

Exploring the Relationship between Management Skills and Employees' Conflict in Industrial Production Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp

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Abstract

The present study investigates the relation between management skills and employees' conflict in Keyvan pump industrial and Manufacturer Co. The research is descriptive in nature and correlational method was used as the design of the study and data collection method. The target population includes 115 of employees working in Keyvan pump industrial and Manufacturer Co. by use of Cochran Formula a sample of 88 employees was selected by simple random sampling method. For the purpose of data collection two Lickert scale questionnaires were used. The validity of the questionnaires was evaluated through content and construct validity and reliability of the survey was explored through pilot study of 30 employees and the calculated Cronbach Alpha was 0.959 and 0.903 for management skills scale and conflict questionnaire respectively. For data analysis, descriptive statistic including frequency and percentage tables, line chart of Means, central tendency indicators: standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis; and inferential statistics including K-S and Spearman Correlation tests were used. The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant correlation between managerial skills (conceptual, human and technical), and employees' conflict.

Keywords: Management Skills, Conflict, Employees

JEL Code: M12

Introduction

The organization's purpose is considered as its existential philosophy. Realizing the aims requires group efforts. The complexity of teamwork has led to organized management. Effectiveness and efficiency as the two main purposes of all organizations need the measures taken by managers. Additionally the resources limitations and environmental changes in different internal and external grounds, demonstrate the significance of management more

than before. It's obvious that creation and development of organizations are resulted from management and they are interdependent (Javadin & Amirkabiri, 2001, p. 15).

The issue of management skills is the one which was under consideration from the beginning of management creation and it has been dealt with in different ways. The management is also of high importance in developing countries. The researches by development experts indicate that providing technology and currency don't bring development alone. The technology and its subsequences are vain and sometimes cumbersome unless we learn how to use the human recourses properly (Roghani & Colleagues, 2009).

Today the organizations and companies have concluded that they must care what they know (intellectual capital) more than what they have (material capital). The managers are the most significant guaranty factor for success or failure of an organization and the quality of management in all levels affects on the organization's effectiveness. The management skills and subsequently the quality of managing determine how the human resources of an organization are administered (Moradi, 2011).

Katz defines the skill as capabilities which aren't the ways of doing inherent requirements but are nourishable. He knows manager as one who leads the others' action and is responsible for realization of some specific purposes. The prerequisite for successful management is triple skills of technology, human and perceptual (Katz, 1996, p. 96).

In fact the conflict seriously exists in many organizations. Maybe this phenomenon is not that much powerful to disband the organization but undoubtedly affects on it in bad ways or brings conditions in which organization may lose many of its efficient resources (Robbins, 2004).

Since the presence of conflict in organization and management is not only natural but also useful and applicable, so the usefulness and applicability of it depends on the manager understanding about different features of it, the reasons of its formation and also the capability and readiness of him to solve this conflict. Then he must have the required skills for leading and control of it (Mirkamali, 1992).

One of the most important skills of managers is the capability of managing conflict to turn the destructive ones to constructive and positive ones. Because the investigations have indicated that 20 percent of managing time is wasted for solving the problems resulting from conflict. Conflict management is a technical task which is sometimes even more important than decision-making and leadership and the manager's success to solve conflict is considered as one of the main capabilities of managing.

Putnam defines conflict as interaction of those who communicate and then disagreements are made between them in terms of main purposes, secondary purposes and values and so they consider each others as potential barrier for realization of their own aims (Kiakojori, 2004).

Chohen (2004) regards the conflict as a factor of cooperation-break and threat for organization. He believes that appearing conflict in organizations is both natural and expected. Given the definitions proposed for conflict so far, some terms are fundamentals of them all. First, both parties should realize it, second, the existence or lack of conflict depends on peoples' perception and if none of them are aware of it, the general agreement is that there is no conflict (Rezaeian, 2003).

The essential point here is our attitude toward conflict and the proper way of encountering it and recognizing whether it's righteous or not based on its forming factors and proposing a rational solution to maximum utilization of it. This is why managing conflict is important not suppressing. Conflict should not be allowed to be serious and out of control. Understanding the reasons of conflict can help to find the probable solutions and the subsequent of any

conflict can cost a lot for organization whether it is between workers or in managing different sections or employees (Cooper, 1997).

That is why there have been done many studies about management skills in different levels and its role regarding employee's conflict among which the following researches can be pointed out:

Fayazi (2009) in a study entitled "perceived conflict and the methods of its managing" indicated that although there is no significant difference between managers and employees realization of conflict, the managers realized more conflict in organization. More over there wasn't seen any significant difference between the methods used to face with conflict in managers and employees. However the results show that employees are more inclined to use the method of "avoidance and compromise". Among the demographical factors, the effect of gender, age, education and service record was demonstrated.

Pirmoradi Bejanjani (2009) in a study entitled "organizational conflict and the strategies to manage it" indicated that conflict is a natural and inevitable phenomenon in organizational life and it appears in different forms. Although the personal factors and characteristic features plays a role in creation of conflict, organizational conflict happens more often as a result of inefficiency of communication system, the condition and status of organization, mismanagement, unofficial groups infiltration, organizational structure and so on.

Shipper & Davy (2006) in a study entitled "investigating management skills, employees' attitude and managing operation" have searched about management skills and proposed a model for it. Six management skills proposed in this study are programming, organizing, control, participation, facilitation and time managing and the results indicated that others' skill assessment more reflect the employees' attitudes and needs than individual one. The results also demonstrated that there are complex relations between individual's assessment and that of others and also between employees' attitudes and managing operation.

Husko (2005) in an article entitled "the lack of skill as an obstacle to teamwork" investigates the teamwork based on two parameters of "proper leadership" and "required leadership skills". The concepts of management and leadership are defined according to Katz theories. The appropriate structure for changing traditional and modern leadership is studied and the required management skills – that for successful teamwork, human skill was found to be equally necessary at all level of management - are being considered. The results indicate that team work needs the required skills which are obtained though assigning responsibilities on team members on the part of managers. The managers and leaders encourage the team members to accept responsibilities through using effective human skill and communicating with them and the members gain skills while they do teamwork and this indeed requires having a flexible organizational structure in which managers help improving teamwork skills and empowering the members.

Given the fact that managers' skills are effective and important factors for organization to attain its purposes and increase the productivity and the employees conflict is another factor of success of organization to do so and also the necessity of study about this topic, the researcher seeks for an answer to the question "whether there is a significant relation between management skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp?"

Research Method

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive (survey) in terms of data collection method. The population consisted of all personnel of Kerman Keyvan Pomp

Company in 2013 (about 1000 members) from which an 88-member sample was selected according to Cochran formula and sampling method was simple randomly. The data collection was done through questionnaires prepared according to Likert Scale. In order to assess the reliability of questionnaires Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha administered in a sample questionnaire with 15 members was calculated as 0.959 for management skills and 0.903 for conflict. For data analysis in inferential statistics, Spearman Correlation Coefficient, Mann-Whitney test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used.

Results

Findings of research main hypothesis: there is a significant relation between management skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp.

Table1:

The result of Spearman Correlation Coefficient between management skills and employees conflict

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Sig	Correlation Coefficient	Result
Management skills	Employees conflict	0/00	-0/429	Approved

As it's obvious in table 1, the amount of Sig is lower than 0.05 which indicates the significance of relation between management skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp. The amount of Correlation Coefficient is -0/429 which indicates an average relation between two variables and the minus sign means the negative and reverse relation of them. It means that improving management skills reduces the employees' conflict.

Findings of research first hypothesis: there is a significant relation between intellectual skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp.

Table 2:

The result of Spearman Correlation Coefficient between intellectual skills and employees conflict

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Sig	Correlation Coefficient	Result
Intellectual skills	Employees conflict	0/00	-0/385	Approved

As it's obvious in table 2, the amount of Sig is lower than 0.05 which indicates the significance of relation between intellectual skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp. The amount of Correlation Coefficient is -0/385 which indicates an average relation between two variables and the minus sign means the negative and reverse relation of them. It means that improving intellectual skills reduces the employees' conflict.

Findings of research second hypothesis: there is a significant relation between human skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp.

Table 3:

The result of Spearman Correlation Coefficient between human skills and employees conflict

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Sig	Correlation Coefficient	Result
human skills	Employees conflict	0/001	-0/334	Approved

As it's obvious in table 3, the amount of Sig is lower than 0.05 which indicates the significance of relation between human skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of

Kerman Keyvan Pomp. The amount of Correlation Coefficient is -0/334 which indicates an average relation between two variables and the minus sign means the negative and reverse relation of them. It means that improving human skills reduces the employees' conflict. Findings of research third hypothesis: there is a significant relation between technical skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp.

Table 4:

The result of Spearman Correlation Coefficient between technical skills and employees conflict

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Sig	Correlation Coefficient	Result
technical skills	Employees conflict	0/00	-0/442	Approved

As it's obvious in table 4, the amount of Sig is lower than 0.05 which indicates the significance of relation between technical skills and employees conflict in producing-industrial Company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp. The amount of Correlation Coefficient is -0/442 which indicates an average relation between two variables and the minus sign means the negative and reverse relation of them. It means that improving technical skills reduces the employees' conflict. Findings of research forth hypothesis: there is significant relations between subsets of technical, human and intellectual skills and employees conflict.

Table 5:

Spearman Correlation Coefficient for Relations between Subsets of Technical, Human and Intellectual Skills

Main Parameters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Intellectual skills	1. Programming	1	.662**	.620**	.636**	.553**	.638**	.602**	.618**	.459**	-.325**
	2. Decision-making	*	1	.760**	.663**	.587**	.682**	.628**	.710**	.679**	-.289**
	3. Control	*	*	1	.616**	.464**	.623**	.765**	.706**	.626**	-.357**
	4. Creativity	*	*	*	1	.655**	.584**	.594**	.638**	.479**	-.381**
Human skills	5. Communications	*	*	*	*	1	.554**	.558**	.502**	.345**	-.284**
	6. Motivation	*	*	*	*	*	1	.643**	.760**	.489**	-.201**
	7. Leadership	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	.696**	.684**	-.311**
Technical skills	8. Product design	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	.631**	-.286**
	9. Production operation	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	-.479**
	10. Conflict	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1

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

As it's obvious in the above table, the amount of Sig is more than 0.05 in relation between decision-making and communication, product design and also parameters of control and production operation. So the null hypothesis H₀ is rejected indicating the lack of relation between these parameters from the viewpoint of personnel in Kerman Keyvan Pump Company. Regarding other parameters there was no significant relation between subsets of management skills.

More over the amount of correlation coefficient in conflict and the subset parameters of management skills oscillate between -0.201 and 0.478 which indicates an average relation between two variables and the minus sign shows the reverse relation. It means that improving the management skills (programming, decision-making, control, creativity, communications, motivation, leadership, product design, production operation, conflict) decrease the employees' conflict.

Findings of research fifth hypothesis: from the viewpoint of personnel who work in Kerman Keyvan Pomp Company there is a significant difference between parameters of management skills.

Table 6:

average ranking of management skills' parameters

Variables	Average rank	Parameters ranking
Production operation	12.98	1
Product design	11.77	2
Communications	7.25	3
Leadership	6.55	4
Programming	5.35	5
Control	5.20	6
Creativity	5.07	7
Decision-making	4.86	8
Motivation	4.61	9

Table 7:

Friedman Test for the comparison of participants' attitude toward parameters of management skills

	number	Chi-square	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
Managers' skills	88	508.543	12	0.000
Friedman Test				

Considering the table 7, the amount of chi-square has calculated according to degree of freedom 12 and level of significance $p < 0.05$. So the null hypothesis which supposes the parameters' ranking average to be the same is rejected and the main hypothesis supposing the difference between parameters is accepted. In other words there is significant difference between parameters of management skills from the viewpoint of personnel working in Kerman Keyvan Pomp Company. In this study the parameters of motivation and production operation had the least and the most importance among others in human and technical skills respectively.

Discussion And Conclusions:

The organizational conflict is evitable and if managed properly it would be able to pave the way for organizational development. Therefore the managers must learn the skills required for appropriately managing conflicts. The manager on the one side should recognize the conflict characteristics, the reasons for its formation, its sources and generally the strategies to manage it and on the other side he should attain the required skills to solve it constructively.

The present study aimed to investigate the relation between management skills and employees' conflict in Kerman Keyvan Pomp Company. The findings indicated that there is a significant relation between management skills (intellectual, human and technical) and employees' conflict and the amount of correlation coefficient which was negative indicated the reverse and negative relation of two variables. In other words improving the management skills decreases the employees' conflict. The findings of other researches done by Fayazi (2009), Pirmoradi Bejanjani (2009), Shipper & Davy (2006) and Husko (2005) verify the findings of present study.

Suggestions for further research:

Given the research results indicating the existence of a significant relation between management skills and employees' conflict in Kerman Keyvan Pomp Company, the following suggestions are made:

- To improve the managers' skills, instructional programs should be prepared in Industrial production company of Kerman Keyvan Pomp
- Given the fact that inappropriate selection of personnel brings about many covert and overt problems in organizations, it is suggested to select candidates of management position according to some determined criteria by which their skills can be examined. Recognizing the differences in attitude, understanding, mental and physical capabilities and characteristics of employees would help to know the different levels of personnel performance and subsequently leads to less organizational conflict. In addition employing managers lacking professional competence could make a ground for appearing conflict and the reduction of their performance and finally lessens the organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Providing required cultural grounds for managers and employees to participate in and using their new thoughts and ideas in solving the conflicts which results in innovation and willing to work.
- Having technical skills including the use of specific techniques, tools and means- learnt through experience and teaching- in fulfilling particular tasks, the managers could interact with their workers and lessen the conflicts among them.
- Managers should affect on the employees' behavior through human skills including capability to make an environment full of mutual understanding and cooperation, fulfilling the tasks with/by others, doing influential activities as a group member and understanding the members' motives. They should also reduce the conflict in employees by motivating them and increase the capability of opinion/ feelings communication in order to develop the temper of sociability by means of receiving desirable response and making relation with others.
- Managers can use intellectual skills to recognize the fact that different functions of organization is interdependent and any change in sections would influence the others – the fact that reduce the organizational conflict. Being aware of these relations and important element and details of different situations, help the manager to recognize problems and make decisions which decrease the organizational conflict and bring effectiveness and employees' satisfaction.
- Acquiring the intellectual skills (including organized thinking, comprehension and decision-making...) requires teaching behavior sciences theories especially the theories of organization, management and decision-making and the applying them and the managers should heed to the facts like these and participate in academic-retraining courses hold for this purpose.
- Being informed of organization's purpose-achievement requires the managers to communicate with personnel because the function of any organization depends on the human resources and their interaction with equipments and technologies of that organization. In addition the performance of human resources depends on their competence and motivation. The competence of human resources itself depends on their attitude, situation and environment in which they work.
- Today the culture of producing-service providing companies necessitates the managers to have more patient encountering different pressures and balance their excitement. These characteristics would not be attained unless the managers use the human skills

and know that business success depends on personnel. Therefore it's necessary to invest in human skills since the customers are attracted/ repelled by employees.

- Given the findings of this research supporting the idea that there is a relation between management skills and employees' conflict, the managers of Kerman Keyvan Pomp Company is suggested to give personnel more freedom in fulfilling their tasks and attempt to use human skills and unofficial/friendly relations when they communicate with workers. They would be better to define organizational responsibilities in a way that requisite latitude and flexibility are being considered in since controlling personnel and compelling them to act according to strict regulations make them lose their innovation and creativity besides causing conflict.
- In order to enhance managers' knowledge, skills and information about the last scientific development and technology in their related working fields, it would be necessary to involve them in relevant conferences, contract with academic-scientific institutes and provide the informative magazines subscription.

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