

“To Know the Score” - A Critical Analysis on the Shift of Workplace Culture Created by the Pandemic and Its Influence on Conflict Management and Employee Morale in Corporates in South India

*A.C. Merlin Varsha¹, S. Ramya²

¹ *Department of Psychology, Stella Maris College, India*

merlinvarshasmc19@gmail.com

² *Department of Psychology, Stella Maris College, India*

ramyagowrisekar@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The mark of COVID has an intense impact in the shift of workplace culture. With respect towards awareness and preventions, the governments announced comprehensive lockdowns with limits to travel and working employees were asked to work from home in all possible ways. The crisis that is still prevalent has an impact in the organizational management as organizations adjust to operate during the pandemic and prepare for a recovery that most resources were constraint that limited their ability to reward productivity or employee effort. These constraints would encompass the decrease in productivity and satisfaction of the employees and organizational leaders are in need to consider which cultural changes they require and counteract. Various spheres of organization management had met with limitations that employees initially felt hard to adapt to telecommuting. The promptitude of these changes is a problem. From a general context, workplace culture does not change too much or too fast. Rather it adjusts slowly over a period of time responsive to accumulation of multiple small encouragements and occasional epiphany. The pandemic, however, organizations globally have abandoned the fundamental working premises; “How things get done around here and how individuals adapt here,” is sometimes in a matter of days. Accelerated adoption of digital tools and modern collaborative technologies have given a misleading impression that physical presence at workplace is not an essential element of productivity and management. But the fact is that, being present at work premises promotes the commitment to work and leadership with rapport and trust. In this pandemic, we have witnessed our daily routines in an online platform – so as our organization works in the same manner too. The pandemic is meant to be social isolation that is endured by many in silence. Leaders interact with their teams through means of collaborative technologies to maintain social contact. Before the COVID crisis, “mental awareness” was a slogan but now it’s an essential element to look upon. Various studies identify worker and workplace characteristics that appears to have influence in the employee morale, but even at recent times, emerging studies continues to measure the morale in multitudinous perspectives.

Thus, this study is a fair attempt to critically analyse the working conditions with context to the worldwide pandemic and discusses the relationship between conflict crisis and employee morale in corporates across southern India.

Employee Morale

According to Larry Flippo – morale is defined as a mental condition or attitude of individual and group which determines their willingness to co-operate. Morale is basically a group phenomenon.

Morale is basically a matter of human behaviour. It is an expression of the attitudes which the member of an organization develops and adapts toward the organization, its members, its purposes and its leaders.

Morale in general sense is referred to ‘Willingness to work’. High morale is the result of job satisfaction which is again the result of motivation attitude of the management.

There are three main approaches to morale:

1. **Classical Approach:** Satisfaction of basic needs is the symbols of morale. Need satisfaction leads to high morale. This approach is mainly concerned with the increase of efficiency of workers and organizations based on organizational practices, and advocates high specialization of labour, centralized decision making and profit maximization.
2. **Psychological Approach:** Emphasizes that apart from the basic needs psychological needs also influence the morale of the people. Morale is an ambiguous concept that is considered as a component of satisfaction. It is defined as a composite of feelings, attitudes, and sentiments contributing to satisfaction. With connection to this explanation, morale is witnessed as one’s attitude towards accomplishment of work rather than emotions he or she displays during work.
3. **Sociological Approach:** Recognizes the morale as social phenomenon which persuades the people to live in society or group in achieving the common goals. The sociology of work and employment are concerned with one’s social relations, normative codes and organizational structures that inform behaviour, experience and identity of people during the course of working in their lives.

Conflict Management

Conflict is defined as the opposing interests involving scarce resources and goal divergence and frustration (Pondy, 1967).

A number of factors are known to facilitate organizational conflict under certain circumstances. In summarizing the literature, Robert Miles points to several specific examples. *Macro Organizational Behaviour*.

These are as follows:

1. Task Interdependencies:

The first antecedent can be found in the nature of task interdependencies. In essence, the greater the extent of task interdependence among individuals or groups (that is, the more they have to work together or collaborate to accomplish a goal), the greater the likelihood of conflict if different expectations or goals exist among entities, in part because the interdependence makes avoiding the conflict more difficult. This occurs in part because high task interdependency heightens the intensity of relationships. Hence, a small disagreement can very quickly get blown up into a major issue.

2. Status Inconsistencies:

A second factor is status inconsistencies among the parties involved. For example, managers in many organizations have the prerogative to take personal time off during workdays to run errands, and so forth, whereas non-managerial personnel do not. Consider the effects this can have on the non-managers' view of organizational policies and fairness.

3. Jurisdictional Ambiguities:

Conflict can also emerge from jurisdictional ambiguities—situations where it is unclear exactly where responsibility for something lies. For example, many organizations use an employee selection procedure in which applicants are evaluated both by the personnel department and by the department in which the applicant would actually work. Because both departments are involved in the hiring process, what happens when one department wants to hire an individual, but the other department does not?

4. Communication Problems:

Suffice it to say that the various communication problems or ambiguities in the communication process can trigger conflict. When one person misunderstands a message or when information is withheld, the person often responds with frustration and anger.

5. Dependence on Common Resource Pool:

Another previously discussed factor that contributes to conflict is dependence on common resource pools. Whenever several departments must compete for scarce resources, conflict is almost inevitable. When resources are limited, a zero-sum game exists in which someone wins and, invariably, someone loses.

6. Lack of Common Performance Standards:

Differences in performance criteria and reward systems enhance more potential for organizational conflict. This often occurs because of a lack of common performance standards among differing groups within the same organization. For example, production personnel are often rewarded for their efficiency, and this efficiency is facilitated by the long-term production of a few products. Sales departments, on the other hand, are rewarded for their short-term response to market changes—often at the expense of long-term production efficiency. In such situations, conflict arises as each unit attempts to meet its own performance criteria.

7. Individual Differences:

Finally, a variety of individual differences, such as personal abilities, traits, and skills, can influence in no small way the nature of interpersonal relations. Individual dominance, aggressiveness, authoritarianism, and tolerance for ambiguity all seem to influence how an individual deals with potential conflict. Indeed, such characteristics may determine whether or not conflict is created at all.

According to the CPP Global Report, “Workplace Conflict and How Business Can Harness It to Thrive” – 85% of the employees deal with conflict at some degree. This reality indicates that we should anticipate conflicts and more essentially, we should have a plan to respond. The most practical solution to workplace conflict is to be proactive and critical of the organizational systems.

The Styles of Conflict Management comprises of assertive and co-operative behaviours that includes competition, collaboration, avoidance, accommodation and compromise.

Workplace Culture

Workplace culture is the overall character of the business that include elements such as the business’s values, beliefs, behaviours, goals, attitudes and work practices. The most important aspect of professional life of an individual would be workplace culture. The organizational environment or a vibe is so vital that it can make or break your experience and results either in your long-term employment or attrition. Factors that determine or reflect a positive company culture are often a little difficult to articulate, but there are several concretes, quantifiable factors that indicates the health not just of a company or workplace but of the way its teams and employees interact and their happiness levels at work.

The Factors that Affecting Workplace Culture

1. Leadership and Management:

Employees within an organisation look up to leaders and use their behaviour as a guide for how they themselves should act. Without good management, businesses can be plagued with stagnancy and

conflict, and financial stability can suffer. Both leaders and managers, therefore, are necessary in an enterprise.

2. Company policies and value statements:

Workplace policies often reinforce and clarify standard operating procedure in a workplace. Well written policies help employers manage staff more effectively by clearly defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, and set out the implications of not complying with those policies. Organisational vision and mission statements, and the policies that support them, can influence culture insomuch as leaders and employees embody and abide by them.

3. Workplace Practices:

Setting rules in the workplace to keep a harmonious and healthy working environment for your employees is a good way to go. Not only will it make your business competitive and productive, it will also produce loyal and reliable people who will be running your business. Human Resource practices such as recruitment, onboarding and promotional processes can be a large determinant of workplace culture. Reward and recognition programs and job flexibility policies also influence culture.

4. People:

The type of personalities you hire may produce a culture that is collaborative and supportive or, on the other end of the spectrum, combative and competitive. The people in an organization ultimately determines the success or failure of a business.

5. Workplace Environment:

The work environment that you establish can have a bearing on culture. Comfort often helps people to be happier, and when people are happy then they tend to work hard, which has a positive impact on the workplace productivity. By creating a comfortable work environment many tough tasks will be a lot easier to push through.

Adding to the above theoretical explanations of the elements and its causing factors, the three prominent aspects studied in this paper are Employee Morale, Conflict Management and Workplace Culture. Correlating these three elements, this study adds more to the existing literature on perspectives of organizational studies and human resource studies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Morale

An exploratory study on Russian workers evaluated the paradigms associated with employee morale in developed market economics and emerging business system of Russian culture. Survey data were collected from Russian employees at two different points in time, 1995 and 2002. Results of the study established a strong correlation between performance assessment and morale, as well as between positive work attitudes and morale. (Linz., Good and Huddleston., 2006).

A qualitative study was conducted to examine the effect of low morale and motivation on employees' productivity and competitiveness. A questionnaire was designated to achieve this purpose, and it was distributed to selected accounting and management employees working in different Jordanian business environments. The number of questionnaires analysed were (276) questionnaires. Resolution data were analysed using the statistical program Smart PLS (Partial Least Square). The study concluded that low morale and low motivation affect productivity and competitiveness, and it also recommends that management should work on increasing productivity by increasing employees' satisfaction through re-engineering systems and processes and providing incentives, education and training (Shaban et al., 2017).

Conflict Management

An empirical study was carried out by Alkaya and Yikir (2014) to measure the effect of organizational culture on conflict management. A Field survey was conducted in a five-star hotel business in Antalya. "x" business which stays open after the high season was operating during November 2011 in which survey was conducted and its employees have been given survey forms. Business consisted of 350 employees in total. 232 survey forms were returned from all that has been distributed. 6 of these forms were considered invalid. 226 survey forms which were considered valid to be taken for evaluation of survey, consisted more than 60% of employees which constituted the study's universe. When all the dimensions of organizational conflict have been evaluated, it is observed that the organization culture has 45% of influence on personal conflict, 36% of influence on group conflict and 40% of influence on group identity conflict. According to this result, the dimension in which organizational conflict is experienced the most is personal conflict. But we still observe that organization culture is influential on all dimensions of conflict in levels that are close to each other.

A cross-sectional quantitative research study based on primary as well as secondary data was conducted by Phulpoto and his colleagues et al., (2021). The population parameter is the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Karachi, Pakistan. The total population of the employees of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Karachi is 1200. Therefore, it is not possible to consider total population to take participation in the study. So, using the convenience sampling technique, the data was collected from 109 employees of the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Karachi. The result shows a moderate positive impact of workplace conflict on both job satisfaction and employees' performance (Phulpoto et al., 2021)

Shift of Workplace Culture

The University of Birmingham and University of Kent conducted a survey to understand how COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdown and widespread working from home has an influence on a range of work-life issues. The results showed that there has been a radical change in practices and culture. The key aspects of the study brought the vital role that the managers played especially in the pandemic that was supportive for the employees. The study also substantiated the negative experiences of the work-from-home culture that many noted lack of equipment and space to work when working from home. Missing interactions with colleagues was noted as a key negative aspect of working from home, especially among women without children. This group was also much more likely to feel nervous and stressed during the lockdown than their male counterparts. (Chang et al., 2020).

A survey of approximately 3,100 individuals employed in diverse occupations across India was conducted during June-December 2019 to assess the suitability of machine learning (SML) and, in turn, the resultant susceptibility of 106 Indian occupations, as defined by the National Classification of Occupations (NCO 2004). The survey instrument, which was based on Brynjolfsson & Mitchell (2017), had a task evaluation rubric that comprised 23 questions pertaining to SML. The following results were obtained towards the end of analysis and about 36% of the respondents feel less or significantly less productive while working from home. 34% of the surveyed respondents feel more productive working from home while 29% feel that their productivity is the same at home and at their workplaces. The respondents who feel that their productivity while working from home is significantly higher say that they have less distractions to deal with in their remote work environment. More than 60% feel believe that their managers and organisations are doing a good job at handling remote work arrangements. 50% of the respondents who work at government institutions had a negative opinion on their productivity levels during remote work. Many respondents agreed that they miss face-to-face interactions with co-workers & informal meetings. (Indian School of Business, 2020)

Reviewing the previous studies, it is evident that Employee Morale is studied using various factors such as motivation, productivity, and organizational culture. There are only few studies conducted supportive to the prevailing pandemic condition and organizational management.

METHODOLOGY

Problem Area

The present study attempts to study the role of Conflict Management and corresponding employee morale after the shift of workplace culture in the pandemic. The study focuses on how organizations strive to work efficiently during this pandemic towards employee' welfare especially during arousal of work conflicts.

Research Question

The study was formulated with unique research questions as follows:

1. What are the ways in which employees' morale can be positively raised up during an organisational conflict on a virtual working mode?
2. How do innovative digital operations improve the standard of an organization?
3. What may be the conflict resolutions that can bring about a positive shift in the workplace for the future owing to the phenomenal disruption caused by the Pandemic?

Research Design

The methodology involved in this study is survey research as it is defined as a study that widely explains the characteristics of a specific target population. The research design used in this study is quantitative, as this method involves scientific investigation of phenomena by gathering quantitative data with application of mathematics and other techniques to provide a rich analysis and conclusions.

The sampling method of the study involved convenience sampling with 107 respondents specifically 55 men and 52 women participants across the southern parts of India (Chennai and Bengaluru).

The inclusion criteria for the participants were as follows:

- working employees in corporates.
- from any part of India
- Any gender

No exclusion criteria were involved in the study.

The participants were initially explained about the rationale of the study and prior informed consent of the participant was ensured before starting the study. Participation was completely voluntary.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the impact of work-from-home culture on conflict management of an organization

2. To identify the role of conflict management on employee morale.
3. To identify the differences in gender on employee morale.

Hypotheses

Based on the studies reviewed, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There would be a significant relationship between employee morale and conflict management
2. There would be a significant correlation between shift of workplace culture and conflict management
3. There would be a significant correlation between shift of workplace culture and employee morale
4. There would be a significant gender difference on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment.

Research Tool

The survey comprised of four standard tools which ensured validity and reliability for better outcomes of the study. To measure the employee morale, an existing study was referred and the operational definition given by the researcher was taken as a primary approach to develop the scale that included Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment (Lindz, Good and Huddleston, 2006).

The following tools were used for the present study based on their availability:

- The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale (MacDonald & MacIntyre, 1992) consisted of 10 Likert Scale questions and the Organizational Commitment Scale (Allen & Meyer, 1996) consisted of 18 Likert Scale questions with subscales to assess the dimensions - Affective, Continuance and Normative.
- The Japanese Organizational Culture Scale, JOCS (Tang et al., 2000) consisted of 15 Likert Scale questions with subscales to assess family orientation / loyalty, open communication, team approach and knowledge of managers.
- The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory, ROCI-II (Rahman., 1983) consisted of 28 Likert Scale questions measuring the Collaborating Style, Accommodating Style, Competing Style, Avoiding Style and Compromising Style in conflict management. The participants indicated their degree of agreement with statements on a 5-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

The survey was conducted on an online platform through Google Forms. It took nearly 10-15 minutes for the participants to complete the study. For statistical analysis, the responses were formulated and results were obtained using the SPSS Version 20. For this correlational study, we assessed the primary

hypothesis of the relationship between variables and for further statistical significance of the study, the correlation coefficient was assessed using t-test analysis.

RESULTS

Correlational Analysis

Table 1: Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Culture

	JS	OCUF	OCUO	OCUT	OCUK
JS					
Pearson Correlation	1	.591**	.481**	.444**	.393**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
N	107	107	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N - Total number of respondents

JS - Job Satisfaction

OCUF - Organizational Culture - Family Orientation / Loyalty

OCUO - Organizational Culture - Open Communication

OCUT - Organizational Culture - Team Approach

OCUK - Organizational Culture - Knowledge of Managers

Table 2: Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Organizational Culture

	OCUF	OCUO	OCUT	OCUK
OCA				
Pearson Correlation	.411**	.346**	.285**	.259**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003	.007
N	107	107	107	107

OCC				
Pearson Correlation	.407**	.288**	.280**	.205*
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.003	.003	.034
N	107	107	107	107
OCN				
Pearson Correlation	.671**	.576**	.547**	.520**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	107	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N - Total number of respondents

OCA- Organizational Commitment - Affirmative

OCC - Organizational Commitment - Continuance

OCN - Organizational Commitment - Normative

OCUF - Organizational Culture - Family Orientation / Loyalty

OCUO - Organizational Culture - Open Communication

OCUT - Organizational Culture - Team Approach

OCUK - Organizational Culture - Knowledge of Managers

Table 2.1: Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Conflict Management

	CMCol	CMAcc	CMCom	CMAv	CMComp
--	--------------	--------------	--------------	-------------	---------------

JS					
Pearson Correlation	.487**	.470**	.395**	.423**	.425**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	107	107	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N - Total number of respondents

JS - Job Satisfaction

CMCol - Conflict Management - Colloborating

CMAcc - Conflict Management - Accommodating

CMCom - Conflict Management - Competing

CMAv - Conflict Management - Avoiding

CMComp- Conflict Management - Compromising

Table 3: Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Conflict Management

	CMCol	CMAcc	CMCom	CMAv	CMComp
OCA					
Pearson Correlation	.329**	.420**	.511**	.437**	.399**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	107	107	107	107	107

OCC					
Pearson Correlation	.376**	.272**	.167	.301**	.291**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.005	.086	.002	.002
N	107	107	107	107	107
OCN					
Pearson Correlation	.524**	.500**	.338**	.345**	.394**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	107	107	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N - Total number of respondents

OCA- Organizational Commitment - Affirmative

OCC - Organizational Commitment - Continuance

OCN - Organizational Commitment - Normative

CMCol - Conflict Management - Collaborating

CMAcc - Conflict Management - Accommodating

CMCom - Conflict Management - Competing

CMAv - Conflict Management - Avoiding

CMComp- Conflict Management - Compromising

Table 4: Relationship between Organizational Culture and Conflict Management

	CMCol	CMAcc	CMCom	CMAv	CMComp
OCUF					
Pearson Correlation	.614**	.424**	.251**	.212*	.378**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.009	.029	.000
N	107	107	107	107	107
OCUO					
Pearson Correlation	.635**	.382**	.174	.173	.287**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.073	.074	.003
N	107	107	107	107	107
OCUT					
Pearson Correlation	.633**	.442**	.174	.245*	.317**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.074	.011	.001
N	107	107	107	107	107

OCUK					
Pearson Correlation	.658**	.458**	.193*	.191*	.394**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.046	.049	.000
N	107	107	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N - Total number of respondents

OCUF - Organizational Culture - Family Orientation / Loyalty

OCUO - Organizational Culture - Open Communication

OCUT - Organizational Culture - Team Approach

OCUK - Organizational Culture - Knowledge of Managers

CMCol - Conflict Management - Collaborating

CMAcc - Conflict Management - Accomodating

CMCom - Conflict Management - Competing

CMAv - Conflict Management - Avoiding

CMComp- Conflict Management - Compromising

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the study was to find out the effect of work-from-home culture on conflict management and its corresponding morale. The findings of the study were relevant to the review of literature and most of the hypotheses which were stated were accepted.

The results show that the relationship between the three variables is statistically significant, which proves that the shift of workplace culture created by the pandemic has an influence in conflict crisis and corresponding employee morale.

Based on their Pearson' coefficient scores, the hypothesis H1 which states there is a significant relationship between Employee Morale and Conflict Management is accepted, as measures of morale satisfies all dimensions of Conflict Management.

The dimensions of Conflict Management i.e., Competence and Avoiding with the dimensions of Organizational Culture i.e., Open Communication and Team Approach is found to be non-significantly correlated that implies a partial significant correlation with dimensions of Organizational Culture and Conflict Management, thus concluding the hypothesis H2 to be partially accepted. Open Communication and Cohesion is a key element of effective conflict management. The basis of conflict resolution is based on how we effectively communicate the problems. During remote work, employees tend to experience communication problems and cohesiveness among peers which ultimately affects the morale and overall performance and also contributes as a vital factor of conflict crisis. Hence, this aspect of determining effective conflict management may have an effect on the results causing partial correlation.

The dimensions of Organizational Culture and Conflict Management show significant correlation with Employee Morale. Hence, the hypothesis H3 which states that shift of workplace culture has a relationship on Conflict Management and corresponding Employee Morale is accepted.

Based on the t-test analysis, results show no significant gender difference in Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment, concluding that there are no gender differences evident in Employee Morale.

The findings of the study exhibit the aspects of culture as a mental programming, belief, strategy and learnt entity. We could witness that culture has been the beliefs as a team, implications of HR initiatives, cultural activity and recognising members of one group from another. Hence, Workplace Culture is never a static component, but rather a dynamic element that continually evolves, often slowly, sometimes faster.

When analysing the role of conflict management, this study revolves around the theoretical approach to conflict management by Rahim (2002) which proposed five major approaches to combating conflicts.

The strategies of conflict management proposed in this theory discusses the aspects where the avoiders ignore the conflict, parties involved accept the views of one another, accepting and agreeing, integrating ideas, to be assertive to resolve conflicts.

Conflict exists if a party is in disagreement because one does not accept or agree with the other. Sometimes, there are differences between human based on incompatibility, the battle has become the usual thing in life for everyone. There is an adage that says, 'if you always see two friends smiling all the time, it shows that they haven't been telling each other the truth.' Sometimes, no company wants his or her interest to be jeopardized and treated as a second-level issue with no dignity. Once there are two people or more involved in a matter, because of the differences in self-concept, educational level, background, organizational training, and a host of others, conflicts can't be avoided. Nonetheless, this

non-avoidance nature of the battle is useful sometimes as the end goal can make parties evolve stronger and better. Battle sometimes can be unidimensional, can be inflicted and based on the perception Interaction will always occur between an individual and a group of people, organization, institutions, and these activities result in interdependence. This comes in various degrees under the groups involved.

Conflict can be similar hence, almost the same conflict management strategy or combinations of approaches can be applied to achieve resolution or minimize the negative impact.

The pandemic crisis has brought a higher degree of limitations to resources and interactions. The persisting variations of opportunities and availability to healthy communication and team cohesion may cause divergence of opinions that may lead to misinterpretations, resulting conflicts. Hence, with this theoretical explanation of Rahim, this study focused on these aspects and was administered in order to bring about the correlational significance of conflict on employee morale during a change in workplace culture causing paradigm shift of values and thought processes.

According to Dale Yoder, “if workers appear to full enthusiastic and optimized about the group activities and mission and friendly to each other, they are described as having good or high morale. If they are dissatisfied irritated, critical, restless and pessimistic, there reactions are described as evidence of poor or low morale.” The key characteristics that contribute to Employee Morale are Organizational Goals, Managerial Philosophy, Organizational Structure and Working Conditions. Since all the aspects determine morale and being on a virtual platform, organizations intend to have limitations to participation to setting goals, profound influence of leaders, decentralized structures in an effective manner which sometimes leads to conflict when needs are efficient dealt, hence, these factors may contribute a correlation between conflict management and employee morale.

Thus, this study has brought out the fact that corporate organizations ravaged by one form of conflict or the other ranging from intrapersonal and group conflict, intra-organizational cultural conflict, constructive or functional conflict, dysfunctional or destructive conflicts. On the whole, the survey indicated that conflicts which occur in organizations as a result of incompatible goals, different values and beliefs, inconsistent evaluation, communication problems, negative power politics, authority, lack of leadership style, scarcity of common resources and organizational demands. It was also found that if conflicts are not appropriately and promptly managed, it can lead to truncated or reduced workers’ morale in this pandemic conditions.

The results of this study corroborate to the study conducted by (Susan.J. Linz., Linda.K. Good and Patricia Huddleston, 2006) which showed results that demographic characteristics such as age and gender have no discernible influence on morale and also established a positive correlation between attitude and morale, performance assessment and morale.

CONCLUSION

Employees have found that during the COVID pandemic situations, although some tasks can be done remotely in a crisis, they are much more effectively done in person. These practices include coaching, counselling and providing feedback: building healthy customer and colleagues relationships; recruiting new employees in the organization; negotiation and making critical decisions; and work those benefits from collaboration, including innovation, problem-solving and creativity. If onboarding is done to be remotely, it requires illustrious rethinking of the activity to produce outcomes similar to those achieved in person. The causes of employee morale can include lack of effective organizational culture and poor cultural integration in the corporate group affecting organizational performance. Lack of performance and productivity results to negative dimensions of attitudes and goals. This may also lead to employee attrition. The possible reasons of employee attitude towards change are Job Satisfaction, Job Security and Commitment to their goals. Mary Parker Follet described stages of conflict as dominance, compromise and integration that involves openness, exchange of information, examining differences to solve problems that is acceptable to both parties. Thus, openness and cohesiveness are an essential element to uphold in conflict management. The possible causes of conflict could be stress, as it contributes as a factor of conflict and lack of workplace communication. The reasons of the correlation between shift of workplace culture and employee morale are that workplace culture creates a task-focused and flexible environment and effective communication which are regarded to be the cornerstones of a positive workplace culture. Hence, this shift of workplace culture to telecommuting may have a relationship between the conflict management styles thus resulting corresponding workplace attitude and commitment to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Managements can take concrete steps to deal constructively with these employee attitudes and goals.
- The organizations should develop a new vision and faith in workforce before approaching organizational change process.
- Managers must exhibit a trust in the employees to contribute to organizational conflicts, which enforces trust in the management.
- The door must be open to individuals to take an active role in improving the organization with good communication, initiation and teamwork in conflict management.

- Provide training and support such as team building activities to foster a sense of collaboration.
- Managers should ensure regular reports, establish rapport to indicate and coordinate with their achievements and problems.
- Hold regular meetings with your sub-ordinates to discuss new initiatives and goals of the organization.
- Cohesiveness and teamwork work wonders both physically and mentally. So, maintain prosperous environment and communication within your teams, despites, work-from-home environment.

This study benefits the demographic of people i.e., employees who are considered to be the target readership focused in this study. The study revolves around the perspectives of the branches – sociology, psychology and human resource management. This study majorly contributes to the contemporary COVID studies and helps the future studies dealing with the importance of morale and shift of workplace cultures. The recommendations of this study insist healthy workplace practices despites, remotely engaged in a crisis.

With consideration to the limitations dealt during this study, this study is highly recommended to be conducted and studied in a higher degree of target audience. This study can be extensively studied focusing the other aspects affecting employee morale in remote work and also the dynamics of conflict management during crisis. Studies dealing with perspectives of morale is still extensively studied and emerging studies dealing with multi-disciplinary perspectives towards explaining morale, bringing about awareness and importance of employee morale is highly encouraged in future.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah Alam. (2011, June). Evaluation of Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Scale: A Cross-Cultural Application in Pakistan. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236107921_Evaluation_of_Allen_and_Meyer's_Organizational_Commitment_Scale_A_Cross-Cultural_Application_in_Pakistan
- Heejung Chung, Holly Birkett, Sarah Forbes, & Hyojin Seo. (2020). WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: Changing preferences and the future of work. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/business/research/wirc/epp-working-from-home-COVID-19-lockdown.pdf>
- Kamran Phulpoto, Nazar Hussain, Sanaullah, Ghulam Saqib Buriro, & Younis Mailto. (2021, January). Impact of Workplace Conflict on Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance. International Journal Advanced Research Engineering a Technology (IJARET), Volume 12(1). https://www.academia.edu/48915750/IMPACT_OF_WORKPLACE_CONFLICT_ON_JOB_SATISFACTION_AND_EMPLOYEE_PERFORMANCE
- Osama Shaban, Ziad-Al-Zubi, Nafez Ali, & Atala Alqtish. (2017, June). The Effect of Low Morale and Motivation on Employees' Productivity and Competitiveness in Jordanian Industrial Companies. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317383840_The_Effect_of_Low_Morale_and_Motivation_on_Employees%27_Productivity_Competitiveness_in_Jordanian_Industrial_Companies
- Patricia Elgoibar, Martin Euwema, & Lourdes Mundate. (2017, June 28). Conflict Management. Oxford Research Encyclopaedias. <https://oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.001.0001/acrefore-9780190236557-e-5>
- Sajee Sirikrai. (n.d.). Measurement of Organizational Culture: A Literature Review. <http://www.jba.tbs.tu.ac.th/files/Jba109/Article/JBA109Sajee.pdf>
- Scott MacDonald, & Peter MacIntyre. (n.d.). The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale: Scale Development and Its Correlates. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.525.5688&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Serap Alkaya, & Şevket Yirik. (2014, September). Organizational culture's effects on organizational conflict: Study of a five-star hospitality business. 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n22p48

Susan J. Linz, Linda K. Good, & Patricia Huddleston. (2006, January). Worker Morale in Russia:

An

Exploratory

Study

<https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/57196/wp816.pdf;jsessionid=88B>

[3E2257E1066684BE11586B4200AF3?sequence=1](https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/57196/wp816.pdf;jsessionid=88B3E2257E1066684BE11586B4200AF3?sequence=1)