

Assertive Employees Behaviour: A Theoretical Analysis of Conflict Management on Firms Productivities

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ABSTRACT

While employee assertive behaviour is inevitable, and conflict signifies negativities, it is necessary to drive leadership and effective management, allowing for productive engagement. However, research on the relationship between these variables is limited. The objective of this study was to explore employee assertive behaviour: a theoretical analysis of conflict management on firms' productivity. A complete review of the available research literature was conducted utilizing a qualitative study method. Findings revealed that, when disagreements are handled assertively, people are inclined to feel encouraged to express their concerns, which increases self-esteem, productivity, and confidence in future interactions. The findings suggest that organizational leaders should be empathetic while dealing with conflict caused by assertive behavior in the workplace, viewing it as an essential component of organizational performance

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable part of life, and competent management will encourage individuals to exhibit assertiveness in the workplace, which may help develop strong working relationships and a thriving workplace culture. As a result, it is not unexpected that practitioners and academics alike are interested in managing workplace conflict to improve outcomes (Avgar & Colvin, 2016). Agjebule et al. (2021) assert that the way employees behave in the workplace has a significant impact on the overall atmosphere of the workplace. Meanwhile, Mishra and Tikoria (2021) claimed that an organization's culture influences its productivity through behavior that the organization creates as a result of its organizational environment.

Employee assertive behavior is defined as the courageous behavior of expressing a viewpoint, acting on one's beliefs, defending oneself without anxiety, expressing one's views honestly and at ease, or standing up by protecting the rights of others (Ibrahim, 2023). Alberti and Emmons supported the claim in their initial study in 2001. As a result, the current study aims to investigate Assertive Employee Behavior: A Theoretical Analysis of Conflict Management on Firm Productivities.

Darling and Earl (2001) state that strong managerial leadership relies on effectively managing conflicts. They believed employing a behavioral style model as a strategy for effective conflict resolution benefits individuals and organizations. According to Omale et al. (2024), conflicts develop because of a lack of organizational learning, change, relationships with others, and poor management. On the other hand, disagreement can foster cooperation, critical thinking, new concepts, and creative solutions. To succeed with their teams, plan for group behavior, or manage personnel, leaders need to be adept at conflict resolution (Bernburg et al. 2019, Veenema et al. 2019, Low et al. 2019, Omale & Abdulahi, 2021).

Addressing workplace disputes is the framework for the initial and full treatment of problems and disagreements (Taher et al., 2008). Conflicts can conclude in three ways: loss-loss, loss-win, or win-win (Taher et al., 2008). De-Church and Hamilton (2007) discovered that the relationship between task conflict and performance was positively mitigated by conflict management techniques. Relationship-driven or functional conflicts are also possible, both have a substantial impact on employee productivity.

Learning how to deal with conflict impacts others and is an essential component of assertiveness, one of the most valuable tools of productivity (Omale & Idodo, 2016; Omale, 2016). In reality, being assertive in utilizing the rhythm of your voice, mannerisms, and words may change how others see you and significantly impact the success of your professional and personal relationships.

Assertive behavior describes how a person responds in a scenario in which their views and/or interests collide with those of others (Daniel, 2009). Based on cultural norms and beliefs, interests and goals vary so much from individual to individual that almost every connection and encounter contains some element of potential conflict (Daniel, 2009; Omale, 2016). This is not to imply that open conflict is a natural part of human relationships; it is not. Instead, one of the

primary driving observations for the current research is that virtually every encounter in an organization or elsewhere is a form of negotiation, no matter how discrete, in which each side meets a difficult position and determines how to manage the circumstance to achieve a better result.

According to Tabassian et al. (2019), multicultural project teams can work more effectively if they avoid conflict. However, when individuals with diverse viewpoints, skills, backgrounds, and evaluations are assigned to a project, the outcome can significantly beyond what any similar group of people could accomplish. Nonetheless, disagreements may occur inside teams, and the team leader is in charge of settling them (Deepak & Roopesh, 2021). Team dynamics refer to how individual roles and behaviors affect the team (Kiely et al. 2021; Huckman, 2020).

Conflicts between individuals and organizations are unavoidable in an environment where individuals possess various interests, opinions, and moral values. This study aims to analyze assertive employee behavior: a theoretical analysis of conflict management's impact on an organization's productivity and to offer the best approaches to improve current practices. We believe that conflict arises from different viewpoints on values and interests and that it will ultimately lead to the organization's downfall if it continues. The conflict has several negative consequences for the firm, including reduced efficiency, employee dissatisfaction, insubordination, inefficiency, and monetary losses (Pembi et al., 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, learning happens through modeling, observation, and imitation. Assertiveness, motivation, and attentiveness are all impacted by this kind of attention. Others are more likely to learn how to be assertive if they exhibit assertive conduct and get positive feedback. This theory is commonly referred to as a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theory since it takes motivation, memory, and attention into account. Jeffrey and Muro (2008). However, Bandura believes that not all forms of learning can be explained by direct reinforcement. He thus included a social element to his theory, asserting that people might pick up new concepts and ways of acting by watching other people.

The social exchange theory proposes that social conduct is the product of an exchange process. It asserts that people consider the advantages and disadvantages of the social relationships they maintain. Attitudes expressed differ depending on the dynamics of two people's relationships and the rewards they receive. Thus, assessing the benefits and negatives of a relationship might lead to assertiveness.

Assertive behavior, therefore, is the honest and lawful expression of one's thoughts, needs, wishes, and feelings that do not reject or violate the independence of others (Alberti & Emmons, 2001). They supported their result that assertiveness increased leadership and communication skills, allowing for more effective management. Assertiveness is the ability to speak up, which is essential for organizational and personal success (Pfrombeck et al., 2023). It includes everyone's right to respect and stand up for themselves, as stated in the

Assertiveness Theory (Alberti & Emmons, 2001); therefore, people must learn to be assertive. This viewpoint highlights humans' ability to assert themselves, which has given individuals the right to act in whatever way that makes them feel comfortable while still considering the rights of others. Additionally, they acknowledged that some staff members voice out, while others are hesitant to express their problems and requirements.

Adejumo (2010) defines assertive personality as a capacity to communicate one's ideas and beliefs without fear of being victimized or repressed. According to Devangana and Naila (2024), assertiveness is the ability to advocate for oneself and assert rights while respecting the rights of others in organizational relationships. This is a key interpersonal competence. This means that assertiveness abilities allow employees to share their opinions even if they contradict the organization's viewpoint on a subject. This is an important interpersonal competency. This suggests that assertiveness skills enable employees to express their thoughts, even if they contradict the organization's position.

Thangal et al. (2023) assessed how assertive behavior affected the work environment. A multinational firm in Malaysia administered the Rathus Independence Schedule to fifty-seven of its employees. The rights to be recognized, to experience and express emotions, to make mistakes, to refuse, and to ask questions were all included in the assertiveness dimensions. The quantitative analysis's conclusions emphasized the necessity of establishing a setting that makes employees feel like they belong to the system. The researchers also found that people behave differently even though they may have similar beliefs and work for the same company. Employees who are assertive can voice important ideas and offer pertinent perspectives.

The assertiveness of seventy-two teenagers participating in a 61-day summer program was examined by Nikolaiev et al. (2023). The investigators used a variety of questionnaires to detect and analyze the cognitive aspects of assertiveness development. The findings suggested that adolescent assertiveness can be enhanced by engaging in productive discourse in a particularly designed adolescent interaction. Adolescents are given a character tool to help them succeed in the future by improving their assertiveness.

Bower (2019) defines assertiveness as an interpersonal trait that includes the capacity to articulate one's opinions and privileges as well as to politely and firmly say "no." Furthermore, aggressive people are the most effective at expressing their opinions, negotiating, and, most importantly, managing disputes (Woods and Lambert, 2018).

In comparison to passive individuals, who might possess low self-esteem and are unable to stand up for their needs and rights, and aggressive individuals, who tend to disregard other people's rights and needs, assertive people are willing to engage in open collaboration that benefits everyone (Bower, 2019). Assertiveness is important not just in relationships with others at work but also in organizational success and staff members' psychological well-being.

Consequently, aggressive individuals are better prepared for confrontations, communicating expectations, teamwork, and creativity within the team (Bower, 2019). Also, the findings linked assertiveness to increased self-esteem, confidence, and job performance, providing credence to the qualities that promote professional achievement and job satisfaction (Judge and Bono, 2001).

According to Venkoba (2016), assertiveness is essentially servitude. He offers four strategies for increasing assertiveness: behavior rehearsal, self-management, challenging irrational judgments, and modeling forceful people. Assertive conduct can take many forms, including aggressive behavior, according to Moon (2009). Aggression is defined as standing up for oneself in a demanding and unacceptable way. Since one can be forceful and defend their rights or fight for what is properly theirs without resorting to violence, this may not be true.

Conflict, on the other hand, is a feature of intricate organizations, and if well managed, it can potentially increase worker productivity and happiness. Effective conflict management improves communication, relationships, decision-making, team resilience, and self-assurance in difficult circumstances (Omale 2016, Adamu et al., 2023, Mohamed et al., 2024).

Therefore, conflict was characterized by Mohamed et al. (2024) as a debate between several mutually dependent parties who are aware of the opposition between their goals, the lack of advantages, and the interference of other parties in preventing them from accomplishing their goals. Workplace conflict has been described in a number of ways by various authors. Conflict in the workplace is a sign of discontent and disagreement that managers or staff take advantage of to intimidate one another in order to achieve their goals. According to this viewpoint, workplace conflict is defined as a disagreement brought on by disparities in the goals, principles, or interests of any number of groups inside an organization.

Based on this understanding, workplace conflict in business relationships is an inescapable, irreconcilable scenario caused by questions of changing power inside and between interactions of various parties. As a result, confrontations between groups with opposing values are unavoidable. Conflict occurs when people or groups communicate formally or informally within an organization (Gogoi & Borah, 2023). Over time, behavioral intelligence-based conflict management is crucial for resolving disputes and maintaining positive working relationships inside the organization (Sharma & Sharma, 2024).

The Basic Human Needs Theory examines human motivations and behaviors while examining dispute resolution strategies. John Burton gave a list of wants, encompassing the need for humans to feel secure and for others to be recognized and cherished. Individuals also seek influence over their environment (Burton, 1990). Furthermore, human wants include feelings of safety and belonging. These beneficial human wants help individuals and others by strengthening their needs and increasing fulfillment. Learning the Human Needs Theory allows individuals to consciously fix a growing conflict while also helping them discern between different causes of conflict (Burton, 1979).

Workers waste valuable resources and miss opportunities to leverage operational disputes to increase productivity by engaging in harmful internal conflicts (Lundula, 2024). This suggests that conflict may be beneficial and profitable and that opposing viewpoints should be promoted in order to offer a wide variety of concepts and choices for conflict-related circumstances. Conflict should therefore be seen as essential to an organization's functioning rather than as either positive or negative.

Given that conflict can be constructive when handled well, it is essential to develop a human resources culture that values assertiveness and creativity and permits people to voice their opinions without fear. This is because constructive disagreement management offers a chance for development and, in the end, improves the relationship between employees, society, and business culture (Omale 2016, Mohamed et al., 2024). Every time people work together, conflicts are inevitable and are usually thought to be caused by glaring disparities between the participants.

Therefore, effective conflict resolution is essential for businesses to navigate conflict-related challenges and thrive in a changing environment (Dahir & Sheikh Ali, 2024). Effective conflict management enables businesses to identify and address underlying problems that might be preventing them from being productive, claim Hasim et al. (2021).

Organizations frequently experience conflict. A number of factors, such as disparities in competence, conflicting objectives among team members, ambiguous assignments, or a pay structure that incites conflict, can lead to conflict inside businesses. Although it cannot be avoided, internal conflict can be minimized. It may also be utilized as a gauge of organizational effectiveness in conflict management due to the overall results produced in terms of revenue creation, human factors, work practices, and a positive atmosphere (Nurhalim, Tinggi, & Wiyatamandala, 2022). Since it lessens imbalances, encourages personal growth, and strengthens relationships, accepting conflict and comprehending the conduct of assertive employees can help you handle it effectively (Kilag et al., 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a theoretical approach to conflict management to investigate how assertive employee behavior affects organizational productivity. This was accomplished by conducting a comprehensive analysis of the existing research literature on assertive employee behavior and conflict resolution using a qualitative study technique. This allowed for a detailed assessment of the issue at hand, which helped to clarify and better understand the goal of this work. The secondary sources included in this study include reputable websites, books, and scholarly journals. This helps identify gaps in the existing research and offers a theoretical understanding of the problems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings, when disagreements are handled assertively, people are inclined to feel encouraged to express their concerns, which increases self-esteem, productivity, and confidence in future interactions. Assertive conflict management also improves communication skills by encouraging active listening and explicit expression of needs. This finding confirms Safitri and Saputra's (2023), contention that, internal conflict inside an organization can significantly impact overall performance in various ways. When handled poorly, disagreement can lower output, increase attrition, lower staff morale, and stifle creativity. Additionally, it might produce a poisonous workplace, which would reduce worker engagement and output. This finding is in line with other research, such as that of Omale et al. (2024), which highlights that bad management, relationships, organizational learning, and change are the main causes of conflicts.

According to the findings, assertiveness is the ability to speak up, which is essential for both individual and organizational growth. The results are in line with Pfrombeck et al. (2023), who claimed that assertiveness is necessary for both organizational and individual success, and Alberti & Emmons (2001), who claimed that in assertiveness, everyone has the right to respect and defend themselves, so people need to learn how to be assertive.

The ability of good assertive conflict management to help deter more aggressive behavior is one of its primary arguments. By addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as unfair favoritism, marginalization, and rivalry for resources, conflict management programs can help ease tensions and promote reconciliation among different groups within the organization. Assertive employee conduct, dedication, and organizational performance are all significantly impacted by efficient dispute-resolution processes (Sanda, 2018; Olu, 2020).

Practical Implication and Contribution to Knowledge

This work has several practical applications. By learning more about assertive employee behavior, conflict management, and firm productivity, the study has expanded the body of literature on this topic, which is currently receiving global interest, demonstrating how assertive employee behavior and/or conflict management affect staff satisfaction and overall organizational productivity. According to academic studies, assertiveness is an important factor that contributes to organizational performance and helps employees retain beneficial relationships in the face of differences. Also, good conflict resolution generates an inspiring workplace environment, which leads to increased teamwork, job satisfaction, and productivity.

This research can also help practitioners and companies improve performance by ensuring that all employees, irrespective of background, demonstrate assertiveness. Organizations can use the study's findings to boost their productivity. According to the findings of this study, staff training and retraining on corporate standards and values, as well as mechanisms for reporting and resolving problems, might be provided to create a suitable working environment for employees

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusively, this study sheds light on the complicated process of assertive conduct and dispute resolution in organizations. The difficulties in effective conflict resolution identified across personal perspectives, corporate ideals, and institutional limits highlight the importance of long-term organizational productivity and employee well-being.

The essential takeaway from this study is that assertiveness is a crucial component that contributes to the growth of organizational performance and assists employees in maintaining positive interpersonal interactions in the face of disparities and/or disregard. Second, assertiveness is a fundamental value of dignity, and to develop dignity, we have to remind ourselves of our rights while simultaneously recognizing other people's rights.

In addition, interests and aspirations are relatively diverse, and almost every connection and encounter have some element of potential conflict. Good conflict resolution fosters an encouraging workplace where workers are free to express their views and concerns, resulting in enhanced collaboration, satisfaction with work, and productivity. In contrast, ineffective conflict resolution may undermine assertiveness and performance by causing stress, anxiety, and a lack of trust among colleagues. Consequently, organizational leaders should be empathetic while dealing with conflict caused by assertive behavior in the workplace, viewing it as an essential component of organizational performance. Employee training and retraining on corporate norms and values and methods for voicing and managing problems should be specified to create a suitable working environment for employees.

This study adds intellectually and practically to the desired development. Nevertheless, many unresolved concerns remain about how to effectively handle conflict involving assertive employee conduct, create long-term relationships, and negotiate the unintended effects of both employee and organizational action. Further research on assertive employee behavior and dispute resolution is required to define the role of organizational leaders in bridging divergent perspectives on how to achieve long-term productivity.

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