

3.3.10 Gender effect on conflict

Respondents are asked whether gender have an effect on conflict management. Accordingly, 37(62%) of them replied as gender can affect conflict management

effectiveness and the rest 23(38%) respond as it has no effect. This information is shown on table 20 below.

Table 20. Gender effect on conflict

	do you think gender have impact on conflict management			which gender do you think is better			
	yes	no	total	male	female	depending on the situations	total
Number	37	23	60	19	18	23	60
%	62	38	100	32	30	38	100

Source- survey 2007

Additionally, respondents are asked about which gender is better in managing conflict. Accordingly 19(32%) of them replied as male are better, 18(30%) replied as female are better and the rest 23(38%) replied as it depends on situations. This information shows as there is a great range of difference on perception regarding the gender effect on conflict management.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

The term conflict has many meanings and has been used to refer to events ranging from the inner turmoil produced by competing needs or desires (inner conflict) to open violence between entire societies (warfare). In the context of OB, however, conflict refers primarily to instances in which units or individuals within an organization work against rather than with one another. More formally, according to one widely accepted definition,

conflict is a process in which one party perceives that another party has taken some action which will exert negative effects on its major interests, or is about to take such action. In other words, the key elements in conflict seem to include: opposing interests between individuals or groups, recognition of such opposition, the belief by each side that the other will thwart (or has already thwarted) these interests, actions that actually produce such thwarting.

It is entirely appropriate to say there has been “Conflict” over the role of conflict in groups and organizations. One school of thought has argued that conflict must be avoided, that it indicates a malfunctioning within the group. We call this the traditional view. Another school of thought, the human relations view, argues that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group and that it need not be evil, but rather has the potential to be a positive force in determining group performance. The third, and most recent, perspective proposes that conflict can be a positive force in a group but explicitly argues that some conflict is absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively. We label this third school the interactions approach. Let’s take a closer look at each of these views.

The conflict process begins with the sources of conflict (which are broadly classified in to personal factors, communication factors and structural factors). The second step is manifest conflict. The next step is conflict escalation cycle and the last and the fourth one is conflict outcomes (which can be functional or dysfunctional)

Based on the parties involved in it, conflict can be classified in to: intrapersonal conflict and interpersonal conflicts (which inturn classified in to itergroup, intragroup, interorganizational, intraorganizational and cross cultural conflicts)

The conflict management styles used in avoiding dysfunctional conflicts are: dominating (forcing), obliging (smoothing), integrating, avoiding and compromising but, the effectiveness of these styles can be determined by situations. Negotiation and third party intervention are also used as alternative methods of conflict management.

Recent literatures on conflict management state that functional conflicts should have to be induced in organizations for better attainment of their objectives. Two programmed conflict inducing techniques with proven track records are devil's advocacy and the dialectic method.

This paper is conducted under a title of "Conflict Management Practice" in Admas University College. The information required for the study is collected by applying both primary and secondary data sources. 100 questionnaires are prepared and distributed to academic, non academic and administrative staff of the university college. The data gathered from these sources is analyzed and presented accordingly. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are also forwarded based on what is concluded.

4.2 Conclusions

Based on the already analyzed data in the previous part, the following conclusions are drawn.

- Most of the institution's administrative staff members lies between the age of 25-40 where as most of the academic and non academic staff member's age is between 21-30.
- Large part the institution's staff members hold higher educational status.

- The years of experience of, most of the institution's staff members (of all types) ranges between 1-4.years
- At both individual and organizational level, most of the employees get in to conflict with several parties because of several reasons.
- Conflict is frequent between administrative and academic staff and between academic staff and student's of the institution because of a wide range of conflict of interest.
- There is a great problem on perception of conflict i.e.; most of the individuals recognize all conflicts as harming the organization most of the individuals have not yet tried to induce conflict among individuals and most of the individuals relate absence of conflict in the organization with the organizational effectiveness.
- From conflict sources in the organization, work independence, unclear job boundaries, emotions, distorted messages, information's late delivery, penalties, reward system and policy and procedural problems are the major ones.
- Most of conflicts in the organization have dysfunctional outcomes.
- Increased rate of Turn over and job dissatisfaction are the two clearly and frequently observed dysfunctional conflict out comes in the organization.
- The organization has not ever prepared any special training program on conflict management related issues.
- The conflict management practice of the organization is too poor.
- There is a predisposition towards perceiving the impact of gender on conflict management effectiveness.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the information concluded above, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- ✓ The organization should use an advantage of having youngsters as academic staff members since they are in productive age but, great emphasis is required to be given on how to protect and manage conflicts happen between them since people in this age are more sensitive and reactive to conflict.
- ✓ The institution should have to keep it up in hiring and retaining those highly educated professionals to increase its service quality, which in turn can boost the institution's reputation and good will.
- ✓ The fact that most of the organization's staff members have few years of experience in the institution shows as there is great problem in retaining earlier staff. So the institution should have to develop several mechanisms that help to keep the employees with it.
- ✓ The organization should create some special programs in which its employees develop a harmonies relationship among themselves. These programs are like special trips, get together, recreational tours ...etc
- ✓ The institution should also appreciate a social relationship among workers and the heads of the institution are supposed to play a figure head role by appearing on special occasions for the employees like, marriage, death... etc
- ✓ In order to minimize the frequent conflicts between the University College's academic and administrative staff and between the academic staff members and students of the institution, the following recommendations are helpful:

- ❖ The organization is required to put individuals who have the required skill of leading/directing in its administrative post.
 - ❖ There must be clear and reasonable procedure that the administrative staffs of the institution should have to follow in dealing with employees.
 - ❖ There must be standardized rules and regulations that govern the student of the institution and it should be communicated to the students appropriately.
 - ❖ The institution is also supposed to prepare several programs to orient students about their rights and obligations.
- ✓ Inducing functional conflicts is advantageous for the institution to be effective. So the institution's administrative officials are specially required to create such kinds of conflicts among workers to come up with increased productivity.
 - ✓ An absence of conflict in an organization cannot be an indicator for effectiveness of the organization necessarily. So the individuals in the organizations should stop to think as if the institution is effective because there is no conflict. Rather they are supposed to analyze the reason why the institution is dormant and take the necessary remedial action.
 - ✓ There must be clearly set job boundary for all units and individuals operating in the organization in order to avoid a conflict results from presence of unclear job boundary.
 - ✓ There should be clear demarcation for those works which are performed interdependently and there should be rules and regulations for setting disputes which arise from work interdependence.

- ✓ Managers in an organization should have to equip themselves with a mechanism to settle emotional expressions and feelings and an appropriate remedy should be taken accordingly.
- ✓ Every individual in an organization should refrain from transmitting distorted message and the organization should also set formal communication channel through which original information reaches each individual without distortion.
- ✓ All the necessary information should be disseminated to the employees timely to avoid a conflict arise because of information's late delivery.
- ✓ The organization should have to refrain itself from penalizing its employees as much as possible unless the problem created in Sevier. The procedures to penalize mistaken workers are also supposed to be communicated in advance to all of the workers in the organization.
- ✓ The reward and promotion system of the organization requires great improvement. There should be clear cut procedures for promoting individuals in an organization. The reward provided is also supposed to have both internal and external equity.
- ✓ The policies and procedures of the organization should have to be communicated to every body as an orientation.
- ✓ The organization should have to examine the reason why most of the conflicts are dysfunctional and corrective measures should have to be taken.
- ✓ In order to reduce employee turnover and dissatisfaction, the organization should have to develop several incentive schemes and every individual should get fair treatment. As it's mentioned earlier, internal and external equality should have to

be kept to avoid those problems. Further more, conflicts happen between several parties in the organization should get timely solution before they result in turn over and dissatisfaction.

- ✓ The organizations should have to prepare a special training program for its employees in order to provide basic information about conflict and how to manage it.
- ✓ The management of the organization should have to strive hard in order to improve its conflict management efficiency by implementing the conflict management styles suitable for solving the conflicts encountered timely.
- ✓ Literatures on conflict management states that gender have no impact on it. So everybody is supposed to get involved in conflict management without any gender demarcation for the organization's best.

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Questionnaire (to be filled by Academic and non Academic staff)

The purpose of this study is to assess the conflict management practices of Adams University College. This questionnaire is meant to secure relevant data to the study which is believed to come up with valuable recommendations for problems observed (if any). There fore, your genuine support in responding to the raised questions has paramount importance for the attainment of the study's objectives. Further more, the secrecy of all the information that you will provide is confidential. Hence, I earnestly request you to fill the questionnaire carefully. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

General instruction

- There is no need to write your name
- Open- ended questions are answered by writing on the space provided. If the space is not sufficient, please use the back page of the paper or separate paper which ever suit for you.
- Close- ended questions are answered by placing a tick (✓) mark with in the box.
- Selecting more than one item in case of close ended questions is possible.

I. Respondent's profile

1. Sex Male Female

2. Age

15-20 26-30 Above 40

21-25 31-40

3. Educational level

Below Grade 12

BA/ BSC

12th Grade complete

MA/MSc

Certificate from technical and vocational institution

PhD

Diploma

Other (please specify) _____

4. Occupation

Academic staff Non academic staff
any other _____

5. What is your experience in your current occupation in the organization (please specify in terms of years or months)

years	months

6. Marital status

Single married Divorced
 Widowed Others (please specify) _____

II. Existence of conflict and perception on conflict

7. Have you ever encountered conflict with people in your work place?

Yes No

8. If the answer for question number 7 is yes how often is it?

Very often rarely
 Often other (please specify) _____

9. With whom do you get in to conflict?

Administrative staff Academic staff
 Students Non academic staff
Others (please specify) _____

10. Do you think all the conflicts harm the organization?

Yes No

11. Have you ever tried to create conflict among workers?

Yes No

12. If your institution is not faced conflict yet, do you feel that the institution is effective?

No Yes

III. Frequency of conflict and parties get involved in it

13. How frequent is conflict in your organization?

Very frequent Not frequent Frequent
Others (pleas specify) _____

14. Which parties in your organization are frequently get in to conflict?

- Academic staff with academic staff Academic staff with non academic staff
 Academic staff with students Non academic staff with students
 Academic staff with Administrative staff
 Administrative staff with Administrative staff

IV. The way if obtaining information about existence of conflict

15. How do you get the information about the existence of conflict?

- Through hearsay from friends and collageous
 Through formal report from the parties felt in conflict
Others (please specify) _____

V. Sources of conflict

The sources of conflict in an organization can be broadly classified in to three: personal factors, structural factors and communication factors.

16. Which of the following personal factors can be a source of conflict in your organization?

- Emotions attitudes skill & responsibility diversity
 Values & Ethics Personalities Jealousy
Others (please specify) _____

17. Which of the following structural factors can be source of conflict in your institution?

- Goal differences status inconsistencies Scarcity of resources
 Interdependence Unclear job boundary
 Relationship among the authorities
Others (pleas specify) _____

18. Which of the following communication factors can be source of conflict in your institution?

- Distorted message Information overload
 Emotional state Lack of communication skill
 Use of Jargon (technical terms) information's late delivery
 Errors in perceptions empathy

Others (please specify) _____

19. Are there any other sources of conflict to mention out of what said above?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Penalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Policies & procedures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reward system | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural differences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender differences | <input type="checkbox"/> Less obedience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance appraisal System & result | <input type="checkbox"/> Assignment of task |

Others (pleas specify) _____

VI Conflict outcomes

20. What are out comes of the conflicts encountered by your organization?

- Functional Dysfunctional Both

21. If the out comes are functional which of the following are the consequences?

- It promoted organizational vitality It increased efficiency
 It motivated change It increased commitment
 It leads to new ideas & innovations

Others (please specify) _____

22. Which of the following dysfunctional outcomes of conflict happen in your institution?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee turn over | <input type="checkbox"/> customer dissatisfactory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distorted group cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased job dissatisfaction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resource wastage | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion of energy from work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creates negative climate | <input type="checkbox"/> In efficiency |

Others (pleas specify) _____

V. Conflict management styles.

23. Do you think that conflict management is a difficult task?

- No Yes

24. If your answer for question above is yes why?

- Because of difference in personality
 Because of cultural differences between the parties involved in conflict
 Because of lack of skill in conflict management

Because of difference in status between all the parties

Other (pleas specify) _____

25. Which of the following conflict management system do you think is better?

Avoiding (ignoring) Integrating (cooperating) Compromising

Negotiation Obliging (smoothing) Third part intervention

Dominating (forcing)

Other (pleas specify) _____

VII Information regarding training on conflict

26 Have you ever taken any special training on conflict related issues?

Yes

No

27. If your answer for question number 26 is yes, how did you find it?

Excellent fair Good

Very good poor useful waste

28. Have you applied what you learnt on the training regarding conflict management styles? Yes No

VIII The conflict management practice of the organization

29. How do you evaluate the conflict management practice of the organization?

Excellent Good poor

Very good fair

IX. The effect if gender on conflict management

30. Do you think gender have an influence on the effectiveness of managing conflict

Yes No

31 Which gender do you think is effective in managing conflict?

Male Female

Depends on the parties get in to conflict

Thank you!

4. What is your experience in your current occupation in the organization (please specify in terms of years or months)

years	months

5. Marital status

- Single married Divorced
 Widowed Others (please specify) _____

II. Existence of conflict and perception on conflict

6. Have you ever encountered conflict with people in your work place?

- Yes No

7. If the answer for question number 6 is yes how often is it?

- Very often rarely
 Often other (please specify) _____

8. With whom do you get in to conflict?

- Supervisors subordinates Academic staffs
 Students Non academic staffs
Others (please specify) _____

9. Do you think all the conflicts harm the organization?

- Yes No

10. Have you ever tried to create conflict among workers?

- Yes No

11. If your institution is not faced conflict yet, do you feel that the institution is effective?

- No Yes

III. Frequency of conflict and parties get involved in it

12. How frequent is conflict in your organization n?

- Very frequent Not frequent Frequent

Others (pleas specify) _____

Others (please specify) _____

18. Are there any other sources of conflict to mention out of what said above?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Penalties | <input type="checkbox"/> policies & procedures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reward system | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural differences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender differences | <input type="checkbox"/> less obedience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance appraisal System & result | <input type="checkbox"/> assignment of task |

Others (pleas specify) _____

VI. Conflict outcomes

19. What are out comes of the conflicts encountered by your organization?

- Functional Dysfunctional Both

20. If the out comes are functional which of the following are the consequences?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It promoted organizational vitality | <input type="checkbox"/> It increased efficiency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It motivated change | <input type="checkbox"/> It increased commitment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It leads to new ideas & innovations | |

Others (please specify) _____

21. Which of the following dysfunctional outcomes of conflict happen in your institution?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee turn over | <input type="checkbox"/> customer dissatisfactory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distorted group cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased job dissatisfaction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resource wastage | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion of energy from work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creates negative climate | <input type="checkbox"/> In efficiency |

Others (pleas specify) _____

V. Conflict management styles.

22. Do you think that conflict management is a difficult task?

- No Yes

23. If your answer for question above is yes why?

- Because of difference in personality
- Because of cultural differences between the parties involved in conflict
- Because of lack of skill in conflict management
- Because of difference in status between all the parties

Other (pleas specify) _____

24. Which of the following conflict management system do you think is better?

- Avoiding (ignoring) Integrating (cooperating) Compromising
 Negotiation Obliging (smoothing) Third part intervention
 Dominating (forcing)

Other (pleas specify) _____

VII. information regarding training on conflict

25. Have you ever taken any special training on conflict management?

- Yes No

26. If your answer for question number 25 is yes, how did you find it?

- Excellent fair Good
 Very good poor useful waste

27. Have you applied what you learnt on the training regarding conflict management styles? Yes No

VIII. Conflict management practice of the organization

28. How do you evaluate the conflict management practice of the organization?

- Excellent Good poor
Very good fair

IX. Effect if gender on conflict management

29. Do you think gender have an influence on the effectiveness of managing conflict

- Yes No

30 Which gender do you think is effective in managing conflict?

- Male Female
Depends on the parties get in to conflict

Thank you!

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Ato Mulatu Mebratu has carried out his research work on the topic of “Assessment of Conflict Management Practice” in Admas University College.

This work is original in nature and it is suitable for submission for the award of the Degree of Masters of Business Administration (MBA).

DECLARATION

I, Mulatu Mebratu declare that this study entitled “Assessment of Conflict Management Practice”, a case of Admas University College is my own effort study. I have carried it indendently except for the guidance and suggestions of the research supervisor. This study has not been submitted for any Degree/Diploma in this or any other University. It is offered here in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Masters of Business Administration (MBA).

Mulatu Mebratu