A STUDY ON CONFLICT HANDLING MODES AND EMPLOYEES COMMITMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYEES WORKING IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Sangeetha. M[1], Selvaraj, B. S.[2]

[1]Department of Psychology, Government College of Arts and Science-Coimbatore, (India)

[2]Department of Psychology, Government College of Arts and Science-Coimbatore, (India)

ABSTRACT

A study on conflict handling modes and employees commitment men and women employees working in government and private sectors was conducted (N=400, Male-265, Female-135, age group 25-55). The tools used were Thomas Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument (2007) and Meyer and Allen TCM Employee Commitment Survey (2004) for measuring the conflict handling modes and employee commitment of the employees. The data was collected from the employees of well known private companies and government organizations working in various sectors from banking, management and service. ANOVA and correlation study was used to find gender differences in conflict handling modes, gender differences in employee commitment and relation between conflict handling modes and employee commitment.

Keywords: Conflict Handling Modes, Employee Commitment, Private sector, Government sector

I. INTRODUCTION

For an organization to be successful, the employees are required to work in harmony to achieve its goals. The presence of emotional tensions and conflict in the organization is one dimension of organizational environment. Conflict is pervasive phenomenon, both in social circles and professional interactions. It is put aptly by Landau et. al. (2001)[1] that "conflict exists in all human relationships: It has and probably always will". According to Boohar (2001) [2] , individuals who never experience conflicts at the workplace are living in a dream world, blind to their surroundings or are confined to solitary confinement". Various definitions of conflict have been provided by many researchers from multiple disciplines like psychology, behavioral sciences, sociology, communication and anthropology. Rahim (1983) [3] defined conflict as "as interactive process manifested in compatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities (individual, group, organization, etc.,)" Marquis and Houston (1996) [4] define conflict as: "the internal discord that results from differences in ideas, values or feelings between two or more people". The most common reasons for conflict (Fox, 2001) [5] are the following: disparate personalities, disparate value systems, unclear working duties, restricted resources, improper communication, interdependent working duties, complexity in organization, unrealistic/unclear rules
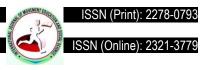
and standards, unrealistic deadlines, collective decision making, consensus decision making, unrealistic expectations, unsettled/suppressed former conflict. A number of scholars have developed typologies of conflict management styles. Blake and Mouton (1964) [6] five modes for handling interpersonal conflicts: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising and problem solving. Kozan (1997) [7] three models of group conflict management: confrontational model, harmony Model, and regulative model. DeChurch and Marks (2001) [8] meta-taxonomy model, Rahim's (2001) [9] meta-model and Thomas Kilmann's five conflict handling modes: competing, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating and compromising. TKI uses two axes influence by the Mouton and Blake axes called assertiveness and cooperativeness. Conflict management is studied by scholar's in variety of context including intimacy, work, education, romance, mixed and same friendship, intercultural, organizational, war and peace etc., Volkema and Bergmann (1995) [10], in a survey found almost 85 percent reported conflicts at work.

Allen and Meyer (1990) [11] define employee commitment as a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue employment with the organization. Research shows that individuals and organizations are adversely affected when commitment is low, and that both benefit when commitment is high (Brockner et al., 1992) [12]. Organizational commitment is associated with increased satisfaction, performance, and organizational adaptability, as well as decreased absenteeism and employee turnover (Lok & Crawford, 1999 [13]; Meyer et al., 2004 [14]). According to O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) [15] the psychological bond between an employee and an organization can take three distinct forms, termed as compliance, identification and internalization. The most basic theory of employee commitment is Allen and Meyer' (1990) [11] conceptualization. They identified three dimensions of employee commitment: affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with the organization and its goals. Affective commitment involves three aspects such as the formation of an emotional attachment to an organization, identification with and the desire to maintain organizational membership. Continuance commitment is a commitment situation originating from the needs of employees to stay in the organization considering the costs of leaving. It refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization as well as the willingness to remain in the organization because of the investment that the employee has with "nontransferable" investments. Nontransferable investment includes things such as retirement, relationships with other employees or things that are special to the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990 [11] ; Brockner et al., 1992 [12]). Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Those with high levels of normative commitment stay with an organization because they feel they ought to remain (Allen and Meyer, 1990 [11]) and they have a moral obligation to remain (Meyer et al., 2004 [14]). The present study investigates the conflict handling modes in relation to employee commitment. The study also attempts to find the difference between male and female employee's conflict handling modes and their commitment to organization.
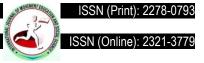
II.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Baley (2007) [16] attempted to investigate the relationship between different levels organizational commitment of 418 teachers and their different conflict management strategies compromising, problem solving, forcing, yielding and avoiding. The study results indicated that male teachers are more likely to experience commitment based on compliance and are more likely to avoid conflicts than female teachers. Muhammad et.al (2014) [17] studied conflict handling styles of 65 bank employees. The result of showed that employees used integrating, compromising and dominating as their conflict management styles. The results demonstrated that employees are more committed towards the organization through the use of integrating style in resolving conflict. On the other hand, employees perceived dominating and avoiding styles as lowering the sense of organizational commitment. Debas and Narayana (2013) [18] conducted an exploratory study to determine the influence of gender on conflict management of 301 bank employees. The result indicated that gender had a significant impact on the compromising and integrating conflict management style preference of employees.

III.METHOD

3.1 PARTICIPANTS: The number of participants in the study was 265 male and 135 female comprising the total of 400. The sample was employees working in various districts of Tamilnadu state and Maharashtra state. Employees were from various sectors ranging from teaching, banking, service and IT.

3.2 MEASURES: Thomas Kilman Instrument (TKI) was used to measure conflict management style. It was developed by Thomas and Kilmann in 1974. It consists of pair of 30 items making 60 statements, which are designed to measure 5 modes conflict handling ie., competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. TKI measure five conflict handling modes in two dimensions ie., assertiveness and cooperativeness. The Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey developed by Meyer and Allen was used to measure employee commitment. Survey measures three forms of employee commitment to the organization: desire-based (Affective Commitment), Obligation-based (Normative Commitment) and cost-based (Continuance Commitment) in a 7 point Likert Scale. The survey In this study revised three-component model was used which consists of 18 items.

3.3 HYPOTHESIS:H1: There will be significant difference in the conflict handling modes between male and female employees. H2: There will be significant difference in the employee commitment of male and female employees

H3: There is will be positive relation between conflict handling modes and employee commitment of the employees.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Conflict Handling Modes of male and female employees'.

Variable	Dimensions	Employees' Gender	M	Std. Deviation	N
Conflict Management Style	Competing	Male	6.10	1.97	265
		Female	6.33	1.77	135
	Collaborating	Male	6.21	1.29	265
		Female	6.12	1.30	135
	Compromising	Male	6.37	1.69	265
		Female	6.42	1.46	135
	Avoiding	Male	5.73	1.60	265
		Female	5.68	1.69	135
	Accommodating	Male	5.58	1.61	265
		Female	5.42	1.44	135

Table 2: Analysis of Variance for Conflict Handling Modes of male and female employees

Source	df	F	p
Gender			
Competing	1	1.31	0.252
Collaborating	1	0.38	0.535
Compromising	1	0.06	0.794
Avoiding	1	0.06	0.804
Accommodating	1	0.92	0.336
Error	398		
Total	399		

p < .05

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Commitment of the male and female employees'

Variable	Employees' Gender	M	Std. Deviation	N
Affective Commitment	Male	4.63	1.04	265
	Female	4.75	0.98	135
Continuance Commitment	Male	4.43	0.97	265
	Female	4.39	0.80	135
Normative Commitment	Male	4.89	1.04	265
	Female	4.88	0.99	135

Table 4: Analysis of Variance for Employee Commitment of the male and female employees'.

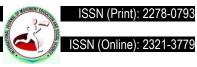| Source	df	F	p
Gender			
Affective Commitment	1	1.27	0.259
Continuance Commitment	1	0.11	0.730
Normative Commitment	1	0.08	0.927
Error	398		
Total	399		

p < .05

Table 5: Relationship between conflict handling modes and employee commitment of the employees's.

Variable		Competing	Collaborating	Compromising	Avoiding	Accommodating	Employee Commitment

Competing	*r*	1				
	Sig.	.				
	N	400				
Collaborating	*r*	-.025	1			
	Sig.	.612	.			
	N	400	400			
Compromising	*r*	-.266	-.322	1		
	Sig.	.000**	.000**	.		
	N	400	400	400		
Avoiding	*r*	-.485	-.216	-.213	1	
	Sig.	.000**	.000**	.000**	.	
	N	400	400	400	400	
Accommodating	*r*	-.413	-241	-.223	-.055	1
	Sig.	.000**	.000**	.000**	.269	.
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Employee Commitment	*r*	.067	0.62	-.078	-.107	.059	1
	Sig.	183	.217	.121	.033*	.240	.
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400

* *p >.01(2-tailed)

* p >.05(2-tailed)

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Analysis of the scores of cognitive handling modes dimensions showed that there is no significant differences between male and female employees in competing cognitive handling modes ($F_{(1, 398)} =1.31$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .003), collaborating cognitive handling modes ($F_{(1, 398)} =0.38$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .001), compromising cognitive handling modes ($F_{(1, 398)} =0.06$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .000), avoiding conflict handling modes ($F_{(1, 398)} =0.06$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .000) and accommodating conflict handling modes ($F_{(1, 398)} =0.92$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .002).

Analysis of male and female employees' mean scores shown that mean score for competing conflict handling mode of male are ($M = 6.10$) more than the female ($M = 6.33$). Male employees' mean for collaborating conflict handling mode are ($M = 6.21$) more than the female employees' ($M = 6.12$). The male employees' mean for compromising conflict handling mode are ($M = 6.37$) less than the female employees' ($M = 6.42$). Male employees' mean for avoiding conflict handling mode are ($M = 5.73$) more than the female employees' ($M = 5.68$). Male employees' mean for accommodating conflict handling mode are ($M = 5.58$) more than the female employees' ($M = 5.42$). The results show that male employees use competing, collaborating, avoiding and accommodating conflict handling modes. And women employees found to use compromising as their conflict handling mode. The study of the mean score analysis shows that the there was no much difference in the mean scores of male and female employees. There were no significant differences found in any of the cognitive handling modes, of male and female employees'. And the mean scores are very close showing the slight variation. Hence, the hypotheses stating gender will significantly make difference in male and female employees' conflict handling modes is rejected.

Analysis of dimensions of organizational commitment shown that there were no significant differences in affective commitment of male and female employees' ($F_{(1, 398)} =1.27$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .003). Continuance commitment also showed no significant difference ($F_{(1, 398)} =0.11$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .000) between male and female employees'. And also normative showed no significant difference ($F_{(1, 398)} =0.00$, $p<.05$; eta squared = .000) between male and female employees'.

Mean score for affective commitment of age male employees ($M = 4.63$) less than the female employees' ($M = 4.75$). Employees' mean for continuance commitment of male employees are ($M = 4.43$) more than the female employees' ($M = 4.39$). The employees' mean for normative commitment of male employees are ($M = 4.89$) is nearly same as the female employees' ($M = 4.88$). There were no significant differences found in affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, of male and female employees' organizational commitment. The hypothesis stating that gender will significantly make difference in employees' commitment to the organization is rejected.

Employee commitment was not significantly correlated with competing ($r =.067$, $N =400$, $p = .183$, two tailed) , collaborating ($r =.062$, $N =400$, $p = .217$, two tailed), compromising ($r =-.078$, $N =400$, $p = .121$, two tailed) and accommodating conflict handling modes ($r =.059$, $N =400$, $p = .240$, two tailed). At the same time, there was a significant negative correlation between the employee commitment and avoiding conflict handling modes ($r =-.107$, $N =400$, $p=.033$, two tailed). Since there was no significant correlation, the

hypothesis stating that there will be positive relation between conflict handling modes and employee commitment is rejected. The study got contradictory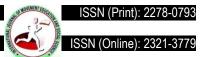 results compared to the previous research studies. The study calls for more research in this area with bigger sample size.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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