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ANALYSIS OF CONFLICTS IN HOTEL OPERATIONS AS A MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

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Abstract

Research purpose: the main aim of this study is to define the term conflict and approach it from the process point of view. Therefore, the main goal of the study is to determine the stages of the conflict. **Research methodology:** based on research methods, such as collecting scientific data and systematic analysis of information received logical generalization and analysis. **Research outcome:** international approaches to conflict process definitions were investigated and the information received was systematically analyzed and presented as an instruction that can be used to manage hotel facilities as well as with other industrial enterprises. **Research limitations:** requires extensive experimental information. **The practical significance of the research:** is that it will play a positive role in enriching the scientific and practical knowledge of students working in this field, researchers, and students in the field. **Scientific novelty and originality of research:** The significance of this study is on implementation possibility of the gained theoretical knowledge to the hospitality management sphere of Azerbaijan. Considering the fact that tourism is a newly developing high priority economic sphere for our country, the implementation benefits of this study is very high.

Keywords: Hospitality Management, Conflict Management, Conflict Process, Negotiation

ANALYSIS OF CONFLICTS IN HOTEL OPERATIONS AS A MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Conflict is defined as opposition of parties when interests have cross points. As it's obviously seen from the table proposed by Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge (2013), the first stage of conflict is potential opposition or incompatibility. In this stage, the conflict arises based on its sources. Communication or its insufficiency is usually one of the main sources. The organizational structure is also a point to consider while it can be a barrier for smooth operational flow among departments. On Individual basis personal conflicts are most likely to reasons of personal variables. The main beginning stage for the conflict is created by established conditions. Causes or sources of conflict are created and accelerated by causes that are grouped as 3 categories, communication, structure and personal variables.

Communication is a flow of information among members of certain affair.

"The potential for conflict increases when either too little or too much communication takes place. Apparently, an increase in communication is functional up to a point, where upon it is possible to over communicate, with a resultant increase in the potential for conflict. Too much information, as well as too little, can lay the foundation for conflict. Furthermore, the channel chosen for communicating can have an influence on stimulating opposition. The filtering process that occurs as information is passed between members and the divergence of communications from formal or previously established channels offer potential opportunities for conflict to arise." (Carsten, 2001).

Conflict happens when communication is not kept in balance, either too much or too little information is provided to the parties. In hotel's internal communication is always an issue because team members are working based on information sent among "players". Sometimes insignificant in

first glance information can create a big problem with the guest, which may result in internal conflicts afterwards. As an example we can note conference and event preparations. Guest noted that we want the lunch to be at strict 12:00, while hotel is not always ready for lunch on this time due to preparation works after breakfast. Minimum 12:30 lunch time must be guaranteed by sales person. When guest makes a special request as timing, it must be directly and immediately communicated with the restaurant to provide pure service. In case if sales person will forget about this fact or will not communicate it due to the fact that he thinks it is not a problematic issue for restaurant, later on guest will write a complain letter and most probably it will damage future relationships with particular event organizer.

Apart from the communication, the structure is also one of the main reasons for creation of first stage of conflict. Organizations must pay attention to the size and job specializations within the company. The likelihood of conflict is increased by the big scale if company. More people mean more interests; consecutively it means more cross points for these interests.

"The term structureis used, in this context, to include variables such as size, degree of specialization in the tasks assigned to group members, jurisdictional clarity, member–goal compatibility, leadership styles, reward systems, and the degree of dependence among groups." (Eirene and Nelson, 2007).

Responsibilities must be identified clearly, the greater the ambiguity in precise definition of duties, the greater chance for conflict establishment. Intergroup problems arise when groups want to have a control on territory and resources. Each department in hotel has got goals that are distinguished between each other. Purchasing department is concerned in purchase of goods in lowest prices, while sales department is concentrated on increasing revenue, controlling the quality, ensuring the hotels products and services meet guest expectations. On the other hand operational departments are focused on increasing efficiency and productivity at the same time, means operational departments concentrate on high performance with minimum resources used. Under this atmosphere conflicts arise between departments, Sales department say: "we want guest satisfaction", on the other hand operational departments say: "we have to follow productivity and with resources (labor, food \ beverage and etc.) that we have, existing guest satisfaction is maximum what we can do". This is actually a task oriented conflict which is functional until certain point, but nevertheless not depending on the future outcomes, this is conflict occasion.

Structure wise another important point is dependency of groups within organization. When one group earns income from the production of another, then crossing forces are stimulated.

Another important fact is personal approach. Each individual is unique and his variables are creating mutual relationships. These variables may also create a conflict. Values of people, their estimations and perceptions can differ:

"Value differences are the best explanation of diverse issues such as prejudice and disagreements over one's contribution to the group, as well as the rewards one deserves. Say that John dislikes African-Americans and Dana believes John's position indicates his ignorance. Say that an employee thinks he is worth $55,000 a year but his boss believes him to be worth $50,000. These are all value differences, which are important sources for creation of potential conflict." (Rahim, 2011).

This above mentioned issue is very important and most encountered fact. Most managers and employees have opinion differences regarding the performance, salary expectations, position promotion and etc., which can create a disagreement. Each person has personal characteristics that can be authoritarian or dogmatic, with high and low esteem that in its term leads to establishment of values systems. This is relationship conflict and has no functional effect, rather than destroying team atmosphere and playing a role of barrier for efficient team work.

The second stage cognition and personalizationof conflict process takes place when one party negatively affects the interests of another. The potential problem actualizes itself in second stage of conflict. Two parties may be informed about disagreement, but personalization takes place when parties are emotionally involved into the dispute.

"It is at the feltlevel, when individuals become emotionally involved, that parties experience anxiety, tension, frustration, or hostility." (http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au).

Intentions are created by people's perceptions and emotions which in their turn are reflected in

behaviors. We can say that the intentions are decisions that one person accepts under certain circumstances as a reaction to surrounding environment. Intentions are studied separately because each person must understand opposite parties' intentions in order to decide the way how reaction will be. Intention and behaviors are not always overlapping and there is a slippage between these phenomenon.

The two dimensions of conflict handling intentions are cooperativeness which is one party's exertion to satisfy opposite parties' interests, and assertiveness is one party's exertions to satisfy his or her personal interests.

"**1.** Competing: assertive and uncooperative, such as when you strive to achieve your goal at the expense of the other party achieving his.

2. Collaborating: assertive and cooperative-intending to find a win–win solution that makes both parties happy.

3. Avoiding: unassertive and uncooperative, such as when you avoid a conflict based on the hope it will just go away.

4. Accommodating: unassertive and cooperative, such as when you give in just to please someone else.

5. Compromising: mid-range on both assertiveness and cooperativeness where the pie is sliced down the middle)." (Rahim, 2010).

Competing conflict handling doesn't always have positive income in long term strategic thinking. This is when one party is concentrated on his or her own needs and takes advantage of other party's expenses. While on the other hand collaborating is finding a win-win situation, answering to both parties needs and demands. Avoiding is opposite to the collaboration, is waiting until conflict goes away. This is no reaction situation when natural flow of situations is guaranteed. Accommodating is when one party is giving away to satisfy the opposite party, this is more non-assertive. Compromising is equally division of resources.

Thinking about conflict people usually focus on this stage, because behavior is the only stage where conflicts are visible. In this stage conflict parties make written or verbal steps that can be either statement report or action and reaction. In professional environment people must behave in a way that their intentions are not directly reflected in actions. In work place emotional behavior is not accepted positively and it can strictly damage image of relevant party.

"For the most part, conflicts that reach the upper ranges of the continuum are almost always dysfunctional. Functional conflicts are typically confined to the lower range of the continuum." (Robbins and Timothy, 2009).

Conflict process is characterized as a continuum which starts from interactions mutual arguments, oppositions. On the lower level the intentions of people are controlled and behaviors are indirect. When the intensity of interactions are increased them conflict becomes destructive, even if it was functional at the beginning, on the higher level of continuum it has no positive effect for group.

As an outcome intention, behaviors between parties create actions and reactions. These parameters create the conflict atmosphere which can be positive or negative at the end of day. Functional and dysfunctional outcomes of conflict are always topic for discussion and literature on this topic is mountainous. It worth to see it from perspective of outcomes, in spite of the fact that we have already discussed this issue before.

Functional Outcomes

"At moderate levels, it is thought to improve group efficiency and productivity." (Verna, 1998).

Conflict is functional at moderate levels. Therefore we will concentrate on functionality at certain levels on process of conflict. Let see when conflicts are constructive:

"Improves the quality of decisions; Stimulates creativity and innovation; Encourages interest and curiosity among group members; provides the medium through which problems can be aired and tensions released, and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change" (Schein, 1983).

Conflicts can improve the efficiency, quality of decision making. Conflicts create alternative thinking in group thoughts, and prevent weak assumptions. Conflict fosters the activeness and increases the probability of flexibly reaction to environmental changes.

Dysfunctional Outcomes

"It is hard to visualize a situation in which open or violent aggression could be functional. Yet

in a number of instances, it's possible to envision how low or moderate levels of conflict could improve the effectiveness of a group. Because people often find it difficult to think of instances in which conflict can be constructive" (Lichbach and Gurr, 1981).

Nevertheless conflicts affect individuals, relationships, communication channels, behaviors, environment and other factors that are involved. Usually dysfunctional conflict effect personalities:

"Perhaps the most frequent consequence of conflict is upset parties." (Robbins, Timothy and Judge, 2013).

"This can be manifest in a number of ways such as anger, feelings of hostility." (Thomas, 1992).

Conflicts are affecting parties negatively in terms of emotional state; hence negative emotional position itself can lead to the following problems for the group or organization:

"Negative emotions can lead in turn to personal frustrations (Thomas, 1976; Chesler, Crowfoot & Bryant, 1978), low job satisfaction (Derr, 1978; Filley, 1978; Robbins, 1978), reduced motivation and performance (Bergman & Volkema, 1989)." (Wall and Callister, 1995).

Low job Satisfaction, reduced motivation and performance create great problems for organizations.

Negotiation is not indicated in conflict processes described by James A. Wall, Jr. and Ronda Roberts Callister (1995). We will look at it in details by reviewing other literature.

"Negotiation as a process in which two or more parties exchange goods or services and attempt to agree on the exchange rate for them." (Whetten, David and Kim, 2012).

There are 2 types of bargaining or negotiations: distributed and integrative (Robbins and Timothy and Judge, 2013).

Distributive bargaining is division of same cake between two disputing parties, or if we express it with other words, it looks like pulling the sides of same rope for getting it as a whole. But this is an income on the expenses of another party as it's expressed below:

"Conversely, every dollar more the seller can get from you comes at your expense. So the essence of distributive bargaining is negotiating over who gets what share of a fixed pie. The fixed pie concept means the bargaining parties believe there only a finite amount of goods or services are available to be divvied up. Therefore, fixed pies are zero-sum games." (David, 2012).

On the other hand integrating negotiation means coming to the equal point where sides agree on win-win alternative of solutions.

"In contrast to distributive bargaining, integrative bargaining operates under the assumption that one or more settlements can create a win–win solution." (Scott, 2011).

"In terms of intra-organizational behavior, all things being equal, integrative bargaining is preferable to distributive bargaining because the former builds long-term relationships and bonds negotiators, allowing them to leave the bargaining table feeling that they have achieved a victory. Distributive bargaining, however, leaves one party a loser." (McShaneand Glinow, 2008).

In comparison of these 2 types of negotiations integrative is more preferable. The reason is that integrative bargaining creates long term relationships as it's mentioned above. While win-win situation is always making parties loyal and reliable to each other. When one party is left aside as a loser it creates a tension that may last during long term.

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