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**The Impact of Conflict Resolution on Staff Morale in the Irish Travel and
Tourism Sector.**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- The purpose of this research is to study and address the various factors which are leading contributors giving rise to conflicts in organization. This research aims to address and explore the effects leading to conflicts. This study thus takes into account the various aspects of conflicts and the importance in dealing with unresolved conflicts. Employee morale in terms of factors affecting personal growth is of utmost importance and thus the researcher has identified the importance of addressing it.

Design and Approach- The researcher has implemented a quantitative data collection approach by circulating a web based questionnaire. The analysis so produced, will be useful to establish the various aspects and areas of conflicts and employee morale.

Findings- There is a strong link derived between how a conflict has a direct effect on the morale of an employee. The findings in the study showcase a transition between the levels of morale varying from negative to positive. This is also observed from the data collected, when the employees underwent conflict resolution.

Value and Originality- This research is a first of its kind conducted and focusing on the travel and tourism sector in Dublin. This research study has been built around previous research work establishing link between conflict resolutions

Paper Type- Academic Research.

To address these key issues in this research, a quantitative methodology of analyzing data will be used by distributing a web based questionnaire. The questions will be structured around the areas of conflict resolution and employee morale. Employees working in the travel and tourism sector will be considered in the sample space ranging in between 50-150 as feasible. Data analysis will be done via MS-Excel.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Mroczek (2019) has stated that Ireland was considered as a location of economic importance due to its location and history. Due to globalization, it has become very convenient for countries to make more investments and capitalize on new opportunities. The Celtic Tiger era saw rapid growth with increasing foreign direct investment across various sectors of the Irish economy. Ireland being the closest European member state paved a way for the American investments given its geographical location. Ideal tax rates for the service sector coupled with the governing agencies played a key role in increasing employment (Mroczek, 2019). Tourism in Ireland has grown significantly over the years with more than 350,000 people employed in this sector (Gov.ie, n.d.). Apart from these, the number students doing part time jobs in order to fund their education cost and living expenses in the same sector, has grown as well .The dealings with the incoming visitors and the host nation (Ireland) are extremely critical as it helps to build relationships. The services thus offered, are aimed to be of superior quality. The Irish Government is taking significant efforts to fortify the numbers regarding employment in this sector to deliver an experience of the highest standard (Gov.ie, n.d.).

A statistical report by the World Bank shows a total of 76.51% employment rate in the service sector in Ireland which forms a major part of the Irish economy. It can be observed that there has been a steady rise in the service sector since 10 years which has resulted in overpowering the agriculture and industrial sectors.

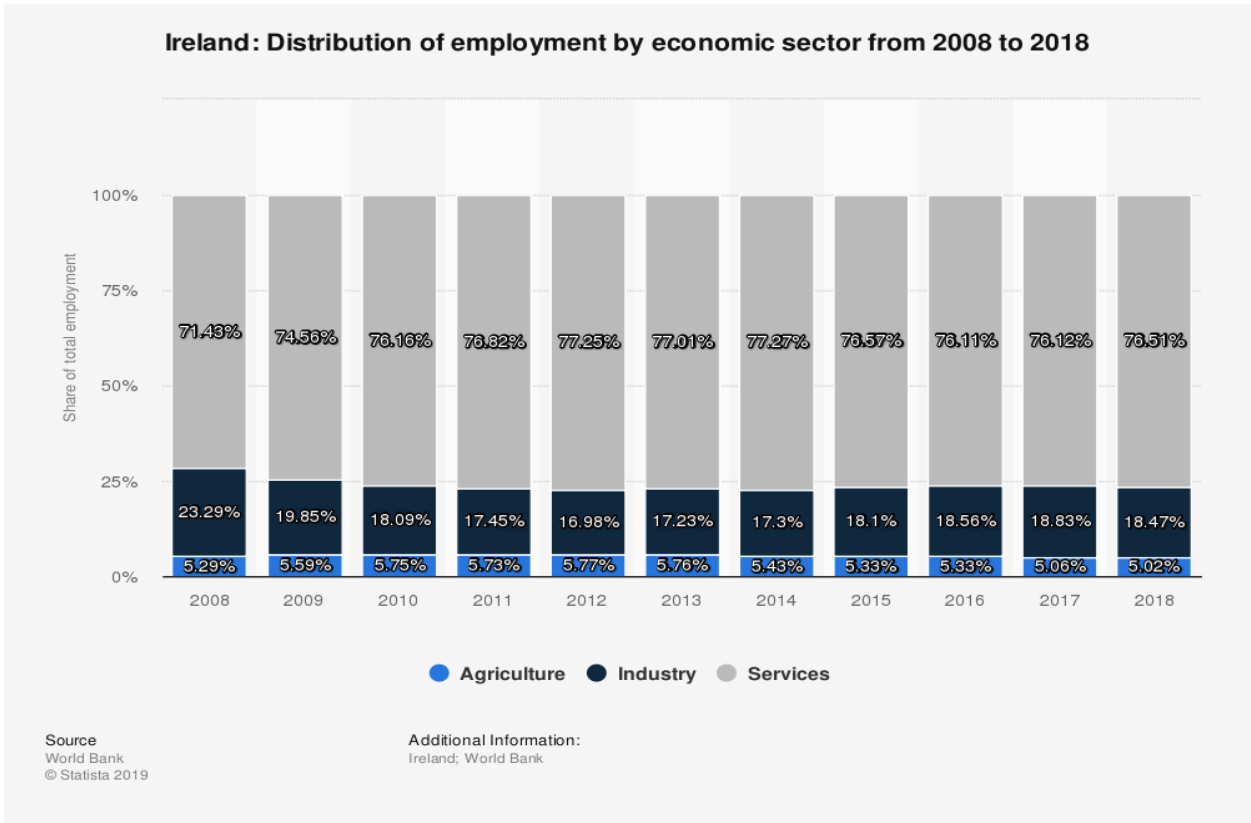


Fig.1.1 Distribution of employment by economic sector (Pletcher, 2019)

Due to its scenic beauty, pleasant summers and numerous tourist attractions, Ireland is considered as one of the most sought after places to travel. Another recent survey published by WTTC shows the increase in employment in the travel and tourism industry which has been the highest amounting to 41.6% in Ireland. The graph also estimates an increase in the trend estimating to an all time high of 61.1% by the year 2028.



Fig.1.2 Employment in travel and tourism industry of Ireland (Luty, 2019)

The existence of a perfectly functioning workplace with great organizational environment and perfect working conditions is a myth. Considering the type of industry taken under consideration, individuals working in this sector are expected to be at their very best. Such organizations are bound to collide with barricades in the form of organizational imbalance caused due to various reasons. Organizational peace and harmony should thus be maintained to effectively manage staff morale, effectiveness and harmony. (Singleton et al., 2011) therefore suggests that it is critical to analyze organizational conflicts and the resolution techniques to use them as an incentive for originality for the organizations to flourish within. Conflict may be deemed to be seen as an unfortunate or an unlikeable scenario in the workplace. There are various theories and research put forth by researchers showing various findings. (Bradley et al., 2015) says that conflicts may result in accelerating employee morale and performance while (Bagshaw, 1998) argued that organizational conflicts have no consequences to the business, as the employees are there to get the job done even if they do not get along well with their colleagues. He establishes his study by saying that organizational conflict is thus viewed as a matter of personal interest only. Researchers such

as (Broome et al., 2002) however suggests that effective conflict resolution methods if implemented, results in team building, maintaining rapport within the members and develops a sense of trust within the organization. Roche (2016), also argues that Irish organizations do not have any methodical assessment of handling a workplace conflict. It thus becomes important to establish a strong link between the causes of conflicts and how effectively they can be managed. The number in terms of available employment and the employed people in the travel and tourism sector has significantly increased, which has led to identify the needs to maintain stability in an organization to enhance its smooth functioning. Organizations have become more vulnerable to facing issues relating to staffing, identifying the needs of their employees, keeping them satisfied in order to maintaining balance within the organization.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONFLICT

CONCEPT OF CONFLICT

Conflicts in workplace can be described as a circumstance arisen due to discrepancies or misconceptions as a result of clash of genuine philosophies, access to resources, opinions etc. If the symptoms of the same are not traced at an earlier stage, conflicts become prevalent within the organization. Turkalj et al., (2008) have thus stressed on the importance of monitoring the symptoms which ultimately lead to conflict. An organization may completely be driven by conflict if they are not dealt with the same. Organizations which are primarily focused on achieving results are more vulnerable to conflicts especially if they concentrate less on maintaining interpersonal relations and organizational harmony. According to McKibben (2017), conflicts are characterized by tyranny, resentment, disregard, low levels of morale, conflict of goals etc.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher has focused mainly on organizational conflict to address the issues. According to Pondy (1992), conflicts occurring in organizations negatively impact the team chemistry, productivity in turn impacting the organizational strength. Understanding conflict and the process of resolution can be well explained by (Pondy's, 1992) framework. The framework assumes that conflict arises from one of the five described phases. Pondy (1992), best described the latent phase where conflict seems to be looming due to apprehension. The second phase comprises of minimised conflict but is present whereas the third phase is characterized by impending distress coupled with personalised conflicts. Pondy (1992), argues that the ultimate later phases are concerned with expressing the conflict, the aftermath and its effects on individuals of the organization. Conflict can be viewed as dynamic in nature but (Pondy, 1992), suggests that his framework can be a guideline to inspect conflicts within the organization.

DUAL CONCERN MODEL- AN APPROACH OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Originally based on the work put forward by (Blake and Mouton, 1968) the ‘Dual concern Model’ has undergone several variations and modifications. Every modification is suggested by unique individuals that opt for various styles, ideologies and strategies for resolving conflict. Based on the model put forth by (Blake and Mouton, 1968), (Pruitt 1983), argued that there were 4 basic strategies that can be implemented as a part of negotiations to resolve conflicts. He argued that psychological orientations played huge roles in these strategies and thus distinguished them as irreconcilable with each other.

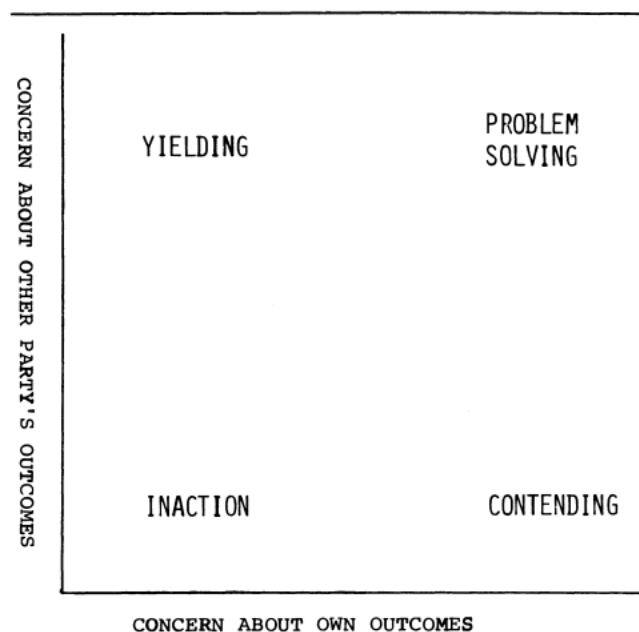


Figure 1: The Dual Concern Model

Fig 2.1 Framework of The Dual Concern Model (Pruitt, 1983)

All the outcomes mentioned in this model help in identifying the negotiation strategy that can be implemented to achieve the expected outcome.

Yielding allows one aggrieved party to reap the benefits as the second party aims to maintain a long-term relation or postpones the situation to find a replacement in the later stage. Pruitt (1983), best describes the approach of yielding when either of the conflicting parties reduces their demands and/or goals in order to arrive at a conclusion. This approach can be effective when time is a constraint and the conflicting issues are of less importance. In order to achieve the most efficient outcome, the conflicting parties should implement a trial and error

technique. As suggested by (Smith et al., n.d.) the conflicting parties can reach a conclusion by reducing their aspirations gradually and implementing a problem solving approach.

Inaction is the resulting of a conclusion reached after the initial goals of both the aggrieved parties have been ignored and replaced. Pruitt (1983), suggests that the conflicting parties may even completely break the negotiations if they get discouraged. Temporary suspension of negotiations due to wasting time or delaying it has been identified as one of the major factors by (Pruitt, 1983).

Pruitt (1983), suggests a problem solving tactic to expect an outcome which attracts the interest of both the parties. The relationships tend to last for a longer amount of time if worked in unison. Although problem solving can be considered as an effective approach, it might not be practical to apply the same if the parties do not mutually trust each other. Conceding, bridging or logrolling are some of the tactics which (Pruitt, 1983) suggested and can be classified according to the level of risks involved. Pruitt (1983), argues that problem solving mechanism is beneficial for the conflicting parties under the following conditions:

- (i) When the conflicting parties seek and maintain high level of aspirations, they tend to stretch their own levels of creativity. Pruitt (1983), however suggests aspirations should not be excessive in the sense that it becomes difficult for the conflicting parties to reach on common grounds.
- (ii) Burchill (1999), elaborated (Walton and McKersie's, 1965) ideology of identifying situations having higher integrating potentials. They suggested that the conflicting parties should identify the possibilities of cost cutting strategies, compensation strategies or bridging their gaps in order to implement a problem solving approach.

Contending is an approach where either one of the conflicting parties tries to be persuasive to accept an approach or alternative which is favourable for one's own self interest. Fisher and Ury (2012), have also termed contending as a type of positional bargaining and suggest that pressure tactics play a huge role to ultimately dominate one of the aggrieved parties. Pruitt (1982), has however viewed contending as a negative approach as the conflicting parties tend to become rigid with respect to their demands. Creative thinking and outcomes tend to be absent as agreements are reached over low levels of compromise. However, conflicts resolved through contending often followed by a problem solving stage (Morley and Stephenson, 1978). It can thus be concluded that contending is often classified as a precursor

to a problem solving approach. Neale and Baezerman (1983), argue that the negotiation phase starts with a high degree of aspirations and expectations which cannot be resolved by a problem solving approach which ultimately results in contending behaviour.

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Conflicts can be categorized depending on their nature. For the purpose of this research, they have been categorized into personal conflicts, task oriented conflicts and process oriented conflicts.

Pinkley (1990), has defined personal conflict as, clashes or indifference of opinions regarding norms, traditions, practices etc. He insists infuriation, jealousy, discontent amongst members instigates personal conflicts. Amason (1996), further supports the definition by terming it to be consistent as it differentiates cognitive and affective conflict in terms of categorization. Resentment amongst members thus paves the way for loss in morale.

Task conflicts can be viewed as conflicts which are cognitive in nature having contradicting methodology or opinions pertaining to a team task (Amason et al., 1997). Productivity levels may have a positive effect as it bolsters superior thinking and a more refined ability to implement better decisions. These types of conflicts often lead to damaging the morale of employees but in turn promote the invention of new ideas and enhance decision making skills (Jehn and Mannix, 2001). Qualities of personal conflicts may be significant among group members but are considered as invalid, as they are inclined more towards the task and not the individuals.

Process related conflicts have been defined by (Jehn, 1997) as collisions regarding the intrinsic aspects of methodologies for getting a task done. These conflicts are usually confined to delegation levels or issues arising where duties or responsibilities can be questioned. Process conflicts can occur when the assigned tasks are not clearly defined. Such conflicts if not dealt in an appropriate way, can affect an employee's morale in a positive or in a negative manner. A certain level of conflict is vital for organizations to achieve a certain level of organizational effectiveness (Jehn, 1997).

CONSEQUENCES OF UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

Unresolved conflicts are unsettling and often cause stress to individuals. They have an impact on the morale of employees thus further affecting their productivity and inter personal relations. The after effects of conflict are often underestimated and overlooked. Gerradi, (N.D) in his research has distinguished consequences into two categories that are direct and indirect consequences. Decrease in morale, a negative image in front of the media or publicity, an alarming rate of employee turnover, increase in investment for conflict resolution policies and practices etc. comprise of indirect consequences whereas direct consequences include total loss in morale, team communication, imbalanced team chemistry etc. Apart from the piling stress, unresolved conflicts act as catalysts and amount to even more complicated problems. The reputation of an organization can be affected in a negative way (SHRM, n.d.).

Employees tend to remain absent from work and it costs the organization a great deal in terms replacement cost and a negatively affected output. Unaccounted absenteeism from workplace directly reflects in low morale. Unresolved conflict leading to absenteeism results in increasing discontent amongst employees. Abbot (2003), suggests the effects of low morale and absenteeism should be worked on by the management by identifying their potential and giving them due recognition.

Unresolved conflict also increases employee turnover. Organizations thus incur more training and recruiting costs. Ngambi (2011), associates a higher rate of employee turnover as an additional contributor to employees having low morale. The ill effect of an organization which reflects to a high rate of turnover has a direct impact on the financial as well as the productivity levels of an organization. The organizations face a financial burden of hiring new employees adding to their recruitment costs. Turnover also makes it difficult for organizations to replace employees having specialized knowledge who are the major contributors in the organizations growth and profits (Hung-Wen Lee and Ching-Hsiang Liu, 2009).

The outcome of the resolutions may seem to be unfair in the eyes of employees. At such times, employees prefer to seek external help in the form of unions. Issues relating to terms of contract, compensation, working conditions etc. are looked into by the union. Employees may even opt for litigation if the desired outcome is not achieved. Legal assistance and

lawsuit if gone against the employer may result in extreme financial payouts with a legal record as well. It is argued by (Hung-Wen Lee and Ching-Hsiang Liu, 2009) that some level of conflict is necessary to enhance productivity levels of employees. Lingering conflict however affects the productivity directly in a negative way. Low levels of employee motivation can be traced to lower productivity levels. Dugguh (2014), insisted management should stress more on motivation theories and human resource management theories to positively impact employee morale and competition.

2.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS

Burton (1964), argues that conflict resolution is a modern concept involving aggrieved parties to negotiate terms with an analytical mindset. The author justifies that it is a belief of political nature which identifies the ultimate goal which is satisfaction of human needs.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND STYLES

Every organization has different styles, strategies and procedures that are reflected by their culture. The organizational success is dependent on the type of environment that they thrive within (Flanagan and Runde, 2008). Roche (2016), suggested that modern organizations have started to implement advanced techniques such as the Alternative Dispute Resolution strategies over formal procedures. He suggests ADR practices are more inclined towards informal methods which involve mediation and facilitation. The presence of conflict in organizations forces organizations to identify the need to deal with conflict efficiently just as it identifies the importance of dealing with human resources and development. Roche (2016), identified four key principles for designing a successful conflict resolution system. They are as follows;

- 1) Organizations should utilize various voice mechanisms to expose various issues due to which conflicts become prevalent. The risk involved in open conflicts is thus reduced.
- 2) Negotiations pave a way in resolving conflicts. (Clardy, 2018) therefore suggests conflict resolution procedures which preserve the interest of both the parties should be adopted.
- 3) Third party interventions should be encouraged and be made feasible.
- 4) Various forms of resolution practices should be made available which are informal and cost effective.

While ADR procedures are considered a formal way handling conflicts, (Rahim, 2002), has proposed a model of resolving conflicts comprising of 5 styles that emerge from conciliating aspects of concern for the parties that are involved. They are as follows-

Completely avoiding is one of the most frequent types of response to conflict. (Kangal et al., 2019) has identified self silencing as a distinctive behavioural pattern for individuals who avoid conflict. Delaying, ignoring, or completely avoiding conflicts and hoping that they will go away results in a total loss for the parties as the conflict remain totally unresolved. Individuals opt to suppress their emotions in order to avoid conflict (Kangal et al., 2019). They believe concealing issues will curb conflicts over a period of time and should not be meddled with. Employees often tend to seek the support of their subordinates and avoid confrontation with the party they are in conflict with. Rahim et al., (2001) are of the opinion that employees rather ignore conflicts or their presence in the true sense rather than avoiding it. (Kangal et al., 2019) has also noted that lingering issues directly reflect on staff morale as their performance gets affected.

Rahim (2002), suggests accommodating where either party focuses more on maintaining relations over winning the argument. Obliging in order to reduce stress or being compassionate also helps to avoid conflict. Conflicting parties prefer to arrive on common grounds with a solution agreeable by every party involved. Flanagan and Runde (2008), observed that the conflicting parties openly addressed the issues by discussing and communicating with each other.

At times, both the grieving parties are aggressive in their approach to protect their own interest. Having an obstinate mentality by showcasing dominating demands are deployed by more influential parties (Lewicki et al., 1992). Since individuals or parties intimidate their way into a settlement or a compromise, a dominating approach dents relationships and is considered as a temporary step of avoiding conflict.

It can so happen that parties in conflict can come up with a mutual understanding, beneficial for both of them. The conflicting parties can integrate their interests to arrive at a favourable position. Rahim (2002), suggests that integrating may have a positive impact on interpersonal relations as employees tend to achieve a sense of satisfaction in their allotted tasks, supervision and daily work.

Compromising styles aims at reaching an agreement when the involved parties give up some of their rights after negotiating. These parties seek to maintain equilibrium by compromising

(Kai et al., 2010). Reich et al., (2007) believes conflicting parties agree to compromise when they find adequate reasoning or re-evaluate their own judgements. Although this style of resolving conflicts ensures to maintain relations and saves on time, compromising may lean on either parties demanding too much or asking to give up too much.

IMPORTANCE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A successfully managed conflict resolution procedure can be beneficial for the organization if handled practically. Conflict thus has to be managed as it cannot be totally avoided. Pondy (1992) argued that preventing the occurrence of conflict can be possible by tracing the origin and signs of conflict. Organizations have to think beyond the conventional ways of resolving conflicts. Ellis & Abbott (2011), however suggest that the success of conflict resolution procedure often depends on the transparency of communication, mutual understanding between the aggrieved parties and focal point of disparity. McKibben (2017), has stated the fact that conflict resolution aims to get rid or solve the problem and not the person. He stresses on the importance of resolving disputes and argues that accusing individuals is not the solution as it has a direct impact on employee morale. Conflict resolution also plays a key part as conflicting parties may tend to opt for measures leading to more uncertainty and aggression (McKibben, 2017).

As a part of resolving conflicts, (Overton & Lowry, 2013) hence suggest that it is critical to develop and impart skills to handle conversations, scenarios and interactions of a sensitive nature. They also argued that individuals should be competent enough to deal with difficult conversations as well as decisive confrontations. Knippen and Green (1999), suggested that resolving disputes in a workplace should be taken care of as the opportunity arises as the process of resolving a conflict may get delayed due to the time available, mindset of individuals as well as the location which has a significant impact on the outcome.

Conflict resolution is thus embedded by the principle of managing workplace conflicts as they cannot be completely eliminated from the system (Teague and Roche, 2012). The traditional ideology suggested that suppressing conflicts at workplace was an ideal methodology of maintaining peace. Research conducted by (Darling and Walker, 2001) however suggested that conflicts may be signs which need to be addressed for potential issues that may arise. Conflict resolution can also aid in minimizing the ill-functioning element and maximizing the constructive elements of managing conflicts to augment more efficiency in

the organization (Rahim, 2002). Conflict resolution is an art in itself because of its sensitive nature. In many organizations, the importance of conflict resolution procedures has not been identified. The results of a study published by (Teague and Roche, 2012) showcased that managers rarely received any formal conflict resolution training even though they were heavily involved in the conflict management process. Cunningham and Hyman's (1999), study also supported this research by further arguing that a majority of the managers did not sufficiently discharge their HR duties relating to conflict management as they considered it as common sense. A survey conducted by (Brand et al., 2009) also showed that managing conflict was considered to be the least importance duty of any manager.

At times, the leadership style practiced in an organization reflects on its working culture. Avolio et al., (2004) suggests that a transformational leadership style to manage workplace conflict directly reflects with a positive attitude and increased level of commitments. Walumbwa & Lawler (2003), argue that managing workplace conflict with an effective leadership style enables employees to identify needs, increase employee motivation and enhances employee involvement. It also results in reduced level of absenteeism. Conflict resolution negates the possibility of the occurrence of recurring negative aspects that create a barrier. Knippen and Green (1999), relate resolving conflicts as a vital step in prohibiting potential or larger conflicts. The authors suggest that dealing with conflicts curb communication gaps, eases co-operation, enhances performance and also prevent withholding of promotions or rewards in an organization.

Conflict if dealt in a rightful manner with the help of resolution procedures can help in promoting analytical thinking, team productivity and can help individuals acquaint to change. Pondy (1992) suggests that unresolved conflicts carry huge potentials of various ideas, innovations and perspectives which bolster task success and organizational culture. The positive aspects of conflicts when picked out can promote change and give a new rhythm if the overall functioning has deemed to become stagnant. Jehn (1997), is of the opinion that it also enhances productivity levels and encourages free thinking while Pondy (1992), states that conflicts carry a lot of potential if harvested properly. He thus stresses on the importance of resolving conflicts as resolution procedures results in innovation, exposes more perspectives and improves team orientation.

EFFECTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Conflicts in workplace are an unavoidable phenomenon and can occur due to the working conditions as well. Ideal scenarios which result in conflict include difference in the pace of

working amongst employees, employees who expect remuneration against management who are focused on cost controlling, differences in ideas or interests etc. Conflicts will thus continue to exist even if the individuals might get replaced. Organizations must therefore implement formal and informal practices to deal with conflicts. Clardy (2018) has differentiated these practices with that of employee voice in a sense that these practices are more active, clearer and in presence of both the conflicting parties. Each category comprises of several resolution practices which are regulated by human resource policies. A variety of conflict resolution strategies are implemented in organizations that include instant feedback mechanism, employee empowerment programmes, team building activities, mentoring sessions etc.

According to Pianta, Hamre, & Allen (2012) mentoring is one of the most successful methods of resolving disputes and the relationship between a mentor and mentee can be enhanced through mutual understanding and learning. A mediator or mentor requires having analytical and social interaction skills in order to understand and rectify relations. Findings of a study conducted by Hudson (2005) showed that mentors acting as mediators who were pro active listeners and were supporting instilled confidence and an optimistic mentality in the minds of their mentees. Mentoring and offering support as a part of conflict resolution strategy is aided with unbiased opinions, morale support, flexible communication and a sense of trust (Hudson, 2013). It is thus viewed as a two-way procedure in which the mentee plays an extensive role of a contributor as well.

Valeyre, Lorenz and Cartron (2009) suggests that more than 80% of the organizations in the EU having more than 10 employees on an average, consider teamwork and team building exercises an important form of work aspect in the organization. Team building sessions is a type of conflict resolution practice aimed to increase communication practices and engulf the organizational culture with trust and openness. Dyer (2015) suggested that team building activities help reduce conflict by discussing issues openly which leads to aligning goals and to better understand the tasks in hand. Although most of the studies have found out that team building activities for resolving conflicts have a positive outcome, (Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin's, 1999) study had contradictory results. The authors suggested that employees tend to compromise in such situations leading to loss of cognitive morale and performance.

The major conflict resolution practices can be further categorized into the following:

1. Disciplinary action committee's

Lack of satisfactory workplace performances results in these types of conflict. These resolution practices stress more on eliminating the performance related issues that cause conflict or ultimately separating the employee from the organization. Employees are progressively discipline by employers in the event of non satisfactory performances. An employee may be given verbal warnings followed by written warnings, suspension and might even get terminated if the need may be. These practices may be viewed as time consuming and hence (Campbell, Fleming and Grote, 1985) believe to instil discipline without punishing an employee. The authors stress on implementing a secondary work related violation to be met with a day off for the employee where he gets to think on his actions. If a tertiary breach is still committed, it is met with automatic termination. Their research was backed with adequate support with many organizations implementing this practice across the EU continent.

2. Grievance Handling Machineries

Unlike disciplinary committees, grievance procedures are initiated by the employee. The expectations or authority of the management that may seem to violate the contractual obligations may be challenged by the employees in unionized organizations (Workplace Relations Commission, n.d.). Ethical codes of practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures have laid down the general ethical codes and guidelines for application to grievance procedures. It also promotes the ideal practices and lays the foundation for unjust procedures. The arrangements made for handling various grievances depends on every type of employment including the industrial agreements, terms of contracts, agreed procedures, power of trade unions etc. This Code of Practise as prescribed by the government is applicable unless and until an alternative agreeable procedure has been laid down by the establishment. Workplace Relations Commission (N.D), has laid down the following general principles to be followed -

-A crucial element of any grievance procedure going ahead should be that are rational and unambiguous so that the penalties that can be confined and a mechanism can be made available.

-The ongoing procedures in the workplace should be well aligned with the current practices and updated with the legislation.

-Organizations with effective practices consist of stages of disciplinary procedures. Issues can be raised with the line managers at the initial stage. Clardy (2018), has identified progressive and challenging steps in grievance handling. If an issue is not determined by a grieving employee and his supervisor, the same is issued in writing which is then reviewed by the union supervisor and production officer. The conflict resolutions can then be resolved with the assistance of a mediator or any third party. For smaller organizations, unresolved issues can then be out forward to the senior Hr management, Relations officer, Third party or any other form of agreement.

-Employees can be accompanied with any colleague of his choice or a registered TU or a member of the same as official representatives.

-The purpose of appointing a representative has been addresses in various laws such as the, Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Protection of Employment Act 1977, Organization Working Time Act 1997 etc.

-The measures for dealing with the conflicts should adhere with the common principles laid down which include the following:

(a)An employee is notified about the allegations that have been made against him after his grievances are carefully looked though.

(b)An employee is given a right to respond to the allegations and have a legal representative as well.

(c) He is also entitled to a fair and unjust resolution proceeding with his representative.

-The allegations that are made should essentially be in writing and the employee is given a right to question the source or witness regarding the same.

-A formal or an informal attempt to resolve the dispute between the employee and his supervisor should be made as a generic rule.

-Steps are undertaken in a progressive procedure which involves oral and 2 written warnings, unpaid suspension, transfer, demotion and dismissal as the last resort.

-An employee may be entitled to full and complete pay until the final conclusion of an ongoing investigation.

-The procedures so laid out should mention the stages in the organization on which every procedure will be applicable

-The procedures also suggest that the warnings given to the employee should be excluded off his records after a specific amount of time. A successful grievance procedure requires the documentation and maintenance of records as well as the requirement of employees, their representatives and the supervisory members of the management to be acquainted with the terms.

3. Collective Bargaining Committees

Organizations that are backed by trade unions negotiate contractual particulars regarding working conditions, remuneration, duties etc. The management and the labour force attempt to arrive at common grounds to establish a stable relationship. Agreements turn into contracts when accepted by the conflicting parties. Kaufman (2001), has suggested that the workforce functions in the 1960's era, termed it as Industrial Relations Department whose sole objective was to manage the complexities in contractual obligations of the labour workforce.

Provisions mentioned in the agreement which constitute any one or more of the nine grounds of discrimination u/s 9 of the Employment Equality Act (1998-2011) are declared as null and void. The provision also includes discrimination of pay. Any individual affected by agreements restricting to employment regulation orders, terms of employment or any collective bargaining agreements can register a complaint with the Workplace Relations Commission Section 86 of the acts suggests that the complaint of such nature may be referred to mediation and get a decision issued if both the conflicting parties agree to do so. (Workplace Relations Commission, n.d). The Board may recommend an alternative unbiased provision if the initial provision is found to be of a discriminatory nature which will have no legal binding.

IMPORTANCE OF A FACILITATOR

Derek (2001), has described a facilitator as a person who does not have any direct interest in the resultant of the conflict but acts as negotiator to resolve conflicts. Organizations often implement facilitators by offering mentorship through a leader or a senior figure whose expertise can be implemented for the betterment.

A need of a supervisory figure is identified when the organizational environment tends to transform in a hostile one due to conflicts. Emotions play a huge role in resolving conflicts. At times, a colleague can assist in the process of conflict resolution to maintain balance. Under some circumstances, an organization if it has the capacity may opt for their party interventions but (Robinson, 2010) believes developing the skill of mediation can resolve internal conflict in a more efficient manner. In another research conducted by (Fisher, 1982) the author suggested a sense of mutual respect and trust is instilled amongst the conflicting parties when managers implement a conflict resolution style focusing on satisfying their requirements.

A negotiator or a mediator is a person who aims at amicably resolving disputes between conflicting parties. As suggested by (Clardy, 2018) a mediator or negotiator has to impart unbiased and satisfactory decisions which are acceptable by the conflicting parties. Although biasness in decision making may have a direct impact on employee morale, it is not possible for every organization to hire a third party intervention or introduce resolution machinery due to financial constraints. Kharbanda & Stallworthy (1991), advice that resolutions and negotiations are not restricted to organizations but also involve relationships between the management and its employees. If desirable results are expected to be achieved, managers need to be convincing and should possess the right tools to deal with conflict effectively. Resolution practices or interventions aim at arriving on common grounds. The mediating person aims the conflicting parties to arrive at a voluntary settlement than an imposed one. In some organizations, top level management may act as mediators if the case may be. Clardy (2018), suggests a mediator should possess decisive capabilities and be active. A successful conflict resolution may be achieved especially when a mediator is impartial and fair to both the conflicting parties. Having the logical ability to understand the issues with effective and diplomatic communication skills acts enhances the chances of resolving a dispute. Training

the managers can be especially useful in organizations that strive to maintain organizational peace in absence of stringent conflict resolution machinery. Kharbanda & Stallworthy (1991), say imparting training can be helpful, as an employee equipped with effective skills comprising of using the appropriate language, listening ability ensures the smooth flow of resolution process. Failure in listening to the conflicting parties can disrupt the negotiation skills such as accurate tactics, strategies and other critical mediation skills.

2.3 CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE MORALE

Morale has been described by (Grunberg et al., 2000) as the level of confidence of individuals at certain times under various circumstances. From an organizations perspective, employee morale has a huge impact not only on his performance but on the organizational performance as well. Mallik and Mallik (2019), have thus viewed morale from a human resource perspective, as reflections in satisfaction levels, attitude and well-being of employees in an organizational surrounding. Morale is also reflected by the pride, faith and trust individuals share towards the organization. Morale comes into account especially when it becomes important to deal with the mental well being and ability of an individual to work after being indulged in the conflict. Conflicts leave a negative stamp on the employees well being and negatively affects the mentality by arousing feelings of anger, distrust, resentment and fear. Judge et al., (2001) rightfully argues that employees reflecting to low morale are likely to get involved more in conflicts with his/her colleagues resulting in diversion of focus from their primary assigned tasks.

Any disturbance or imbalance can also affect the morale of an employee. For instance, workers or employees, who feel more vulnerable of getting laid off, react with improved workplace output. Some employees thus find it difficult to express their thoughts leading to negative morale. (Grunberg et al., 2000) has rightly supported this statement by suggesting employees may find it difficult to afford to convey their negative emotions given the circumstances at stake. Thus, it has become important to focus on the morale of individual/employees who are engaged in conflicts, in organisations.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MORALE

The attitude of an employee, his level of satisfaction and his productivity can reflect on the morale of an employee. Positive morale level reflects a positive work environment whereas negative morale levels should be monitored as they have an impact on the organizations output as well as the working environment.

Mascha (2007), expresses factors such clear defined job roles, a well collaborated staff and accurate levels of supervision have a direct impact on employee morale. An employee's morale may be reflected by his performance, workplace attitude, interpersonal relations etc. While various factors amount to have an influence on morale, (Barmao, 2012) suggests that morale can be closely associated with interpersonal relationships and behaviour. The author suggests positive morale paves a way for employee motivation, eases collaboration towards organizational goals and mission. Employees associated with a level of high morale enhance self esteem thus resulting in a higher output for any assigned task. An organization, its effective leaders and influential peers lay the foundation of building positive workplace morale. Bowers et al., (2009) thus views employees having high levels of morale relate more to thrive in a stable workplace environment, have encouraging superiors, unambiguous job roles.

Low levels of morale are signified by employees who are unsatisfied or have a negative notion about their workplace. As (Barmao, 2012) suggests, having low levels or negative morale leads to negligence in assigned tasks. It thus becomes very critical for managers and leaders to monitor their employees and ensure their empowerment. Garland (2002), in his study has identified absenteeism, high levels of employee turnover and abuse in organizational policies regarding sick time as notable traits amongst employees having negative morale. Bowers et al., (2009) has closely associated negative levels of morale with conflicts in workplace, scarce staffing, hostile environment and a lack of employee voice. Employees tend to be more insecure about their jobs as well. Organizations having employees with low levels of morale end up outsourcing more operations due to uncertainty. Sauermann and Cohen (2008), have closely associated low levels of organizational profits, level of competitiveness and also diverted objectives. Ill managerial practices at workplace such as communication barriers due to line of command also have a negative impact on morale. Garland (2002), has also supports his statements by concluding communication gaps also result in having trust issues, disregard for colleagues, and negative workplace morale.

For the management, these issues raise more barriers for rectifying personnel issues and for supervising the staff. The author also suggests that negative morale spreads through the organization if not dealt with in an effective manner as it has a direct impact on individual and group related performance. It should be duly noted that an individual's commitment towards the organization and his satisfaction will be reflected on how committed the organization is towards its employees as well.

CONFLICT AND MORALE

It has been identified that conflicts can have positives and negative effects. The critical aspect is to identify how to nurture the positives and eradicate the negative aspects for the betterment. The management and its leaders should be aware and skilled enough to identify these opportunities. The top level hierarchy of any organization is responsible for dealing with its employees well being, morale, productivity and interpersonal relationships. Hart (2000), is convinced that the morale of an employee is largely affected by the style of management that is practised in an organization. Conflict resolution forms a huge part of the organizational culture. The author suggests that managers should be aware of the fact that a common approach for managing conflict will be ineffective on every employee because of unique personalities

It is important to know that unique personalities respond to different type of managerial styles. Knowing every employee individually enables management to utilize an appropriate technique to enhance morale during conflict as well. Kindler (1998), says that communication is a critical factor and it aids in clarity between an employee and the employer. Cordial relations can thus be maintained by eradicating trust issues.

Another study presented by (Bova et al., 1981) relates self esteem of an employee having a direct impact due to organizational conflicts and managerial styles. The authors have classified the types of style into three categories, namely 'Reverent Power', 'Expert Power' and 'Coercive Power'. Every style of management or 'supervisory powers' as quoted by the authors have a unique impact on employee morale. The findings of the study by Bova et al., (1981) suggested that conflicts or differences which were resolved by adopting reverent or expert managerial styles had a positive impact on an employee's morale. These two styles relied on communication skills coupled with decision making power due to expertise or ones

knowledge. Employees who had agreed to resolve disputes due to a coercive approach portrayed negative levels of morale.

Kindler (1998) opines that a high level of morale can be achieved if the management encourages employee's contributions in setting up organizational goals and settle conflicts in a cordial way. He believes that the employees tend to be more committed towards the organization and thrive in a competitive environment. Employees may be sceptical if they are kept under the shadow. Not being unaware of the organizational plans when changes are being implemented causes an imbalance in their trust levels. The employees may also have a sense of job insecurity leading into conflicts. Hence, Messmer (2001) has suggested that managers should consider the pros and cons of implementing any changes and prioritize open communication to avoid confusion and potential conflicting situations. Empowered employees or who are informed tend to be more satisfied. They are more efficient and adaptable to change.

Every organization and its management aim at attaining higher levels or employee morale. Morale is affected by numerous factors such as the level of involvement, communication, job roles, organizational culture, conflicts etc. If an organization aspire to maintain these positive levels, Barmao (2012) suggests that they should empower employees to operate on an individual level. The author believes this quality will help an employee to gain a better sense of judgment while dealing with conflicts. Enabling employees to grow personally as well as professionally has an impact on their morale.

RESEARCH GAP

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above literature review:-

They have identified the various methods of resolving conflicts; however, they fail to identify the best possible methodology to be undertaken for a favourable outcome. The most prominent type of conflicts incurred, leading to loss in morale has also not been identified.

The literature has further stressed on conflicts and the factors affecting morale. The challenging part to identify the size of the organization which plays a huge role in conflict resolution is a factor, which was not taken under consideration. Size of the organizations is

linked with budget constraints, hierarchy, culture, decentralization of power and authority which directly impact the efficiency of resolution processes.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH AIM, RESEARCH PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

AIM

This study addresses the impact of conflict resolutions on organizational staff morale of a service sector (travel and tourism) in Ireland. This study also aims to understand the various conflict resolution practices and their effectiveness across various organizations.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

‘The impact of conflict resolution on staff morale in the Irish travel and tourism sector.’

This study enables the researcher to focus on multiple attributes relating to conflict resolutions and its importance on the staff morale. It helps the researcher to understand the various conflict resolution practices in the Irish organizations. Secondly, it also focuses on the impact of conflicts on an employee’s morale and the impacts of conflict resolutions on an employee’s morale.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the impact of conflict resolution on the morale of employees working in travel and tourism sector, based in Ireland?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND OBJECTIVES

- (i) **To explore the various views and experiences of employees undergoing conflict.**

HYPOTHESIS 1: Conflict has a negative impact on employee morale.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Conflict does not have a negative impact on employee morale.

Every individual is set apart in his own way and has his own capacity of dealing with conflict in a unique sense. Organizational conflicts are one such phenomenon that are bound to occur at some or the other stage. If not conflict in the true sense, disagreements also take a toll on an employee’s well being and change his perspective. An employee dealing with

organizational conflict will have deeper insights than an observant. It is thus important to understand a participant as well as an observant point of view when they undergo conflict.

(ii) **To explore the various and the most effective conflict resolution practices undertaken by the organizations.**

Depending on the organizational resources and their culture, every organization has a different way of dealing with organizational conflicts. This objective of the researcher is to enable him to find out the various conflict resolution practices followed by organizations in Ireland. Every practise undertaken will result in different levels of success and it may or may not be successful at times. This will also enable the researcher to understand the most used resolution practice and its implication on employee morale.

(iii) **To understand an employees' perception about conflicts.**

It is a widespread perception that conflict always results in a negative outcome. It has to be noted that interpersonal relationships have an impact on the organizations as well as the individual's performance. Conflicting individuals may take excessive measures resulting in loss of productivity and morale. The researcher thus aims to understand an employees' vantage point regarding the need and importance of having conflicts. It will also help the researcher to better understand the effects conflicts have on an employee.

(iv) **To assess whether the size of the organization affects the success rate of conflict resolution practices.**

Size plays a huge role in departmentalization in an organization. A pyramid shaped organization is likely to have more departments than a flat structure. Organizations backed by finances have the power to exercise more advanced resolution procedures and vice versa. A petty dispute between two individuals may escalate and have serious consequences there impacting the organizational balance. It is thus critical to opt for the most appropriate resolution procedure to arrive at the desired outcome. The researcher thus aims to gain insights of the different types of practices prevailing in organizations of different sizes and their outcomes.

(v) **To assess the importance of conflict resolution as a skill possessed by the management.**

A negotiator can be in the form of any individual who takes charge of resolving a dispute. Top level management officials, line managers or even colleagues who possess skills of resolving conflict can help in maintaining balance and team chemistry. Disputes can be resolved at the initial level itself. Entrusting your peers or colleagues with solving organizational issues and conflicts helps in team building as well. The researcher thus aims to identify the importance of conflict resolution management as a skill. It will also help the researcher understand the impact it has on the morale of the employees.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Saunders et al. (2009) suggested a model of a research onion which has been adopted by the researcher to conduct his research. This 6 layered model defines the philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, techniques and time horizons that can be presumed while conducting a research.

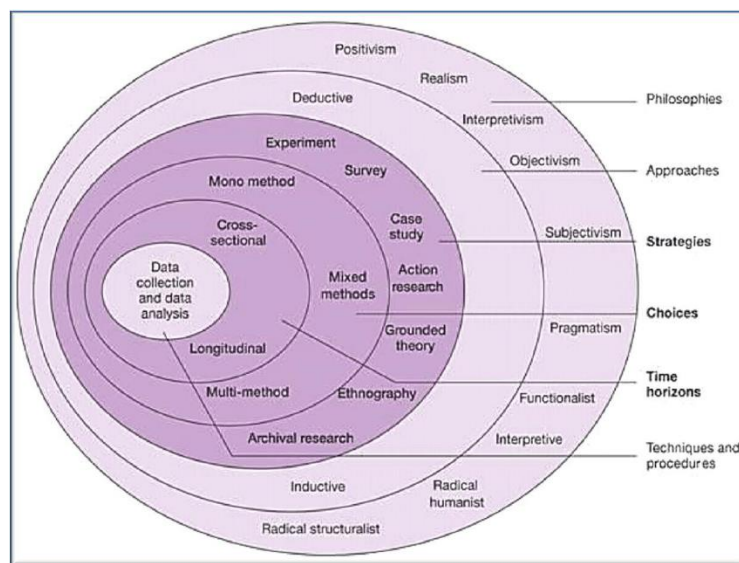


Fig 4.1 Research Onion. [Source: Saunders et al.,(2009, p.108)]

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Any research philosophy which is adapted is reflected by its assumptions and how the researcher views it. Every possible practical and ethical consideration which is then adopted by the researcher is governed by that philosophy. The strategy and the methodology undertaken are emphasized by its assumptions. Saunders et al., (2009) suggested four different types of research philosophies in the 'Research Onion Model'. They are positivism, pragmatism, realism and interpretivism.

For this particular study, the researcher has chosen to opt for the positivism approach. It relies on the credibility of the data generated by observation or data collection. Saunders et al.,

(2009), suggested that this approach relies more on prevailing theories and data in order to create any hypothesis or strategy, which will then be tested further. These studies may create further limitations which can be used as guidelines for testing any future research. The author also suggests that this study emphasizes more on quantifying data using structured methodologies in order to present data analysis.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Saunders et al., (2009) has suggested two approaches which are deductive approach and an inductive approach in the ‘Research Onion Model’. According to the author, a deductive approach makes the application of theories and assumptions in order to test a hypothesis by a suitable research strategy and design. An inductive approach conversely is based on developing theories on the data which is collected.

In a deductive approach, a relationship needs to be established between multiple variables which can be concluded usually with a quantitative study. In order to test the hypothesis, an appropriate methods needs to be implemented in order to replicate data (Saunders et al., 2009). Samples can then be selected to generalize the study for the purpose of analyzing the data. For conducting this particular research, a deductive approach has been implemented as it is best suited to answer the research question.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Dinnen (2014), the president of sales and marketing from MacKenzie Corporation has defined a research strategy as a systematic procedure of actions to implement the readers thoughts into comprehensive results. Strategies may belong to the deductive or inductive approach but has to be made sure that they are not considered to be mutually exclusive.

Deductive approach can be best utilized by implementing a survey which answers the ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘what’ and the ‘how much’ aspect of any area. Surveys thus are an example of an ideal tool for any descriptive piece of study. A sizeable amount of data can be collected via questionnaires in an inexpensive way which can be easily compared (Saunders et al, 2009).

Surveys are tools which allow the researcher to analyze quantitative data with the help of inferential statistics. It also evaluates and establishes significant relations between the variables and is thus assessed as authoritative as well (Saunders et al, 2009).

Saunders et al, (2009) has also suggested that implementing sampling while using a survey for data collection enables to create representations of the selected population. It is a less costly and an effective method to gather data from the entire population.

METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

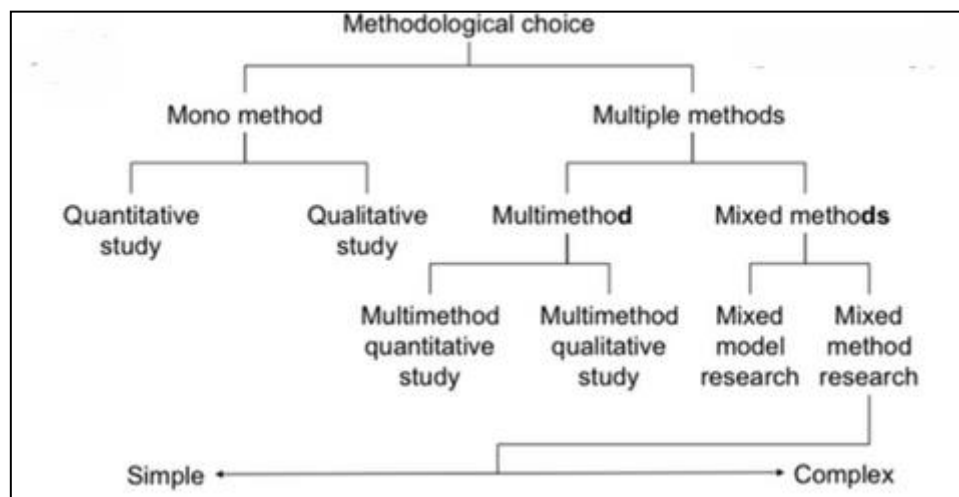


Fig 4.2 Methodological Choices (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009)

Saunders et al., (2009) has suggested mono methods i.e. a singular or a primary source of data collection or multiple methods to gather relevant data to correspond to the research question.

As per Saunders et al., (2009) a quantitative method for data collection includes questionnaire surveys while personal interviews are techniques which comprise of qualitative data collection. For the purpose of answering the research question, the researcher has opted with a mono method involving a quantitative study. This type of method is adequate to gather relevant information by distributing an online survey.

TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

Salomon (1991), suggests that a diverse area can thus be addressed to gain more insights of the field of study. As said by (Grafton et al., 2011), the addressing issues pertaining to ‘how and why’ are explained with the help of a qualitative approach where as issues relating to ‘how many’ or ‘how often’ are clarified by a quantitative approach. Logical groundwork backed by an understanding of the social phenomenon is aimed to be reflected by a mixed approach (Grafton et al., 2011). As recommended by (Flanagan, 2013) any scientific methodology involves the study of the various methods or measurement instruments that are used to measure data for analyzing a scientific piece of work. Scientific methodologies are exceptional tools for analyzing data, findings and interpreting facts or theories. According to Flanagan (2013), a scientific study can be categorized either into a qualitative or quantitative research.

A qualitative research study is mainly concerned with a deeper insight unlike a quantitative study which concentrates more on presenting numerical data. Almeida (2017), distinguishes qualitative study from quantitative study by the mere fact that the researcher acts as the subject as well as an object in the prior.

Unlike qualitative methodologies, quantitative methodologies use quantifiable methods for data collection. These methods highlight the objectives with the help of structured procedures. Quantitative research methods are especially more fitting when sizeable data can be collected from a selected population which can then be quantified (Almeida, 2017). Quantitative data is the most prominent method used for obtaining factual data and views towards a particular area or subject (Barnham, 2015). The main objective of a quantitative research design is to perceive the insights of a selected group known as a sample space. Using scientific inquiry, the quantitative analysis of the data which is gathered is done to draw appropriate conclusions (Allen, 2017).

Davies (2003), in his research on studies on tourism sector used qualitative and quantitative analysis which allowed recognizing evidence on employee turnover taking into consideration the external environmental factors. Paul (2019), in his research of similar nature, successfully collected a significant data in a limited amount of time. He states quantifying the data by

using a simple questionnaire was the most feasible method which was efficient in analyzing a huge sample space. Questionnaires are an effective tool for quantifying data.

DATA COLLECTION

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Information regarding areas around the conflict resolution methodologies implemented in the organization and its impact on morale will be gathered with the help of a structured questionnaire on seeking approval from the organizations. The feedback received will be anonymous to safeguard the identity of the participant. It has also been made aware to the participant regarding their right to withdraw their participation from the survey, whenever they may think so.

SECONDARY DATA

Greenhoot & Dowsett (2012), suggests that a researcher's existing data can be refereed or used as a guideline to concentrate on his own concern. Additional findings can be interpreted by analyzing the same data as well.

Working on these similar lines, the researcher has made use of EBSCOhost database, academic journals and articles based in HR learning websites for the purpose of this research. The research conducted by Greenhoot & Dowsett, (2012) has also suggested an existing unfinished research can be further continued to inspect fresh concerns, the researcher has utilized this framework to answer his own questions in this study.

PRIMARY DATA

Benelli and Low (2019), highlighted the importance of primary data for research purposes. The need to collect primary data can be guaranteed when secondary source of data is re-examined before any ethical consideration is taken into account.

Quantitative Data Collection

Wolfe (1956), has suggested questionnaires are an important tool for data collection as they enlarge the scope of providing accurate reports with enhanced efficiency. Questionnaires are easy to process, handle and are a cost effective method of accessing data. Taking this under consideration, the researcher has acquired primary data as a first hand source of information

through the use of a questionnaire. The researcher has implemented an online questionnaire survey which comprises of close and open ended questions addressing the topic.

Quantitative studies involve a larger sample size which is selected at random and hence the conclusions which are drawn are set to be generalized (Rahman, 2017). Joel and Mathur (2018), have identified the following advantages and disadvantages of implementing a web based questionnaire for data collection-

ADVANTAGES

- i) E-questionnaires are extremely flexible as they can be conducted via emails, direct links, websites etc. Surveys can also be customised according to suitable demographics, different languages, personal experiences etc.
- ii) They can be effectively administered in a short amount of time thus reducing the time required for the collection of data. The use of internet also aids in broadcasting several data which enriches the scope of surveys. This has led to the possibility of enhanced group discussion, focus groups and interactive chat sessions etc. for a rich survey experience.
- iii) Technology has also played a massive role in upgrading the qualities of questionnaires or surveys. Responses can easily be submitted and collected via a specific URL. Various survey tools can thus be accessed to send the answers (Mullarkey, 2004). Internet has provided to provide a superior control by helping in reducing biasness as well. Online surveys also make it possible to utilize different indicators to make the responses more specific (Tingling et al., 2003).
- iv) Questionnaires sent via an online platform are extremely convenient as they can be answered on the respondent's discretion and convenience. Time constraints are not a barrier and many a times the respondent's can answer an unanswered question at a later stage. Hogg (2003), states that respondents are at a liberty to answer the survey at a convenient hour rather than not being able to do it due to an inconvenient hour. It is not only easier for the respondents to send the responses, but is easier for the researcher to administer and input data from the responses. Wilson and Laskey (2003), have also suggested the feasibility of decoding the data of the respondents once all the responses are collected.
- v) A diverse form of questions can be answered which gives the respondent a better view to express his opinions. A respondent may have the option of selecting his desired response in the form of yes/no, agree-disagree, ranking ordered answers, short descriptive or even open ended brief questions etc.

DISADVANTAGES

- (i) Web based questionnaires or invites for the same are often perceived as junk emails. Organizations are equipped with inbuilt software which blocks emails sent by an unreliable source. Researchers are often perceived as fraudulent sources to extract information. It so happens that a potential participant would not even receive such emails due to software put in place.
- (ii) Participants may be at the receiving end of unclear instructions which affects the quality of the questionnaire as well as the responses. At times, the level of understanding regarding certain aspects of the questionnaires, also compromise the results due to uncertainty.
- (iii) Sharing any information online or to any stranger is vulnerable these days. A lot of personal information gets compromised and thus issues relating to the same have increased. People have become more sceptical about what they share online due to ongoing frauds. The author thus suggests putting in place a strong policy or consent statement around the data that is being collected transparent to both the parties.

Considering the above stated advantages, disadvantages and previously available research, the researcher has opted to apply a web questionnaire method for data collection. The questions will be based around the areas pertaining to conflict resolution and employee morale. A structured questionnaire prepared using Goggle forms and using a Likert Scale was distributed via e-mail. The questionnaire had 5 answers of multiple choices. A degree which will range from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' or options between 'Yes' and 'No' could be selected. Two questions were opinion based where the researcher gained valuable insights regarding a participants experience and understanding. Once the responses were received, analysis of the gathered data was done to make suitable inferences. The researcher has used MS Excel for the purpose of data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Meyer and Avery (2009), have highlighted the importance of implementing spreadsheet based software tools such as Microsoft Excel and Powerpoint for analyzing and reducing data. Google surveys enabled the researcher to import the responses in Microsoft Excel. The researcher has used MS Excel for the purpose of data analysis. This tool was used to quantify

the collected data in the form of graphical pie charts and bar diagrams. Saunders et al., (2009), has identified the use of MS Excel for research purposes especially for representing and comparing data by using frequency tables, diagrams and graphs.

EDITING THE DATA AND CODING

Electronic and manual methods of capturing data are prone to be filled with substitution errors. Thus, it is critical to measure and scrutinize the quality of the captured data (Jones and Hidioglou, 2013). These responses may be entered incorrectly, misinterpreted, repetitive, or even misread by the respondents and hence be cleaned. Data can be established into various categories after being collected and then can be coded accordingly.

This research involved taking insights of employee's opinions through open ended questions as well. Saunders et al., (2009) identifies the need to quantify such qualitative statements by calculating the occurrence of specified references or reasoning. Software such as MS Excel can then be implemented for statistically analyzing the same. Data can also be represented by pie charts. The entire chart is divided in to fragments which are individually represented by significant values. Saunders et al., (2009) suggests grouping of fragmented data, as it becomes complicated to interpret segments larger in number especially for categorical and numerical data. Bar charts and pictograms are ideal for displaying discrete quantifiable data. Saunders et al., (2009) supports their statements by justifying the importance for implementing bar graphs (or otherwise known as column charts) for research purposes given their accuracy. The occurrences or frequencies in bar graphs are denoted by their length of every individual bar.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

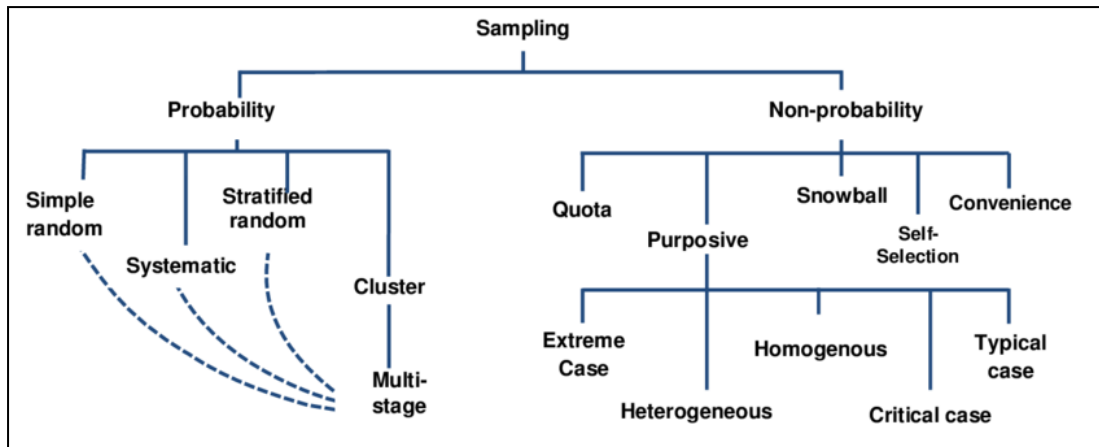


Fig 4.3 Sampling Techniques (Saunders et al., 2009)

For the purpose of selecting an ideal sampling technique, Saunders et al., (2009) has identified two types of techniques i.e. probability and non-probability sampling techniques. As per the author, every individual has an equal possibility of being selected in a probability sampling. It is thus termed as a promising technique to answer the research question via surveys. On the contrary, a non-probability sampling method negates the chances of providing individuals an equal opportunity of being selected. Uprichard (2013), has explained the purpose of non probability sampling when there is a need to obtain intrinsic facts regarding the specified sample. However, in both the cases the authors suggest that some sort of prior knowledge has to be taken under consideration before implementing any sampling technique.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher aims to answer his research question by targeting a specific group who share their personal opinions. Hence, a non probability sampling method which applies convenience sampling and a snowball effect is bet fit for the researcher.

The researcher aimed at obtaining the specified sample size by selecting random samples which were easy to access within the organizations. A convenience sampling method was implemented as data from the top level management could not be gathered due to lack of accessibility. Although, this technique is prone to biasness due to ease of accessing the samples, Saunders et al., (2009) suggests the sample space represent the said population.

At times, due to enforceable circumstances (global COVID-19 pandemic in this case) or other factors (employees on leaves, temporarily unavailable etc.) it is difficult for the researcher to

identify individuals who are a part of the large population. At such times cases or samples can be asked to further identify new cases and so on. The researcher has thus implemented a snowball sampling technique to cater to a larger sample size. Taylor (1994), suggests respondents tend to find potential respondents who are of an identical nature

TARGET POPULATION

A target population is the entire set of sample space which may be considered for the purpose of research to make inferences. Saunders et al., (2009), defines population as a selected sample taken from a specific case. A set of population may not necessarily mean a set of individuals for the purpose of research. For the purpose of this thesis, all the employees working in the travel and tourism sector comprise of the total population.

The sample space consists of participants working in the marketing, human resources, customer service and the accounts department. This research is aimed at employees working in different departments and their line managers (mid level) within the travel and tourism based organizations including marketing, accounting, human resources, customer service etc. The researcher has excluded all top level personnel such as the CEO's, MD or the GM (top level) due to feasibility purpose.

SAMPLE SIZE

Considering the size of the population, it is not feasible and impractical at times to consider the entire population for collecting data. Sampling thus becomes more effective when interviewing, surveys or any other data collection techniques are being implemented. It is however incorrect to assume that the findings given by a specific census from a sample will reflect to an accurate data representing the entire population. According to Saunders et al., (2009), sampling can be substituted for census especially when;

- (a) It is not practically possible to survey the entire population under consideration.
- (b) Monetary constraints prove to be a barrier to survey the entire population.
- (c) Surveying the entire population becomes impossible due to limited time.
- (d) The results need to be analyzed quickly as the data is ready and collected.

LIMITATIONS

Every researcher has to anticipate limitations so that they can be dealt in an effective manner to increase the scope and reliability of the study. Limitations can be constraints in various forms due to feasibility, application or findings. Price and Murnan (2004) suggest that these constraints can be an outcome of the methodology or the design of study that has been undertaken or other unforeseen challenges. The researcher has identified the following limitations that were taken under consideration-

- 1) **TIME FRAME-** Due to the limited amount of time being allotted to this research, the data findings are confined to the amount of responders who responded within the stipulated time frame. The researcher managed to reach out to 134 participants out of which 81 participants responded.
- 2) **FUNDING-** This research project was not aided with any funding. The researcher had a limited access to various sites, data sources as well as tools for the purpose of data analysis.
- 3) **INSUFFICIENT SAMPLE SIZE-** Results tend to be more accurate, when the findings are drawn from a larger sample size. With the ongoing issue of COVID-19 pandemic, gathering data from participants by physically interviewing them was not possible. The lockdown impositions that were followed also proved to be a constraint to reach out to participants as they were unavailable to reach out. Also, time constraints played a huge role as the researcher could approach 134 participants due to the same. The findings are restricted to the data provided by 81 participants due to their availability. The participants engaged in the survey were mid level employees who were easily accessible. Top level managers, CEO's, MD's and any other equivalent individuals were not targeted due to feasibility and lack of access to reach out to them.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The travel and tourism sector in Ireland has always been one of the major contributors to the Irish economy. The nature of the business is such that employees will always thrive in a busy environment. Operating in such a fast-paced environment leads to organizational instability thus leading to conflicts among co-workers. The researcher has attempted to answer his research objectives by carefully

In this chapter, the researcher has managed to analyze the data focusing on the issues that were highlighted in the survey. A detailed analysis of every question in the survey has been done and the findings have been presented accordingly. Every question pertains to a specific parameter revolving the topic of the research to answer the mentioned objectives. The questionnaire has been attached for reference purposes. The researcher ensured to acquire prior consent of the participants. The following findings that are presented are confined to 81 respondents from the Irish travel and tourism sector.

(i) OBJECTIVE 1: To explore the various views and experiences of employees undergoing conflict.

HYPOTHESIS 1: Conflict has a negative impact on employee morale.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Conflict does not have a negative impact on employee morale.

This objective aims to understand the various emotions an employee undergoes when he is experiencing conflict. Emotions can be overwhelming for any employee which may affect the rationality of the decisions that are followed. A person in conflict may adversely affect not only his morale, but the morale of the team as well.

In Fig 5.1, a majority of the sample comprising of 31.1% felt angry or frustrated. The research further revealed that 27.2% of the employees felt severely demotivated when they were undergoing conflicts. Roughly 10% of the employees were nervous and 1.2% of the employees felt emotionally disturbed when they were in conflict.

11% of the employees were deemed to be excited by the fact that they would get an opportunity to prove their counterpart wrong, whereas the results show that 16% of the employees felt confident as their issues have been raised.

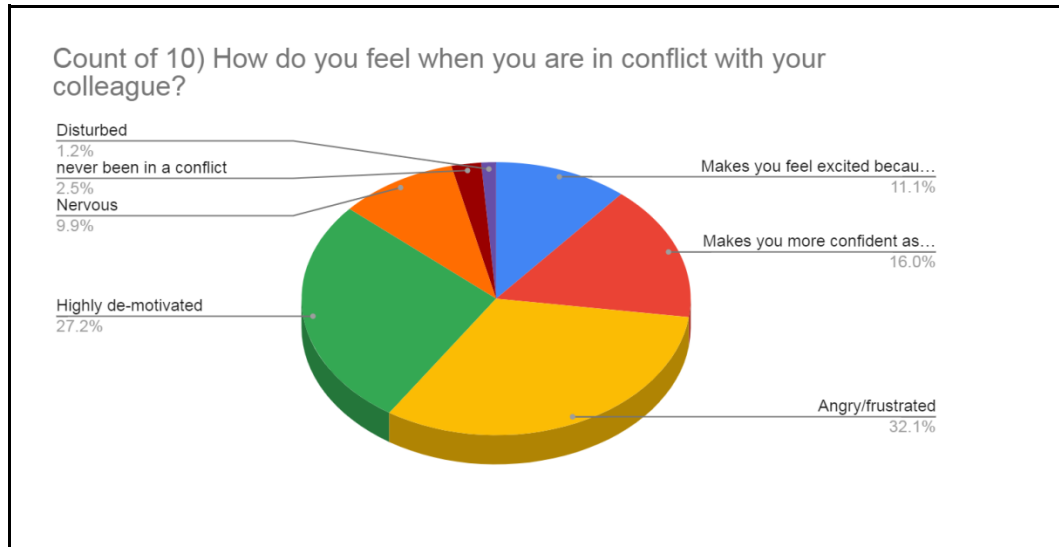


Fig 5.1 Types of Emotions for Individuals Undergoing Conflict

(ii) OBJECTIVE 2: To explore the various and the most effective conflict resolution practices undertaken by the organizations.

The respondents were asked about the various types of resolution practices which were implemented in their organization. The findings showed that multiple practices were accessible and practiced in the organizations but 58% of the organizations offered mentoring from managers/colleagues. 33.3% of the respondents represented organizations imparting team/group building conflict resolution practices. While 24.7% of the organizations gave peer to peer training, 18.5% of the organization's offered relationship management training. Some organizations (13.6%) also offered external

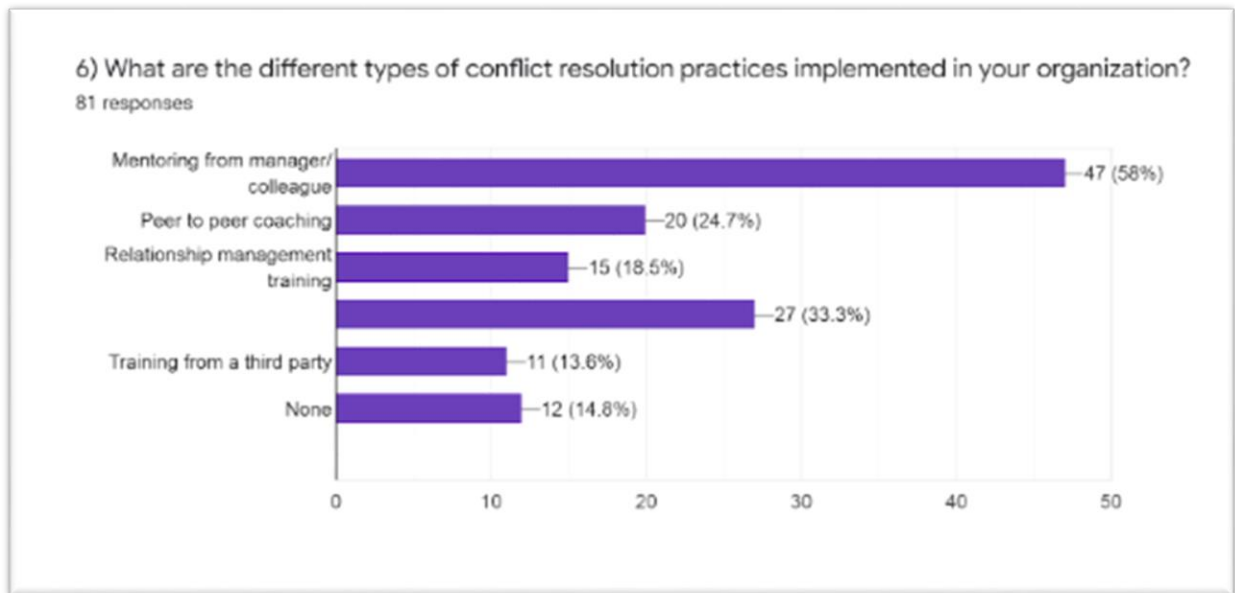


Fig 5.2 Types of Conflict Resolution Practices.

The researcher also gathered insights from employees by asking them who according to their opinion should ideally manage conflicts. A majority of the respondents (43.2%) considered HR Department to be solely responsible while 33.3% of the employees think top level executives/managers should be responsible. 12.3% of the respondents think only the parties involved should be responsible for resolving their issues. Some participants (6.2%) preferred external interventions for resolutions while the remaining 4.9% of the participants

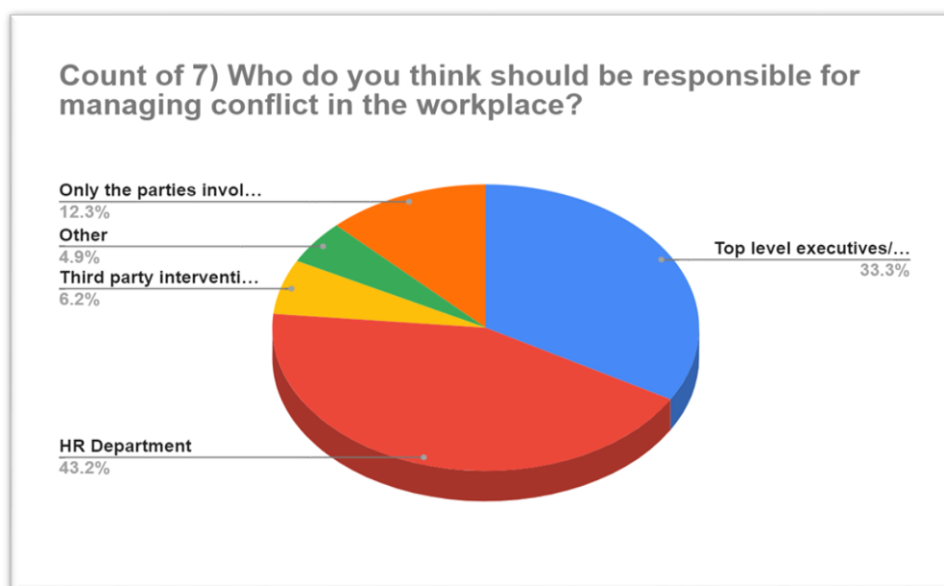


Fig 5.3 Responsibility of Managing Conflicts at Workplace

(iii) OBJECTIVE 3: To understand an employees' perception about conflicts.

The researcher aimed to understand an employees standpoint regarding conflicts at the workplace. This primary research enabled the researcher to gather valuable insights regarding how important conflict is viewed, by the employees. The findings showed that 31.4% of the respondents valued the presence of conflict at workplace as very important (4/5). 25.5% of the participants identified conflicts as critically important (5/5) phenomenon to have at the workplace. The findings further showed that 24.7% participants thought it is important (3/5) to have workplace conflicts. While 15.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that conflicts are somewhat important (2/5), only 2.7% of the respondents think of conflicts as least important (1/5) to have at the workplace.

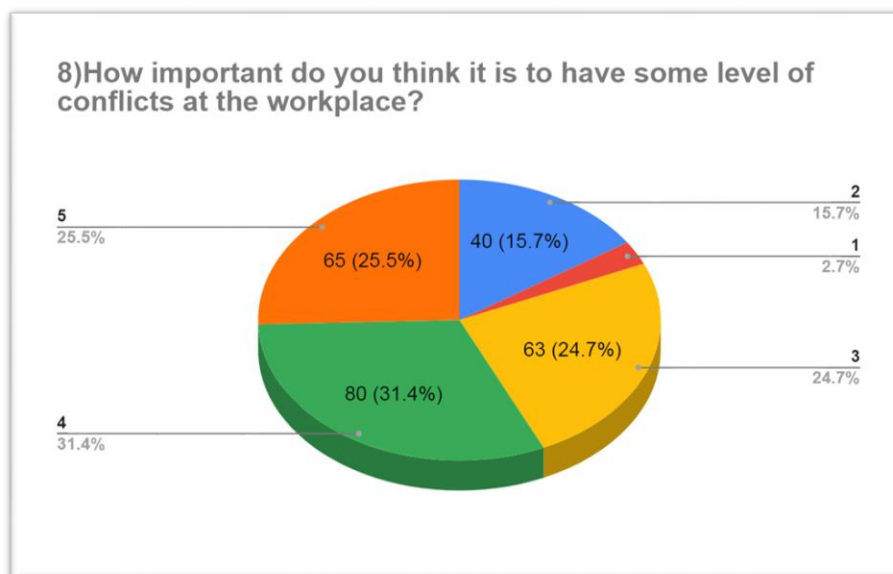


Fig 5.4 Importance of Conflicts at Workplace

This primary research also focused on the various outcomes employees experienced after they underwent workplace conflict (Fig 5.5). A major part of the respondents amounting to 43.2% suggested conflicts improved teamwork after rectified. 40.7% of the participants believed they were flexible in their overall approach followed by another 37% of the respondents who felt they enhanced their ability to listen more to their colleagues. Roughly 36% of the participants felt conflicts later on improved relations. 28.4% of the participants

were of the opinion that having conflicts resulted in giving shared opinions further resulting in new innovations and ideas. While 24.7% of the participants enhanced their communication skills as a result of conflict, 18.5% of the respondents did not find any positive outcome of conflicts.

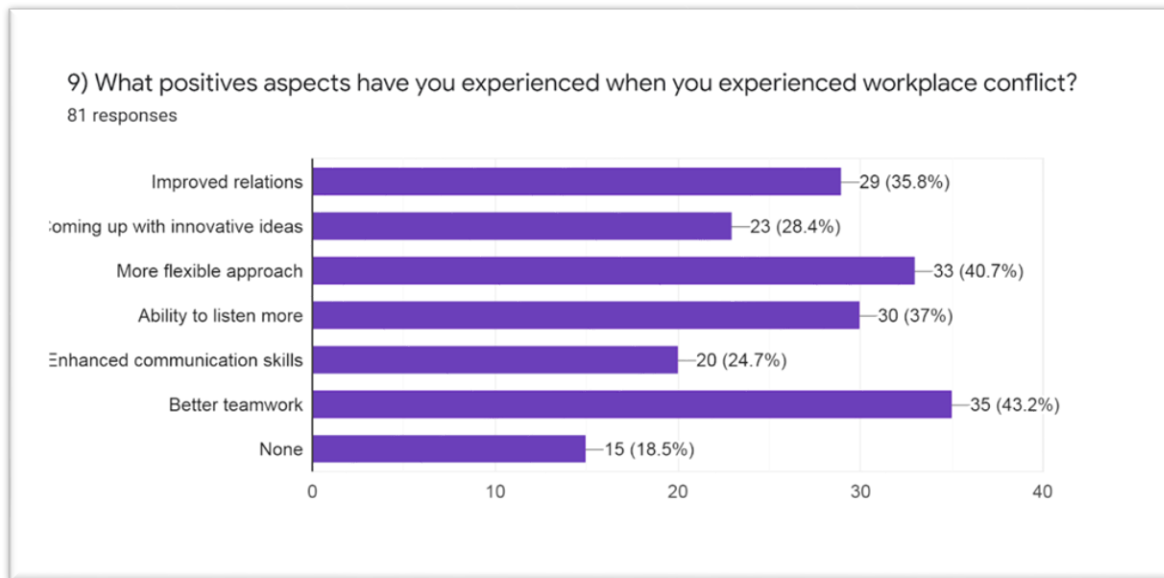


Fig 5.5 Positive Aspects Emerging out of Workplace Conflicts

Fig 5.6 shows the generic perception of employees regarding the causes of conflicts at workplace. A majority of the respondents accounting to 25.9% think conflicts are caused due to the contradictory opinions with the colleagues. 22% of the respondents relate conflicts with improper management followed by 16% of the respondents who associate conflicts with the underlying stress caused due to workload. 12.3% of the respondents think conflicts were caused due to them being unfairly treated by the members of their own organization. Equal number of respondents accounting to 6.2% find the major causes of conflict to be disparity in understanding their job roles and accountability respectively. Almost 5% of the respondents think having a sense of perceived discrimination against their colleagues resulted in conflicts. A minor population of respondents amounting to 3.7% think harassment and/or bullying at workplace resulted in conflicts while 2.5% of the participants thought that the lack of resources provided to them gave rise to conflicts.

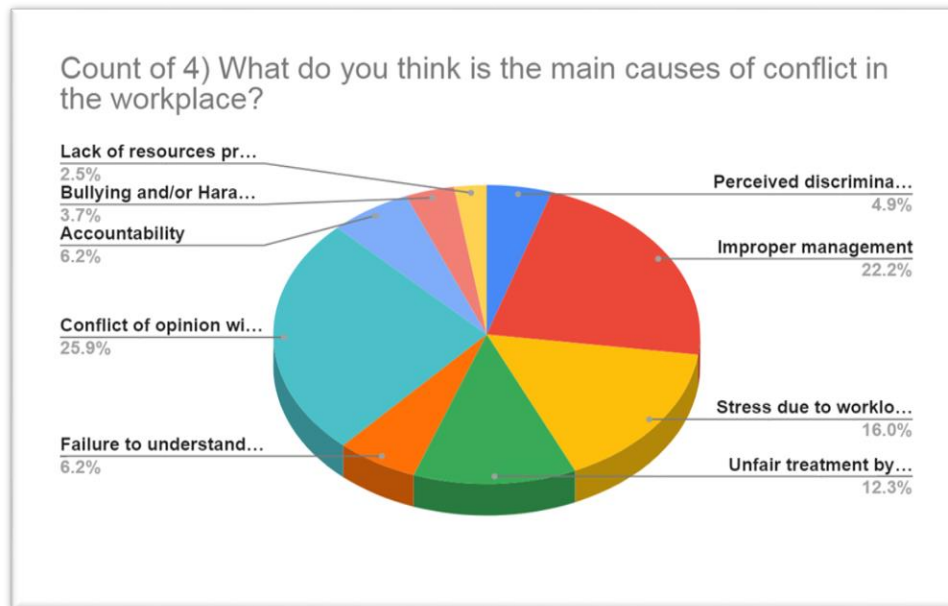


Fig 5.6 Causes Of Conflicts at Workplace

- (iv) OBJECTIVE 4:** To assess whether the size of the organization affects the success rate of conflict resolution practices.

This particular objective of the study helps the researcher to identify the various conflict resolution practices applicable in organizations of various sizes. Larger organizations are accompanied with more formal procedures and vice versa which affects the quality of resolution procedures.

The findings of this study as showed in Fig 5.7, shows a majority of the participants (56.6%) working with a larger team comprising of more than 15 employees. While 16% of the respondents worked with a team comprising of 10-15 members, 14.8% of the employees worked with a team comprising of 5-10 members. A minor portion of the participants (12.3%) worked with a small team having up to 5 members.

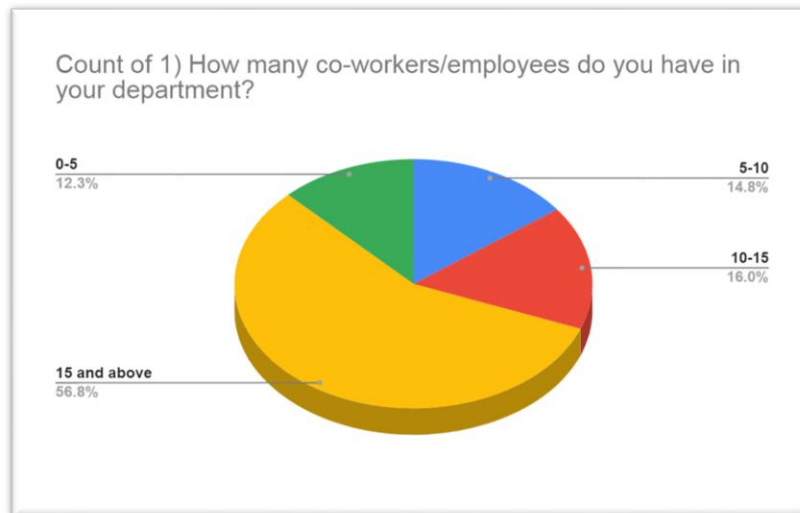


Fig 5.7 Number of Co-Workers

A further investigation conducted in the research also showed the ratio of organizations having a formalized procedure for dispute handling with organizations that did not have any. The findings showed that 54% of the respondents were working in organizations that are not having any formal conflict resolution procedure put in place. On the contrary, 46% of the respondents were working in organizations that had a formalized procedure for managing conflicts.



Fig 5.8 Inclusion of Conflict Management Policy at Workplace

The researcher also gained insights regarding the morale levels of employees who underwent a conflict resolution process. As depicted in Fig 5.9, a majority of the respondents (78 %))

underwent a conflict resolution procedure. Apart from these, the remaining respondents accounting to 22% were never directly or indirectly involved in conflicts and hence did not undergo any conflict resolution procedure.

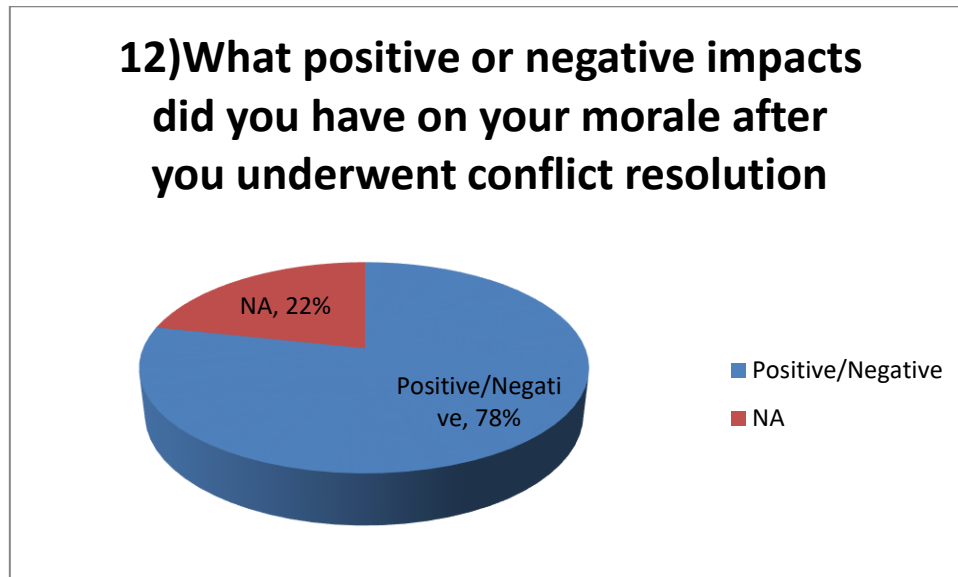


Fig 5.9 Influence of Conflict Resolution on Morale

A further analysis conducted by the researcher in Fig 5.10 shows the analysis of only the participants who underwent conflict resolution process. Out of these respondents, a majority of the respondents (59%) had a positive or a successful resolution procedure. On the other hand 41% of the participants who underwent conflict resolution had an unsuccessful or unconvincing impact on their morale.

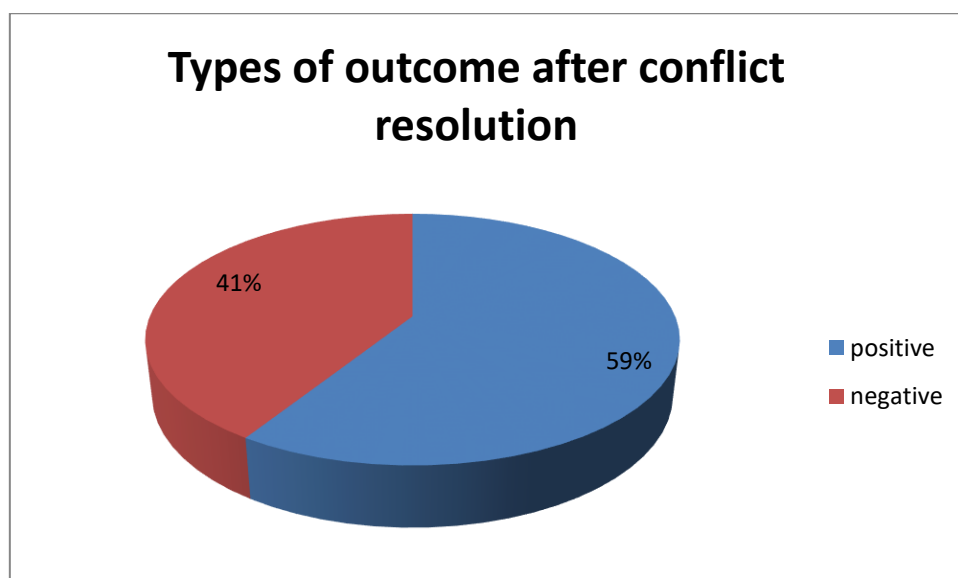


Fig 5.10 Types of Outcome after Conflict Resolution

(v) OBJECTIVE 5: To assess the importance of conflict resolution as a skill possessed by the management.

This particular objective was undertaken to study the insights of conflict resolution as a tool for effectively managing the workforce. The researcher aims to understand employees' perception of who they find responsible for resolving conflicts as well. The management of the organization are responsible for maintain organizational peace and therefore it is critical for the management to be equipped with the right tools to get the job done.

The analysis in Fig 5.11 shows the responses of the participants regarding their opinion of how important it is for the managers to be competent. 37% of the respondents felt it is very important for managers to possess the skill of resolving conflicts. Almost 26% of the candidates think it is critically important for managers to be possessing with conflict resolution skills followed by further 22.2% respondents who think it was just important. A small proportion of candidates accounting to 2.5% however were of the opinion that it is not at all important for managers to possess conflict resolution skills in general.



Fig 5.11 Importance of Conflict Management as a Management Skill

Further findings conducted by the researcher as per Fig 5.12 show that maximum respondents (43.2%) think that only the HR department should be responsible for handling conflicts. 33.3% of the respondents suggested top level executives/managers should intervene with

conflicts whereas 12.3% of the participants consider only the parties involved to sort out their own differences. 6.2% of the participants think an external conflict resolution intervention should be implemented to manage conflicts.

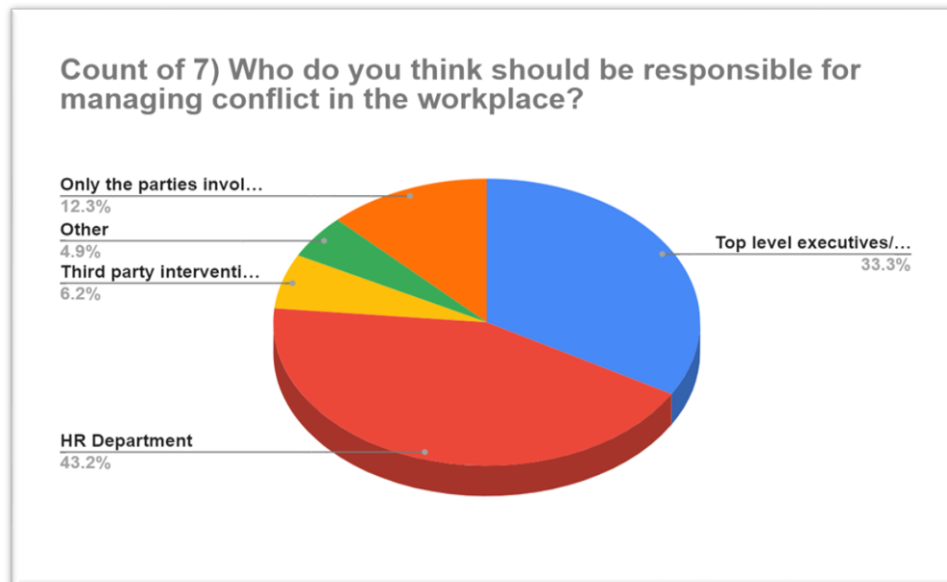


Fig 5.12 Responsibility of Managing Conflicts at Workplace

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMNENDATIONS

Previous studies did not concentrate on the impacts of conflict resolutions on employee morale especially in the Irish context. Various perceptions about conflicts and factors having an impact on an employee's morale were revealed. Also, the researcher gained valuable knowledge about the various practices and working culture in the Irish travel and tourism sector. This chapter of the research study highlights the various factors and understandings that have impacted the findings conducted by the researcher. A critical evaluation of all the objectives, hypothesis and the conclusions are suggested as below;

- (i) To explore the various views and experiences of employees undergoing conflict.

HYPOTHESIS H1: Conflict has a negative impact on employee morale.

HYPOTHESIS H2: Conflict does not have a negative impact on employee morale.

Based on the collected data and analysis that was done, the readings suggest that a majority of the candidates showcased negative emotions after they underwent conflict. Although a significant number of participants suggested they felt confident, excited and seemed progressive in their approach having positive morale (Mascha, 2007) the majority of the findings suggests unlike wise. Previous research has also suggested employees having higher self esteem showcase higher levels of morale. These participants may want to thrive in their workplace as they may have clear defined job roles and voice their opinions (Bowers et al., 2009) to make a mark.

Grunberg et al., (2000), has argued that employees may tend to conceal their negative emotions considering their job which is at stake. Further findings suggested the participants became nervous and disturbed as they experienced conflict. These employees may be contributors to low performance, maintaining poor inter personal relations (Sauermann and Cohen, 2008) creating a hostile environment thus directly impacting their morale. They also might need increased supervision due to under performance (Mascha, 2007).

A majority of the employees showcased different but negative aspects when they were involved in conflicts. The overall findings suggested that employees succumbed to aspects

which impacted their morale in a negative way much more than they do in a positive way. Thus, it can be concluded that **hypothesis statement 2 has been tested negative whereas research findings suggests hypothesis statement 1 to be positive.**

- (ii) To explore the various and the most effective conflict resolution practices undertaken by the organizations.

The research findings suggest that organizations across Ireland have multiple conflict resolution techniques. The type of resolution may vary on the situation, nature of the conflict, organizational values and availability of resources. The findings clearly show that although some organizations to provide with third party interventions, participants still preferred to opt for other internal conflict resolution solutions methods like mentoring that were being offered. Further research also revealed that even though a majority of the respondents worked in teams, team/group building conflict resolutions wasn't the most sought after resolution process. Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin (1999), have identified compromises in cognitive morale and performance as the drawbacks which might have played a role in organizations not practicing this methodology in abundance.

Although a majority of the participants consider the HR Department to be in charge of managing conflicts at the workplace, a majority of the organizations offered mentoring from managers/ colleagues as the most prominent practice. The findings in Fig 5.9 also showed that a majority of the respondents had positive outcomes after they underwent conflict resolutions.

Pianta, Hamre, & Allen (2012), have established mentoring as one of the most successful ways of resolving conflicts. It can thus be concluded that mentoring from a manager/colleague has proved to be a very successful method of resolving conflicts. That might be the case because employees trust their workers or managers more than any external party for assistance. A good sense of leadership could be thoroughly observed in these organizations. Previous research by Hudson (2005) has also suggested that teamwork has a direct impact on the morale of an employee. While Clardy (2018) has highlighted the qualities of a sound mentor, Hudson (2013) has given insights regarding mentoring being a joint collaborative effort. The findings thus suggest that the participants prefer an individual intervention practice like mentoring where there are a less number of people involved. A

collaborative effort with a skilled negotiator/mediator especially having core knowledge of Human Resources and conflict resolution practices with the manager in charge should thus be implemented within these organizations.

As per the findings of this study, it can thus be concluded that the mentoring from managers/colleagues can thus be implemented in Irish organizations from the travel and tourism sector as the most ideal practice of resolving conflicts.

(iii) To understand an employees' perception about conflicts.

As suggested earlier, having conflicts are often generalized as a negative aspect especially in the organizational context. An organization having high level of conflicts can be forced to invest more in conflict resolution practices and procedures. As per the findings of the research, more than 30% of the participants think it is critically important to have some levels of conflicts at the workplace. While only a minor part of the respondents were against the idea of having some levels of conflicts at workplace, it can be said that the rest of the respondents were aware of the importance of conflicts at workplace.

The research suggests that a majority of the respondents thought that having conflicting opinions with your colleague/team mate was the major cause of conflict. Findings also suggested that majority of the participant's experienced better teamwork after they underwent conflict resolution. Other positive aspects such as improved relations, better communication skills (Bova et al., 1981) and approach etc. were also identified by the participants. Previous research by Broome et al., (2002) has also suggested that, conflicting opinions creates a pool of ideas and innovations and this theory was backed by the findings as well. An overall picture suggests that the respondents are well aware and clear about the importance to have some level of conflicts, the causes as well as ideal practices that can be implemented to resolve them. Barmao (2012) has suggested positive morale, collaboration and high levels of self esteem which can be reflected by the findings in these organizations. It can be deduced that the employees in these organizations have identified aspects that enhanced their morale, communication, teamwork etc. in a positive way.

However, it has to be noted that some participants didn't find the presence of conflict important. As suggested by Bagshaw (1998), these employees only intend to get the tasks

completed even if they dwell in a conflicting environment. Research findings suggest some participants had a negative outcome when they underwent a conflict resolution. These participants might have had an extremely negative experience involving conflict resulting in them overlooking the positive aspects. It can also be concluded that these employees may be avoiding conflicts altogether by suppressing their emotions (Kangal et al., 2019). As suggested by Pruitt (1983) completely avoiding or delaying conflicts leading to inaction can be traced in these employees as well. The employees may be completely discouraged to continue to negotiate and reach a conclusion.

- (iv) To assess whether the size of the organization affects the success rate of conflict resolution practices.

The success rate can be accounted by the positive nature of the outcome of conflict resolution. A majority of the respondents work within a team comprising of more than 15 members. Bigger organizations have the required resources to adopt to more sophisticated resolution techniques. Conflicts are bound to occur more if there are more number of individuals that are involved. As suggested by Roche (2016), it was observed that Irish organizations did not tend to have any defined method of assessing conflicts. This study was proved to be right as upon further investigation, it was observed that even though the majority of the respondents worked in a larger workforce (54%), their organization did not have any formalized procedure for resolving conflicts. The members of these organizations may be resorting to the basic but effective resolution methods like reporting to the immediate supervisor, mentoring or negotiating between the conflicting parties or even directly confronting the party involved.

46% of the organizations however provided the employees with a formalized procedure for managing workplace conflicts. Findings revealed that these organizations were backed by strong HR policies with defined steps for resolving conflicts, a formal complaints procedure on HRIS, lodging written complaints and having the scope of escalating the issue if not resolved, conflict and dispute resolution committees, formal intervention procedures, legal teams etc.

The research findings also gave an insight regarding the experience of employees who underwent conflict resolution. It was interesting to observe that a majority of the respondents who had a positive outcome outnumbered the ones having a negative impact on their morale.

In spite of the lesser number of organizations having a formalized procedure as mentioned earlier, findings given by the respondents related them being more open to communicate, having built a better sense of judgement, entrusting colleagues and flexible in their approach (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). Other respondents also experienced an increase in morale, sense of improved morale as issues were resolved, improved relationships, being patient and also a positive approach. Avolio et al., (2004), has suggested a transformational leadership style that reflects to these attributes which can be clearly observed in these organizations as well.

As per the findings presented it can be said that for the context of this research, the size of the organizations did not play any significant impact on the success rate. Even though a majority of the respondents worked in a large team, their organization was not backed with strong policies and procedures for resolving conflicts. Findings also showed that a majority (59%) of the respondents were satisfied thus leading to positive levels of morale, with their outcomes after they underwent a conflict resolution procedure. Organizations that did not have any formal procedure might be imparting quality practices which cater to the needs of the employees. Kharbanda & Stallworthy (1991) have suggested that individuals equipped with listening abilities ensure a smoother resolution process. These organizations reflect to individuals who have good leaders, have strong ethical values and are skilled negotiators. The quality of conflict resolution practices their outcome is a strong factor which should be taken under consideration.

- (v) To assess the importance of conflict resolution as a skill possessed by the management.

Earlier findings of the study revealed that mentoring from the managers/colleagues was concluded as the best practice which could be implemented in every Irish organization. A majority of the respondents think that it is very essential for managers to be equipped with conflict resolution skills. As suggested by Fisher (1982); Robinson (2010) mediation as a skill can be an effective way of resolving conflicts and creating a sense of mutual trust and respect, an in-house skilled negotiator can be very effective for an organization. Apart from saving costs, it also helps to retain the trust of employees. Managers who are competent to resolve conflicts amongst team members also will be held at the highest regard by his subordinates. As suggested by Barmao (2012), it will also enhance engagement within the organization. It has to be noted that communication and understanding also play a huge roll.

Also, internally recruiting or accessing talent from the internal ranks will positively reflect on the organizations culture. It can be supported by Hart's (2000) ideology which suggests the style of management having a direct impact on employee morale.

A minor proportion of respondents suggested that it is not at all important for managers to possess conflict resolution skills. Research from Clardy (2018), also has suggested that favouritism and biasness has a direct impact on employee morale. Perceived discrimination against certain employees thus may be one of the reasons that the participants prefer external conflict resolution management rather than in house mentoring.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Through the findings gathered from this study, a transition between the morale levels of employees in conflict and employees who underwent a conflict resolution procedure could clearly be observed. Conflicts are a natural phenomenon not only in the workplace but in every scenario where there are differences in opinions. Therefore, as Turkalj et al., (2008) suggested they should essentially be traced, monitored and worked upon. This research enabled the researcher to understand that the travel and tourism sector operates in an extremely faced paced environment given the importance of tourism industry in Ireland. This research also shed light on the internal working methods and culture of the Irish organizations, nature and causes of conflicts, an individual's mentality, resolution practices and procedures and other such relevant aspects.

It was noted by the researcher that employees who were in a conflicting situation mainly faced distress or negative feelings. The findings of the study related conflicting individuals to be frustrated, de-motivated and nervous. Such low levels of morale may be reflected by negligence in their work, poor performance and low self esteem. As suggested by Barmao (2012), it also becomes difficult for the managers to manage such employees which ultimately might lead in forming a hostile environment. Abusing organizational policies, absenteeism, low levels of performance are key indicators which need to be taken note of (Garland, 2002). Conflicts between individuals in an organization should be addressed to seek common grounds. The initial phase when the conflict occurs is critical itself. Suppressing feelings, avoiding or completely ignoring situations are temporary measures to avoid conflict. The success of a positive outcome from a conflict resolution depends on these factors. Resolving conflicts forcefully or by a coercive mentality will only negate morale levels (Bova et al., 1981). The findings showed that the negative aspects have outweighed the positive aspects of individuals who are in conflict thus proving the hypothesis statement 1 to be positive.

Insights regarding the various practices available and practised in the Irish organizations were also obtained by the researcher. The initial perception regarding size of an organization playing a significant role in the outcome of a conflict resolution procedure was proved to be false. The findings showed that even though a majority of the participants operated in a larger

organization, the practice of implementing a formalized procedure was absent. It can be inferred that such procedures are time consuming, costly and there is too much at stake given the situation. Various conflict resolution mechanisms such as mentoring, team building activities, third party interventions etc. are being offered in Irish organizations. Findings of the study suggested that mentoring was found out to be the best practised approach in the Irish organizations. It is an important thing to note that the employees found comfort in internal resolution procedures such as mentoring. Hudson (2005) pointed out the advantages of mentors who were deemed to be good listeners and analytical thinkers. It can be concluded that the employees in these organizations are being led by pro active leaders who are concerned about their employees well being. The mere fact that the employees preferred to have their disputes resolved internally speaks volumes for itself. A majority of the employees also overlooked the fact that biasness in opinion was also something which could have been taken under consideration.

This research study focused on the impacts of conflict resolutions on an employee's morale. Initial findings suggested that employees showcased negative levels of morale when they were engaged in conflicts. 78% of the employees underwent a conflict resolution process out of which 59% of the respondents were satisfied with the outcome. Only a minor part of the population was against recognizing the importance of conflicts at a workplace. It can be thus concluded that a majority of the employees understood the importance of conflicts at workplace. As mentioned by Pondy (1992), these employees may tend to be more innovative in their approach and have a higher chance of succeeding in their tasks. They may even be more engaged within the workplace, have better communication with their colleagues and be more motivated than the rest. As suggested by Walumbwa and Lawler (2003), the leadership style reflects on the motivation levels of an employee. These organizations are thus engulfed with strong leaders. The fact that a majority of the employees were satisfied with the outcomes proves the transition of negative morale into positive morale. It can be concluded that these employees have identified the importance of resolving conflicts, as delaying them has a negative impact on them (Knippen and Green, 1999). It can be assumed that the employees have acknowledged the justification of using conflict resolution techniques as it helps to get rid of the ongoing problem and not the individual at stake (McKibben, 2017). The travel and tourism sector can be a seasonal business at times. Especially during the Irish summers, the researcher observed that the organizations operated at a very fast pace in order to get in more business. Complexities and additional work load can thus result in more

conflicts. Employees undergoing a conflict resolution will be equipped to maintain their calm and give them a better understanding of how to deal with difficult scenarios in the future. A better sense of judgement can aid an individual to avoid making irrational decision which may impact his morale.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research enabled the researcher to understand the various dynamics which run parallel with conflicts and the resolution process. This study enabled the researcher to gain knowledge about the conflict processes, resolution practices and the issues associated with it.

This study focused on the Irish employees working in the travel and tourism sector. The participants were confined to limited cities from Ireland. For the purpose of expanding this study, the top level management and employees of the similar stature could be included in the study which was originally excluded as a part of this research. These participants could have provided with different aspects regarding managing conflicts. As top management level officials, they could have provided hands on experience regarding how they have dealt with employees having low morale which would have made a significant impact on the findings. Their leadership skills, experiences and their own expertise on how they have or would have dealt in a similar situation would have gained more reliability on the findings.

Also, due to the limited time and availability of respondents, the researcher has opted for a convenience sampling method. A simple random sampling method can be utilized which yields far more reliable results when the entire population is considered for the study. A mixed methodology could also prove to be decisive in gathering insights from the respondents.

Considering the above mentioned aspects, any future studies on the same topic can be undertaken considering with the above mentioned recommendations along with reduced time constraints to gain more adequate data.

PERSONAL LEARNING STATEMENT

This entire journey of completing a Masters degree in Human Resource Management from Ireland has been a fascinating experience. It has helped the researcher to understand some key concepts of Human Resources while being exposed to more practical knowledge and case studies.

The sample size can be expanded to various other cities and counties in Ireland. It will enable the researcher to expand the findings and test the validity of the study on a larger scale as well. It will also help the researcher to enhance the credibility of the findings.

The research could also have expanded and spread over a larger timeframe. This would have enabled the researcher to utilize more advanced or different means of gathering data such as the mixed method. It could have opened the doors to understand more gaps in the study which could have been addressed.

CHAPTER 8: REFERENCES

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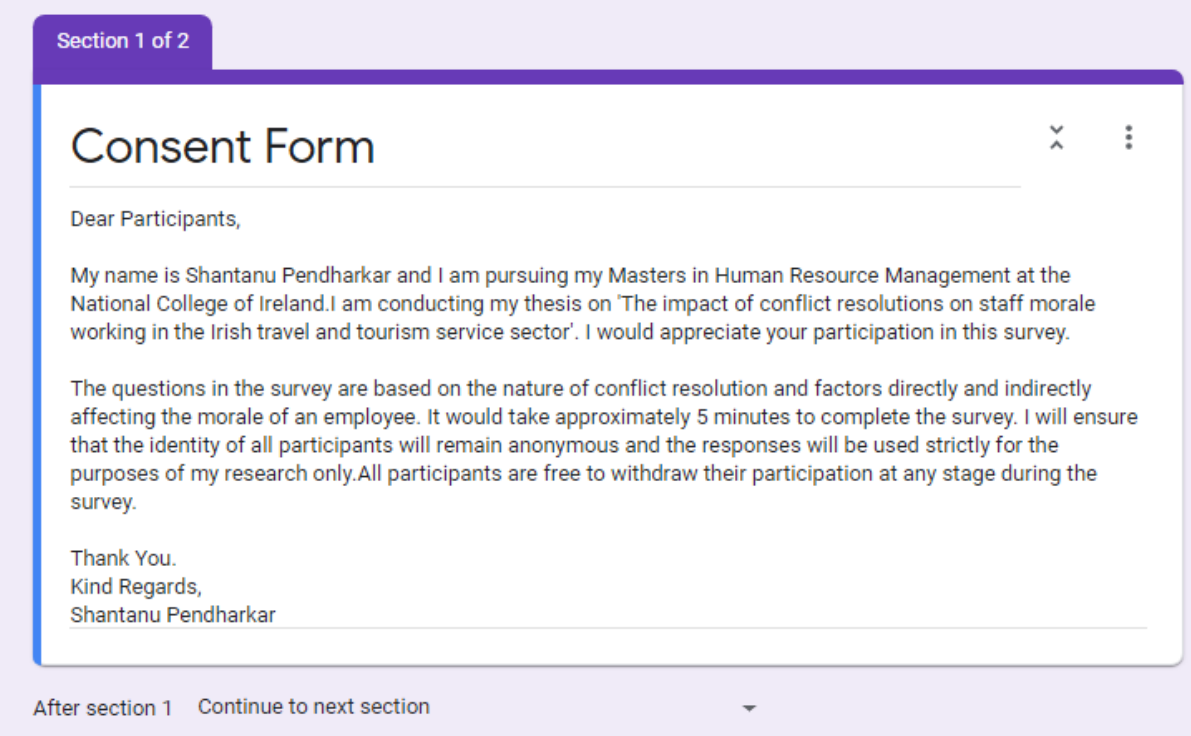
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APPENDICE

The under attached screenshots consists of the online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms.



Section 1 of 2

Consent Form

Dear Participants,

My name is Shantanu Pendharkar and I am pursuing my Masters in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland. I am conducting my thesis on 'The impact of conflict resolutions on staff morale working in the Irish travel and tourism service sector'. I would appreciate your participation in this survey.

The questions in the survey are based on the nature of conflict resolution and factors directly and indirectly affecting the morale of an employee. It would take approximately 5 minutes to complete the survey. I will ensure that the identity of all participants will remain anonymous and the responses will be used strictly for the purposes of my research only. All participants are free to withdraw their participation at any stage during the survey.

Thank You.
Kind Regards,
Shantanu Pendharkar

After section 1 Continue to next section

Influence of Conflict Resolution on staff



Description (optional)

1) How many co-workers/employees do you have in your department? *

- 0-5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- 15 and above

2) Have you ever been involved in or experienced organizational conflict? *

- Yes
- No

...

3) Was your experience as a participant or an observer in the conflict? *

- Participant
- Observer
- None

...

4) What do you think is the main causes of conflict in the workplace? *

- Conflict of opinion with colleagues
- Bullying and/or Harassment
- Perceived discrimination
- Improper management
- Lack of resources provided to you
- Failure to understand role clarity
- Stress due to workload or deadline.
- Accountability
- Unfair treatment by members of your organization

5) Does your organization have a formal conflict resolution management policy/procedure in place? If yes, please provide a few details. *

Long answer text
.....

6) What are the different types of conflict resolution practices implemented in your organization? *

- Mentoring from manager/colleague
- Peer to peer coaching
- Relationship management training
- Group conflict management training/Team building.
- Training from a third party
- None
- Other...

7) Who do you think should be responsible for managing conflict in the workplace? *

- Only the parties involved
- HR Department
- Top level executives/managers
- Third party interventions
- Other...

8) How important do you think it is to have some level of conflicts at the workplace? *

- 1 2 3 4 5
- Least Important Highly Important

9) What positives aspects have you experienced when you experienced workplace conflict? *

- Improved relations
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- More flexible approach
- Ability to listen more
- Enhanced communication skills
- Better teamwork
- None

⋮

10) How do you feel when you are in conflict with your colleague? *

- Angry/frustrated
- Highly de-motivated
- Nervous
- Makes you more confident as the issues have been highlighted
- Makes you feel excited because you will get a chance to prove yourself
- Other...

11) How important is conflict management as a management or leadership skill? *

- Not important at all
- Somewhat Important
- Important
- Very Important
- Critically Important

12) What positive or negative impacts did you have on your morale after you underwent conflict resolution? *

Long answer text

