

Investigating on the Relationship between Personality Characteristics of Personnel and Organizational Conflict (Intra-Individual) in Government Organizations

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Abstract— In recent era, it is necessary to understand personality characteristics of people in many situations of life. Studies have shown that individual and personality difference is one of the factors leading to conflict in organizations. In other words, conflict emerges because people have not agreed about goals, issues, beliefs and so on and since there are various people in organizations with different personality characteristics such as locus of control (introverted, extroverted), authoritarianism, self-esteem, compatibility with situation, being risk tolerance, etc., more conflicts can happen between people. In the current research, among various personality characteristics affecting organizational behavior, personality characteristics represented by Robbins such as locus of control, authoritarianism, self-esteem and compatibility with situation are considered and since the extent of organizational conflicts are wide, the research is limited to intra-individual conflicts. The previous researches have been shown that there is a meaningful relationship between personality characteristics and organizational conflict. The current research was performed in 2008 using sectional studies and correlation method. The results were shown that there are positive meaningful relationships between locus of control and authoritarianism of personnel (personality characteristics) and organizational conflict (intra individual) while there are negative meaningful relationships between self-esteem and compatibility with situations of personnel (personality characteristics) and organizational conflict (intra individual).

Index Terms— Personality Characteristics, Personnel Conflict, Organizational Conflict, Intra-Individual, Government Organizations, Human Resource Management

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the major obstacles on realizing the objectives of an organization is conflict between personnel. Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life and frequently emerges due to organizational characteristics [1–37]. However, one of the effective factors on conflict is various personality characteristics between people in organization. People are different from various points of view such as talents, interests, abilities and other personality characteristics. It is clear that individual conflicts lead to various behavioral conflicts in people and the origin of these conflicts is human personality [38–63]. Researches have been shown that various problems in organizations are related to personality factors. It means that personality factors make people prone to behave variably in different situations [64–90].

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In many organizations, conflict is a major problem. Maybe it is not a powerful problem in all organizations so that leads to dissolution of company, but without doubt, conflict has disas-

trous effects on the performance of organization and can be led to conditions that organization lost many effective personnel [7]. Cohen considered the conflict in organizations as the broken cooperation or a threat for organization and believed that conflict emergence in normal in organizations and is expected in relations of people with each other [21]. So, conflict is an inevitable issue. The critical point is our attitude towards the conflict and right dealing with it based on the reasons of conflict and suggesting a reasonable solution for optimum exploiting of it [17]. Therefore, it is important to manage conflict not to suppress it so that it will be controlled [25]. Identifying the reasons of conflict can be very helpful for determining possible solutions. The consequences of conflict may be very costly for organization, whether it emerges between workers and management, between various units of an organization, or between people. Informing about different personalities of people in an organization can help managers to solve many problems. When they are accepted that people are different based on their natural and learned abilities, they will not expect similarly from all personnel [14]. The main question of the current research is that if there is a relationship between personality characteristics of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh?

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3 LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been various researches about personality characteristics and organizational conflict. However, limited arguments have been about the relations of personality characteristics (locus of control, self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism) and intra-individual conflicts. Conflict may emerge individually, between two people or rival groups, and or between governing coalitions. In some occasions, the reason of conflict is organizational structure, role of people, attitudes and routine performances, and lack of resources. Conflict may be obvious or hidden. However, conflict always rooted in conflict of interest and in organizations, conflict is not only due to conflicts of people [20]. Baron has been numerous investigations about "personality and organizational conflict". He cited various researches about the effects of inherent factors of individuals on conflict in a paper entitled as "Personality and organizational conflict". He said: personality characteristics lead to specific tendencies for solving individual conflicts. Regarding those researches, Thomas argued that one type of personality characteristics has a critical role in conflict [15]. Lam et al. (1981) showed that managers attributed weak performance to personality deficiencies in personnel such as laziness, lack of skill or lack of motivation. In this regard, researches propose that managers should ignore this assumption that bad behaviors are for bad people. In fact, aggressive behaviors that frequently seen in individual conflicts is the sign of weakness in people with good willing but with no experience in encountering with sensational situations [18]. Walter (1970) found that people with high degree of compatibility independently do their job in various situations and are relied upon themselves, are assured about their judgments and are responsible for their decision making, accept criticisms and when encountering with opposite decisions and beliefs, they have not despond [10]. Dembo (1994) and Lauren (1997) found that feelings of safety and self-esteem are among the important characteristics of compatible people [5]. It seems that these feelings lead to reduction of stresses and conflicts between individuals. The results of this research showed that increasing the compatibility with personnel situation lead to decrease in organizational conflicts. "Lotfali Foroozan" in his research entitled as "assessment of various solutions of organizational conflicts and their relations with personality of managers" concluded that some personality characteristics are effective in emerging the conflict. For example, people with personality type A have more contribution in organizational conflicts than people with personality type B [13].

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

As can be seen, the effects of personality characteristics and internal issues of individual (failures, internal conflict, mental stresses a pressures, etc.) on creating and increasing the individual and organizational conflicts are investigated in individual dimension analysis while in organizational dimension analysis, the effects of organizational structure and important processes such as management methods, communication and changes in organization, and non-official groups on emerging and increasing the conflict are investigated [2]. In the current

research, conflict is studied from individual point of view and some personality characteristics that have the most influence on organizational behavior in view of "Robbins" such as locus of control, self-esteem, authoritarianism and compatibility with situation are considered.

5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

- (1) There is a relationship between personality characteristic of locus of control of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh.
- (2) There is a relationship between personality characteristic of self-esteem of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh.
- (3) There is a relationship between personality characteristic of authoritarianism of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh.
- (4) There is a relationship between personality characteristic of compatibility with situation of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh.

6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is a descriptive research of correlation type which was performed sectional and evaluates the relationship between personality characteristic of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual). Research population was consisted of 1984 people working in 12 government organization of Saveh. Based on the type of activity, government organizations are classified into three groups of construction and production, cultural, education and research as well as headquarter. The volume of sample was selected based on Cochran formula and using classified random sampling method proportional with the volume of each class as 250 people with following assumptions:

$Z = 1.96$: Percentile of 0.975 in standard normal distribution.
 $P = 0.5$ and $q = 1 - p$: Ratio of population units with a specified characteristic.
 $\alpha = 0.05$: Error or possibility of first type error.
 $d = 0.058$: Maximum estimation error. $N = 1984$: volume of population.

In order to collect data, a questionnaire was used. The renewed questionnaire of personality characteristics is including 24 questions designed based on the dimensions of locus of control (introverted, extroverted, and combined), self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism [23] with five options (completely agree, agree, relatively agree, opposing, completely opposing) and each dimension was measured as average of questions. In this regard, scores lower than 3 show extroverted locus of control and low self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism; score 3 show combined locus of control and medium self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism; score higher than 3 show introverted locus of control and high or very high self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism.

For measuring organizational conflict, researcher-made questionnaire was used that have various components (personality differences, pressures induced by role, failures, arro-

gance, misunderstandings, and incomplete communications) containing 30 questions. The amount of conflict between tested people was rated between 1 and 5. In this regard, 1 is lowest and 5 is highest. The organizational conflict was measured as the average score. It means that score lower than 3 shows low organizational conflict; score 3 shows medium organizational conflict; and score higher than 3 shows high organizational conflict.

To evaluate the validity of questionnaire, experts were asked to judge it and questionnaire was sent to 5 experts with an introduction to explain the validity of questions. Questionnaire were sent back and evaluated by "counting sigma" method [16] and finally, the validity of personality characteristics questionnaire was evaluated as 93.35% and the validity of organizational conflict questionnaire was evaluated as 92%.

In order to measure the reliability of questionnaire, repeated test method was used. Questionnaires were distributed two times between 10 people, in an interval of 10 days. Then, correlation of first and second scores of each people was measured by Kendal and Spearman correlation coefficient. Reliability of personality characteristics questionnaire was evaluated as 89.9 and 96% and the reliability of organizational conflict questionnaire was evaluated as 85.4 and 93.6%. After inputting raw data to SPSS Software, descriptive statistics (frequency, average, mean and mode) was firstly used to calculate the dimensions of personality characteristics (locus of control, self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism) and organizational conflict and then, the research assumptions were evaluated by Kendal and Spearman correlation test. In addition, presence or absence of relationship between personality characteristics and organizational conflict was measured by linear logarithmic analysis regarding background data.

7 RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

Description of Personality Characteristics Variable: Regarding the results of Chi-square test (χ^2) and frequently distribution, among 250 tested samples, locus of control for 53 people (21.3%) was combined and for 196 people (78.7%) was extroverted and introverted. However, 1 person has not mentioned his/her locus of control. Hence, it can be concluded that the locus of control for personnel is introverted. Among 250 sample, 4 people have low self-esteem (1.6%), 48 people have medium self-esteem (19.4%) and 196 people have high self-esteem (79%). However, 2 persons have not mentioned their self-esteem. Hence, it can be concluded that the self-esteem of personnel is high. Among 250 sample, 18 people have low compatibility with situation (7.3%), 81 people have medium compatibility with situation (33.1%) and 146 people have high compatibility with situation (59.6%). However, 5 persons have not mentioned their compatibility with situation. Hence, it can be concluded that the compatibility with situation of personnel is high. Among 250 sample, 3 people have low authoritarianism (1.2%), 88 people have medium authoritarianism (35.9%) and 154 people have high authoritarianism (62.9%). However, 5 persons have not mentioned their authoritarianism. Hence, it can be concluded that the authoritarianism of personnel is high.

Description of Organizational Conflict (Intra Individual)

Variable: Regarding the results of frequently distribution, it can be seen that the average of organizational conflict of personnel in cultural and educational organizations is 3 (medium) and for rest of organizations is 4 (high). However, discrepancy of organizational conflict of personnel is similar for all organizations. Among 250 tested samples, organizational conflict for 38 people (15.3%) was low, for 94 people (37.8%) was medium and for 117 people (47%) was high. However, 1 person has not mentioned his/her organizational conflict. Regarding the fact that the organizational conflict of personnel is high among 47%, it can be concluded that the organizational conflict of personnel is high.

Regarding the confirmation of assumptions, i.e. determining the relation of personality characteristics (locus of control, self-esteem, compatibility with situation and authoritarianism) and organizational conflict, the following results are obtained:

There is a direct meaningful relationship between personality characteristics (locus of control and authoritarianism) and organizational conflict. In other words, more introverted and authoritarianism people lead to more organizational conflict.

There is a reverse meaningful relationship between personality characteristics (self-esteem and compatibility with situation) and organizational conflict. In other words, increasing the self-esteem and compatibility with situation of people lead to less organizational conflict.

The linear logarithmic analysis is used to show the presence of a relationship between personality characteristics and organizational conflict regarding mediator variables (sex, marriage situation, education, employment situation, work experience).

8 CONCLUSION

The results show that there is a relationship between personality characteristics of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh. Hence, it can be said that difference in personality is one of the reasons for conflict. Human lost his physical and mental powers by growing older, and hence, become different. These individual and personality differences lead to conflict in their common activities. In other words, differences lead to conflicts in social and organizational behavior. In evaluation of more detailed levels of research:

(1) Statistical analyses are shown that there are positive meaningful relationships between locus of control and organizational conflict. It means that increasing the locus of control (introversion), lead to increase in organizational conflict. The results show that most respondents are introverted. Introverted people are better personnel than extroverted ones but indulgence in introversion, similar to extroversion, may lead to defensive and abnormal behaviors and create stress. "Rotter" (1996) described locus of control as believe in having control on events. In other words, this is the belief of person about the effect of his control and other factors such as chance, fate and other on occurring the events. Researches have been shown that extroverted people are dynamic, responsible, hopeful and optimistic. They attribute the results of works to themselves and know themselves as the reason of success or failure.

(2) Statistical analyses are shown that there are negative meaningful relationships between self-esteem and organizational conflict. It means that decreasing the self-esteem lead to increase in organizational conflict. Anyway, self-esteem strongly affects the job and position of person in the organization and the quality of work is a function of personal self-esteem.

(3) Statistical analyses are shown that there are negative meaningful relationships between compatibility with situation and organizational conflict. It means that increasing the compatibility with situation lead to decrease in organizational conflict.

(4) Statistical analyses are shown that there are positive meaningful relationships between authoritarianism and organizational conflict. It means that increasing the authoritarianism lead to decrease in organizational conflict. Some cases have shown that some types of personality, e.g. people with high authoritarianism or people with low social credit, are not high-minded and they lead to conflict. In the current research, personnel have high authoritarianism.

Therefore, it can be said that there is a relationship between personality characteristics of personnel and organizational conflict (intra individual) in government organizations of Saveh.

- Regarding the fact that if inappropriate people select in organizations, it may be led to obvious and hidden problems, organizations must consider "job proportion with personality" in their selection. Hence, understanding the differences in attitudes, physical and mental abilities and personality characteristics is very helpful for understanding different performances of personnel and lead to decrease in conflict.

- Since conflict in organizations is inevitable, managers can use from conflicts as opportunities for revolution, as lack of agreements and differences can be useful for organization if they treated well.

- Managers will be able to effectively lead their organizations if understanding personal and personality differences of their personnel. Managers can draw up the trust of personnel and organization by behaving well with personnel in spite of responsibility to rules and laws. It seems that manager can control these conflicts using this method.

The current researches have some limitations: (1) Inherent limitations of questionnaire, since such questionnaires may be not able to completely reflect the attitudes of respondents. (2) Reluctance of some people to respond questions and lack of appropriate culture in the field of effectiveness of such researches. (3) Some personnel have not experienced in research works to well respond to questions.

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