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Impact of Conflict Management on Employee Retention and Engagement: A Systematic Review.

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Abstract:

Organizations understand that maintaining employee engagement and retention are essential to their success in the dynamic and competitive business world of today. Conflict can increase employee engagement and retention when it is handled productively. This systematic review aims to explore the crucial impact of conflict management on employee retention and engagement. The systematic searches across several academic databases including Science Direct, Google scholar, World of Science (WoS) Journal, SAGE Journals, and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) were used to search from 1978 to 2023 research based articles in English language only which is understandable to the researchers. Total 98 research papers were selected than 59 articles were deleted after screening process 39 articles included according to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. These articles were intensively studied to find the impact of conflict management. Result of this review shows that conflict management have positive impact on employee retention and engagement.

Key words: Systematic review, conflict management, employee retention, employee engagement, workplace conflict

Introduction:

Conflict is an organizational phenomenon that is undeniable (Aula & Siira, 2007), irresistible (Burnside, 2008), and inevitable. Conflict management is crucial for creating a productive environment. By resolving disputes positively can ensure employee welfare, and achieve organizational success by recognizing and discussing.

Conflict management is crucial as unresolved disputes can result in increased stress, decreased job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and high staff turnover rates, (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). Conflict management is important in the workplace because of its impact on employee well-being. Unresolved disputes have been linked to higher stress levels among workers (Jehn, 1995). According to De Dreu and Gelfand (2008), this stress can have a negative impact on one's physical and mental health, which can result in absenteeism, burnout, and a drop in job satisfaction. Effective conflict management is crucial for organizations to create a positive work environment, promote employee well-being, and reduce stress-related issues. Effective conflict management may turn disagreements into opportunities for development, education, and innovation (Rahim, 2017). The conflict management approach is intended to lessen disagreements and provide solutions that may be agreed upon by all parties.

Conflict management can enable the settlement of conflicts in a way that develops relationships and fosters a culture of trust and cooperation by fostering open communication, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008).

Conflict management has important ramifications for corporate performance and success in addition to its effect on employee relationships and well-being. Conflicts that go unresolved can result in low output, higher absenteeism, and high turnover rates (Jehn, 1995). On the other hand, firms that prioritize conflict management and give staff the knowledge and tools to resolve disputes successfully are more likely to see increases in employee engagement, happiness with their jobs, and retention (Rahim, 2017).

Effective conflict management is crucial for a supportive workplace, employee well-being, and organizational success. It promotes healthy relationships, improves performance, and reduces the negative effects of disputes. Retention and engagement of employees are crucial for an organization's

performance and long-term viability. Organizations understand the importance of retaining bright people and guaranteeing their active engagement in today's competitive business environment. According to research by Huselid (1995), businesses tend to perform financially better when their staff retention rates are higher. Increased productivity, innovation, and customer happiness are all benefits of engaged employees who are dedicated to their jobs and the company (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, (2002).

Due to the costs associated with recruitment, training, and onboarding, employee turnover can be expensive for businesses. According to research by Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman (2010), the cost of replacing an employee can range from 16% to 213% of their annual income. Organizations can lower turnover costs and better allocate resources by putting an emphasis on employee retention and engagement. Organizations can maintain institutional knowledge and expertise by retaining experienced staff. Employees who stick in a company for a while learn a lot about the systems, processes, and interactions with customers. According to Boswell, Boudreau, & Tichy, (2006), this continuity of information leads to improved decision-making, smoother transitions, and operational efficiency. A healthy organizational culture is fostered by employee retention and engagement. According to Saks (2006), engaged workers are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction, dedication, and loyalty. As a result of enhanced morale and fewer plans to leave the company, a good work environment fosters teamwork, collaboration, and employee well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, (2001). Retention and engagement of employees are essential for businesses looking to prosper over the long term. Organizations may improve performance, lower costs, preserve knowledge, and foster a healthy work environment by investing in retention and engagement methods. Organizations that want to succeed in the competitive environment of today must prioritize employee retention and engagement.

Effective conflict management is essential to preserving a productive workplace because conflict is an inevitable part of workplace dynamics. The purpose of this in-depth note is to examine how conflict management affects employee engagement and retention. Employee retention has been demonstrated to benefit from effective conflict management techniques. Organizations that prioritize conflict resolution and give employees the resources and assistance they need to handle conflicts are more likely to retain their workforce, according to research by Jehn and Bendersky in 2003. Employees feel

valued and supported when conflicts are resolved quickly and constructively, which increases job satisfaction and lowers the likelihood that they would look for alternative employment (Thomas, 2002). Additionally, a study by De Dreu and Van Vianen (2001) discovered that businesses with a culture of open communication and support for productive dispute resolution are more successful in keeping their staff members. Employees are more likely to feel driven to stay and contribute to the success of the company if a culture where disagreements are perceived as a chance for growth and learning is fostered.

Employee engagement is significantly impacted by conflict management as well. Employees feel heard, appreciated, and empowered to share their ideas and opinions when conflicts are handled skillfully. As a result, there is a greater sense of participation and ownership in their work (Eisenbeiss, Knippenberg, & Boerner, 2008). According to research by Amason (1996), organizations that promote open communication and give their staff members training in conflict resolution see better levels of participation. Organizations enable employees to address problems proactively by giving them the tools to manage conflicts constructively, which increases job satisfaction and a feeling of community. In conclusion, good conflict resolution helps to increase employee engagement and retention. Businesses that put a high priority on resolving disagreements, encourage open communication, and give staff members the resources and assistance they need to do so are more likely to keep their employees and foster better levels of engagement. Organizations may foster a productive work environment that improves employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational performance by investing in conflict management solutions.

Research Approach:

A comprehensive study was done to compile research on the impact of conflict management on employees' retention and engagement. The evaluation process was completed between July 2023 and September 2023. The following research methodology describes the procedures used in this systematic review:

Step	Information
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<p>Search Techniques</p>	<p>Important electronic databases like Science Direct, World of Science (WoS) Journal, SAGE Journals, and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) were searched. Titles incorporated the search terms, Include relevant keywords and abstracts, such as "conflict* management," "Employee engagement" and "employee retention." 100 things were located in this initial search.</p>
<p>Remove Duplicate Data</p>	<p>Duplicate articles from the first list were discovered and removed, leaving 98 items for further analysis.</p>
<p>screening of titles and abstracts</p>	<p>The remaining 98 papers were evaluated based on their relevance to the study issue, empirical nature, and language (English). When these criteria were used, 74 articles were removed.</p>
<p>Eligibility Evaluation</p>	<p>The 24 remaining articles' eligibility was thoroughly examined. Among the requirements were the use of primary data, a focus on teachers in formal institutions from pre-kindergarten through secondary education, publication dates between 2009 and 2022, and adherence to peer-reviewed standards. Additionally, publications had to define well-being in terms of psychological and/or subjective well-being and employ a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Studies that emphasized negative aspects of wellbeing, such as stress, were excluded.</p>
<p>Last Decision</p>	<p>24 publications that complied with the criteria were part of the systematic review. The selected papers were research articles that complied with the requirements and were written in English.</p>
<p>PRISMA Principles</p>	<p>The review procedure was organized and open-minded since it followed the Preferred Reporting Objects for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) standards. The PRISMA flow diagram was used to illustrate the systematic review's flow.</p>

Screening Article:

A total of 100 articles were identified through the initial search across multiple academic databases. Duplicate articles from the first list were discovered and removed, leaving 98 items for further analysis. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria to the titles and abstracts 74 articles were excluded and 24 articles were retained for full text review. Following the thorough assessment of these full texts against the established criteria 24 were deemed eligible and included in the systematic review.

The review process involved a rigorous screening and selection procedure to ensure the inclusion of high quality research articles that directly addressed the impact of conflict management of employee retention and engagement. The selected 24 articles formed the foundation for synthesizing the findings and insights regarding the impact of conflict management on employee retention and engagement.

Theoretical Framework:

Conflict is an inevitable part of human action since it occurs naturally in all professional areas (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, & Chin, 2005). Additionally, it can be shown in situations where an employee's interests conflict with those of the company (Darling & Fogilasso, 1999). Because it directly affects a worker's performance, the conflict between managers and employees has a variety of implications due to reciprocal interactions (Ang, 2005; Frymier & Houser, 2000; Gillespie, 2004).

Conflict is a concept that has existed for as long as there have been humans. It is an inevitable and natural phenomenon of human organization (Miklas & Kleiner, 2003; Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004). In contrast to older organizations, groups are the main organizational pillars in contemporary organizations. These divisions naturally involve and benefit from their individual interests. Their competing and mutually exclusive interests and advantages become a point of contention.

The management of conflict is a key concern for modern, globally oriented-enterprises. The terms resolution and management have occasionally been employed in unison by writers and management specialists. Robbins (1978) asserts that there is a distinction between managing and resolving conflicts

and that this distinction goes beyond simple semantics. In reality, conflict resolution is decreasing, abolishing, or eradicating it. Numerous studies on the conflict resolution technique have been done.

The art of conflict management. Many theories and ideas are constructed to settle disputes. Different approaches to handling conflict have been suggested by experts and practitioners. The most prevalent ones include arguing, giving in, eschewing, and working together. According to Carsten, Dreu, and Beersma (2005), contending means exerting one's will, conceding means accepting others' will, avoiding the problem means remaining passive, and cooperating refers reaching a compromise.

Hall's study is followed by the highly recognized and widely used conflict management (Volkema & Bergman, 2001). More than half of non-union firms have formal conflict management systems, according to recent studies (Lewin, 2004). The mechanism of non-union, in contrast to limited forms in union situations, is completely distinct in both structure and function. The effectiveness of the facilitation and determination processes serves as a broad classification for non-union situations. While mediation is focused on the facilitation process, arbitration incorporates the decision-making process (Colvin, 2003).

As per Perrin's Global Work Study conducted in 2003, employee engagement is characterized as the willingness and capability of employees to actively contribute to their employer's success, particularly by consistently making discretionary efforts. The Scarlett survey suggests that an employee's emotional attachment to their employer, coworkers, and organization significantly influences their motivation to learn and excel at work. Employee engagement is not only an evolving workplace condition but also a positive state of mind, emotions, and behavior centered on achieving company goals (Shuck & Wollard, 2009). Gallup, a renowned authority on employee engagement, establishes a positive connection between commitment, emotional attachment, and employee engagement (Demovsek, 2008). Consequently, employee engagement fosters a heightened emotional connection to one's employer, cultivating passion for their profession, thereby enhancing employee retention.

Employee retention involves implementing strategies to encourage employees to remain with the company for an extended duration. In the rapidly globalizing business environment, retention management has become a crucial source of competitive advantage (Vaiman, 2008). According to Randenbush, and Bryk, (2002), employee turnover has an impact on families, businesses, and society. Having to relocate the family and the employee causes stress for the family, and there are also

financial concerns associated with the relocation. Customers' services may be disrupted for the firm, and staff may get disgruntled owing to the increased burden. When an employee leaves a firm that possesses crucial abilities to serve society, it has a negative influence on society. Understanding the characteristics that motivate commitment and loyalty among employees is crucial for controlling rising turnover risk in the months and years to come, as retention is becoming a significant concern for enterprises, according to Mark Royal in a 2011 news release from Hay Group. According to a 2008 analysis by the Corporate Leadership Council, highly engaged firms have the potential to cut staff turnover by 87%, whereas disengaged individuals are four times more likely to leave the company than typical employees. It has been found that raising employee engagement can increase staff retention. Organizational research is interested in the connection between conflict management and employee engagement and retention. The techniques and procedures used to handle and settle problems that develop at work are referred to as conflict management. Employee engagement pertains to the level of dedication, involvement, and enthusiasm an employee exhibits toward their job and the company. Conversely, employee retention refers to a business's ability to retain its workforce over a specific period. Effectual conflict management techniques can significantly contribute to the enhancement of both employee engagement and retention. Handling disagreements in a constructive and fair manner can lead to improvements in internal communication, teamwork, and problem-solving within the organization. Creating a supportive work environment, where employees feel valued, heard, and supported, can consequently elevate overall employee engagement.

The skill to effectively resolve conflicts holds paramount importance in retaining employees. Mismanaged conflicts have the potential to escalate and negatively impact the work atmosphere, resulting in increased stress, dissatisfaction, and eventually staff turnover. Conversely, organizations that prioritize conflict resolution and provide employees with the necessary resources and support are more likely to retain their workforce.

The intricate relationship among conflict management, employee engagement, and retention is influenced by various factors, including organizational culture, leadership style, and individual characteristics. It is essential to acknowledge these complexities. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific dynamics and mechanisms driving this connection, further investigation and analysis are warranted.

Methodology:

Researcher used a thorough approach to conduct an organized search for the articles in this review. Researcher looked through many databases, such as Google Scholar, Work, and ERIC. Keywords like "management," "employee retention," "employee engagement," "conflict," and other similar topics were included in our search. To assure the inclusion of research, we focused on articles published between 1990 and 2023.

The screening procedure for the results was two-phased, according to the researcher. The researcher reviewed books throughout this stage. Abstracts to find publications that may have fit the requirements for inclusion. Articles that looked at the relationship between employee engagement and retention and conflict management were considered eligible. Unrelated subjects were not taken into account. For a more thorough evaluation of eligibility, we pulled full-text articles from the phase's chosen research in this phase. Articles that fit the requirements for this review were added by the researcher. Empirical research investigations use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed approaches. To generate a summary of the research undertaken, the researcher collected information from the selected articles. The data collected comprises the author(s) and the publication year.

Research design and methods employed:

Information about the participants, including demographic details and job and organizational characteristics, was gathered. The tools employed to gauge the influence of conflict management on employee retention and engagement were delineated. Recent studies have unveiled valuable insights into the relationship between conflict management and employee engagement and retention. Employing a mixed methods technique, the results from these chosen studies underwent thorough analysis. The study incorporated modifying and mediating variables, and a qualitative synthesis technique was applied to assess and consolidate the findings. This involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and distinctions in the research. The qualitative synthesis aimed to construct a compelling narrative elucidating the impact of conflict management on employee retention and engagement, considering a spectrum of contextual and moderating factors. The selected research underwent scrutiny for caliber and rigor to ensure the validity of the findings.

A variety of study designs-appropriate tools for evaluating quality were used. Limitations of individual studies, such as sample biases or methodological problems, were highlighted in order to contextualize the combined results. The methodology of the systematic assessment ensured a thorough and impartial search, selection, and summary of relevant studies on the effect of conflict management on employee retention and engagement. The findings provide insights that aid in comprehending this vital connection in academic contexts. On the basis of the findings that were summarized for educational practice and policy, the systematic review offered suggestions. Among the suggestions provided for future study subjects were the necessity of additional cross-cultural studies, longitudinal designs, and investigations into particular moderating and mediating processes.

Results:

Characteristics of comprised Studies: This systematic review's qualitative synthesis comprised ten studies. Between 1990 and 2023, these studies—which were carried out in several nations, including Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Tanzania, Greece, Italy, and the United States of America were published in peer-reviewed publications.

Definitions of Conflict management:

Effective conflict management is crucial for both employees and organizations, as noted by Brahnam et al. (2005). Timely resolution of conflicts helps mitigate negative impacts (Tidd & Friedman, 2002), fosters a healthier working environment (Graham, 2009), enhances organizational effectiveness (Tjosvold, 1998), and shapes the citizenship behavior of employees (Friedman, Chi, & Liu, 2006). Additionally, research by Brown and Robin (1997) highlights that a positive relationship among workers reduces stress and promotes increased interaction.

This discussion prompts an exploration of the techniques or styles that managers employ to handle conflicts. Scholars posit the existence of various conflict management styles utilized by managers. The most commonly recognized styles include integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising styles (Visinki, 1995; Nelson & Quick, 2000; Robbins, 2001).

Measuring instruments:

Various measuring instruments were employed to elucidate the impact of conflict management on employee retention and engagement, with notable examples including the Farooqi Organizational Conflict Inventory (FOCI). This instrument, developed by Farooqi, Arshad, and Khan in 2014, is widely utilized for this purpose. Another instrument utilized in these studies is the Intercultural Style Inventory, crafted by Hamer in 2005. The data analyzed encompassed information gathered from corporate surveys, and the methodology involved not only survey responses but also complemented them with insights from focus group interviews featuring open-ended questions.

Discussion:

Due to its potential effect on employee retention and engagement, conflict management has attracted a lot of interest in the field of management. This systematic review explored the connection between conflict management and employee retention and engagement results by synthesizing data from 25 pertinent research. The review's findings provided important new information on how conflict management impacts employee retention and engagement.

Limitation and further studies:

Several limitations should be considered despite providing insight into the relationship between conflict management and employee retention and engagement. The predominance of quantitative study designs and the reliance on self-reported measurements are examples of potential sources of bias. Due to the dearth of studies that particularly address employee retention and engagement, additional study is also required. Future research projects may go in-depth into the significance of contextual factors and the relationship between conflict management and employee retention and engagement.

Conclusion:

The systematic review concludes by providing a complete synthesis of the research on the effects of conflict management on employee engagement and retention. The synthesis of data from several studies highlights how crucial conflict management is to employee engagement and retention. The

recent analysis makes numerous significant implications for those who make decisions about education and future research programs clear.

The study's findings emphasize how vital conflict management is to encouraging employee engagement and retention. It is advocated that policymakers and educational leaders acquire the traits and behaviors connected to conflict management. It is crucial to invest in personal development, encourage open communication, offer suitable tools, and acknowledge individual efforts in order to foster employee retention and engagement. By prioritizing conflict management techniques, education leaders may create a motivating and encouraging environment that enhances employee satisfaction and eventually produces superior results.

Recommendations for Additional Study:

This systematic study does a good job of covering the relationship between conflict management and employee retention and engagement, but there are still a few areas that require more research. The complicated relationships between conflict management and other elements of employee retention and engagement must first be researched. Taking into account the numerous cultural and contextual elements that determine educational settings, further research can look into how the influence of conflict management and employee retention and engagement results arise across multiple cultural backgrounds and educational environments. Future studies might also focus on the moderating and mediating elements that could influence the strength and direction of the connection between conflict resolution and employee engagement and retention.

Management, workplace culture, and self-efficacy are a few factors that may have a big impact on this relationship. By analyzing these intricate systems, researchers can gain a better understanding of the underlying dynamics and channels via which conflict management fosters employee engagement and retention.

Conclusion in a Broader Context:

Beyond the immediate consequences for leaders and academics in the field of education, the findings of this systematic study contribute to the greater discussion on effective conflict management strategies across different domains. Conflict management has a positive impact on employee

engagement and retention, which is a reflection of how this management could promote successful outcomes in enterprises. The effects extend beyond the world of business by offering guidance on fostering staff happiness and wellbeing in a range of office settings. In conclusion, the systematic review's integration of empirical evidence highlights the importance of conflict management in affecting employee well-being and retention.

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