

The effect of organizational climate to conflict management among organizational personnel

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the relationship and effect of organizational climate to conflict management among personnel in Wangsaphung Hospital, Wangsaphung district, Loei province, Thailand. A total of 181 personnel who have worked more than one year in this particular hospital were selected as respondents. A cross-sectional descriptive research design was employed in this study. Descriptive statistic like frequency, percentage, mean score, and standard deviation while inferential statistic such as Pearson product moment correlations and stepwise multiple regression were utilized in this study. Results indicated that the level of conflict management of respondents was at the average level ($\bar{x} = 3.23$, $SD = 0.29$). In addition, those dimensions of organizational climate namely structure, responsibility, warmth, standard of performance, conflict and unity have showed significant positive and average relationships to conflict management at significant level of 0.01. However dimensions of organizational climate like reward, risk, and support also showed positive, significant but low relationships to conflict management at significant level of 0.01. Finally, finding also revealed that there are four significant predictors namely conflict, warmth, structure, and responsibility dimensions contributed 34.6 percent of variances at the significant level of 0.05. As conclusion, these four organizational climate dimensions are able to predict the conflict management among the personnel in Wangsaphung Hospital.

Keywords: Organizational climate; conflict management; personnel

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1. Introduction

In the current situation, conflict is found increasingly in various organizations. It can be clearly detected from the presented of hidden behavior shown among organizational members' mind which may be in a status of restlessness at most of the times. These can undermine the mental health of organizational members and make the regression of a particular organization (Rahim, 1985). If any form of conflict is continuously remained in the organization without appropriately managed, it would cause the organization losing something or the competitiveness would eventually decline. According to Brown (1983), these impacts would occur because organizational members still have to work together among the existing conflicts.

Saritwanit (2009) mentioned that troubleshooting is not the only solution however there is none of the best methods that available for all conflict situations. In order to resolve the conflict, it requires knowledge, planning, timing, and finding the right opportunity may be the major concern. Therefore, the exchange of experiences and point of views with other colleagues in order to search for a resolving method that is acceptable to the society is a necessity (Muangman & Suwan, 1997).

There are several common methods used to reduce conflict within an organization such as group meeting, appoint a team to resolve the conflict, job transfer, across of work line, exposure to feedback, survey of colleague by focusing on the problem and recommendation that does not focus on the person or find the offender along with creation a positive attitude towards each other, build the platform for conflict resolution (Litwin & Stinger, 1968). All these efforts aimed to achieve mutual trusts and creation organizational climate with secured and accepted comment freely to provide information. Thus personnel would feel like the conflicts would eventually be resolved.

2. Research objectives

The following are the main objectives of this study:

- To study the organizational climate level and personnel conflict management.
- To study the relationship between the organizational climate and personnel conflict management.
- To investigate the predictors of the personnel conflict management.
- To conclude the provided suggestions to improve personnel conflict management.

3. Research methodology

This study employs survey questionnaire as a method to collect quantitative data. A cross-sectional descriptive research design was utilized. This method benefits this study in terms of obtaining data more efficiently as time, energy and costs could be minimized (Sekaran, 2006), provides an excellent means of measuring attitudes and orientation in a large population which can, therefore, be generalized to a larger population (Babbie, 2002). For the total population of 289 personnel who have worked more than one year at Wangsaphung Hospital, Wangsaphung district, Loei province, Thailand, the required sample size is 181 by employing Cohen's (1988) formula. The sampling method used is simple random sampling which is considered appropriate, accurate, and efficient as it provides more information with a given sample size.

The survey questionnaire instrument was administered in Thai language to ensure that respondents were clear about the statements. There were 91 items in 3 sections and one open ended question related to suggestion by respondents to improve personnel conflict management. Section A of the questionnaire was comprised of eight items intended to gather information regarding demographic

factors of the respondents. These eight items which included information pertaining to their personal background such as age, gender, job position, marital status, education level, monthly income, attached department, and work experience.

Section B specifically designed to gauge the organizational climate practice. There were nine dimensions of organizational climate, giving a total of 54 items. Respondents are required to give responses toward their organizational climate in this section. Specifically, all the nine organizational climate dimensions were measured equally using 6 items. Section C of the instrument is used to gauge the personnel conflict management. A total of 29 items were contained in Section C. Section C consisted of five conflict management styles. They are five items of competing style, six items of accommodating style, six items of avoiding style, five items of compromising style, and seven items of confronting style. A five-point Likert scale was used in Section B and C.

This questionnaire was then sent to a panel of experts for comments and feedbacks. The panel of experts was selected using the criteria based on their expertise in the area of public health administration, research measurement as well as research and evaluation, for validation purpose. The panelist chosen included three professionals from various fields as stated before. From the feedbacks returned by the panel, some modifications were made to the original instrument.

Pilot testing of the instrument was carried out to 30 hospital staff from Muang district hospital. They were not the samples of the actual study. They were chosen as their structure and population are the same as the actual study. To improve the quality of the items in the instrument, they were also asked to give suggestions and comments on the items in the instrument. Revision was made based on the suggestions and feedback. It could be concluded that the instrument was reliable and good to use as the Cronbach alpha value indicated that all the research variables like organizational climate and conflict management had high Cronbach alpha value as 0.82 and 0.75 respectively.

Before researchers started to collect data, researchers submitted an official letter asking for permission from director of the research hospital. All the 181 distributed questionnaires have been successfully collected after two times of follow up have been taken, giving a response rate as 100 percent. Descriptive statistic including mean score and standard deviation were utilized in this study. Furthermore, inferential statistic like Pearson's correlation coefficients used to explain the relationship between the organizational climate and personnel conflict management. Finally stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the organizational climate that affecting the personnel conflict management in Wangsaphung Hospital.

4. Profile of the respondents

All the distributed questionnaire have been successfully collected after two times of follow up have been taken, giving a response rate as 100 percent. In this study, a vast majority of the samples are female (80.70%). Their age ranged from 21 to 58 years old and average age is 37.22 year. This indicates that the majority of the respondents in this study were from the middle age generation. Most of them have married (60.80%) and possessed graduate degree (42.50%). Majority of them had been working with this hospital for about 1 to 5 years (36.50%) and had served in nursing department and family medicine department at the percentage of 48.6 and 14.4 respectively. This basically relates to more than one third proportion of respondents had less working experience.

5. Results

5.1. Organizational climate

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of each organizational climate dimensions practice in Wangsaphung Hospital. As indicated in Table 1, the mean score for the nine organizational climate dimensions ranged from 3.06 to 3.37. All the nine organizational climate dimensions were at

average level. The responsibility dimension was found to be at highest value ($\bar{x} = 3.37$, $SD = 0.42$). The next highest was structure dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.36$, $SD = 0.44$). This is followed by conflict dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.33$, $SD = 0.44$), standard of performance ($\bar{x} = 3.29$, $SD = 0.39$), reward dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.25$, $SD = 0.41$), unity dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.23$, $SD = 0.38$), warmth dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.21$, $SD = 0.49$), and support dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.19$, $SD = 0.36$). The lowest mean score was risk dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.19$, $SD = 0.36$). The overall organizational climate was at a average level ($\bar{x} = 3.25$, $SD = 0.27$).

Table 1. Level of organizational climate dimensions.

Organizational climate dimensions	\bar{x}	SD
Responsibility	3.37	0.42
Structure	3.36	0.44
Conflict	3.33	0.44
Standard of performance	3.29	0.39
Reward	3.25	0.41
Unity	3.23	0.38
Warmth	3.21	0.49
Support	3.19	0.36
Risk	3.06	0.44
Overall	3.25	0.27

5.2. Practice level of conflict management

Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviation of the five styles of conflict management. As shown in Table 2, the mean scores range from 3.00 to 3.51. This indicates that all the five conflict management styles were moderately practice. This shows that, the most frequently practice of conflict management was compromising ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.63$). This is followed by competing ($\bar{x} = 3.37$, $SD = 0.43$), accommodating ($\bar{x} = 3.18$, $SD = 0.39$), and avoiding ($\bar{x} = 3.14$, $SD = 0.40$). The conflict management style that least frequently practised was confronting ($\bar{x} = 3.00$, $SD = 0.34$). Therefore, based on Table 2, it can be concluded that all the conflict management styles were at moderate level.

Table 2. Conflict management.

Conflict management	\bar{x}	SD
Compromising	3.51	0.63
Competing	3.37	0.43
Accommodating	3.18	0.39
Avoiding	3.14	0.40
Confronting	3.00	0.34

5.3. Correlation between organizational climate dimensions and personnel conflict management

Table 3 presented the Pearson correlation coefficient between the nine organizational climate dimensions and conflict management. Based on de Vaus's (2002) interpretation of correlation coefficients in Table 3 the correlation results between the nine organizational climate dimensions and personnel conflict management showed a significant relationship ($p < 0.01$), with strength of association varying from 'low to moderate' and 'moderate to substantial' and positive.

Table 3. Designation strength of association based on size of correlation coefficients.

Strength of association	Negative	Positive
Low to moderate	-0.29 till -0.10	0.10 till 0.29
Moderate to substantial	-0.49 till -0.30	0.30 till 0.49
Substantial to very strong	-0.69 till -0.50	0.50 till 0.69
Very strong	-0.89 till -0.70	0.70 till 0.89
Near perfect	-0.99 till -0.90	0.90 till 0.99
Perfect relationship	-1.00	1.00

As indicated in Table 4, personnel conflict management was significant, positive and moderate to substantial correlated with conflict dimension ($r = 0.464$; $p < 0.01$), responsibility dimension ($r = 0.443$; $p < 0.01$), warmth dimension ($r = 0.428$; $p < 0.01$), standard of performance dimension ($r = 0.392$; $p < 0.01$), structure dimension ($r = 0.362$; $p < 0.01$), unity dimension ($r = 0.355$; $p < 0.01$), and reward dimension ($r = 0.307$; $p < 0.01$). In addition, it was low to moderate correlated with support dimension ($r = 0.287$, $p < 0.01$) and risk dimension ($r = 0.272$, $p < 0.01$). This means that, to a moderate to substantial extent, an increase in organizational climate dimensions namely conflict, responsibility, warmth, standard of performance, structure, unity, and reward dimensions is associated with an increase in personnel conflict management. However a low to moderate extent, an improvement in support and risk dimension is associated with an increase in the personnel conflict management.

Table 4. Correlation coefficient between organizational climate dimensions and personnel conflict management.

Personnel conflict management	r-value	p
Conflict dimension	0.464**	0.001
Responsibility dimension	0.443**	0.001
Warmth dimension	0.428**	0.001
Standard of performance dimension	0.392**	0.001
Structure dimension	0.362**	0.001
Unity dimension	0.355**	0.001
Reward dimension	0.307**	0.001
Support dimension	0.287**	0.001
Risk dimension	0.272**	0.001

5.4. Significant predictors for conflict management

To identify the significant predictor for conflict management of personnel in Wangsaphung Hospital, a stepwise regression and analysis was carried out. In this analysis, the nine organizational climate dimensions were treated as predictor variables, while conflict management was treated as the dependent variable. The purpose of estimating this regression equation was to identify the organizational climate dimensions that have significant impact on conflict management of personnel in Wangsaphung Hospital that is the organizational climate dimensions which constitute the predictors for conflict management.

In this analysis, the size of the standardized coefficient (β) directly indicates the importance of these predictors relative to one another. In the context, the conflict dimension ($\beta = 0.255$) was the most important predictor, followed by warmth dimension ($\beta = 0.239$), structure dimension ($\beta = 0.150$), and responsibility dimension ($\beta = 0.159$), in that order. As shown in Table 5, the summary statistics of the estimated regression equation show the variables for which the coefficients are statistically significant.

The estimated regression equation was significant at 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), implying that all the four predictor variables that have an impact on conflict management; thereby qualifying these to be the

predictors for the latter. In brief, these four variables have a linear relationship with conflict management. The adjusted R^2 being 0.346 in Table 5 shows that the impact of conflict dimension was 21.6 percent, warmth dimension was 9.0 percent, structure dimension was 2.4 percent, and responsibility dimension was 1.6 percent. In conclusion, the four variables account for 34.6 percent of variation in the dependent variable. The following multivariate linear regression model shows the relationship between the predictor variables on the dependent variable.

Table 5. Multiple regression of organizational climate on personnel conflict management.

Conflict management	B	β	t	R^2	Change of R^2	p
Conflict (X_8)	0.167	0.255	3.418	0.216		0.001
Warmth (X_5)	0.139	0.239	3.506	0.306	0.090	0.001
Structure (X_1)	0.098	0.150	2.240	0.330	0.024	0.026
Responsibility (X_2)	0.110	0.159	2.072	0.346	0.016	0.040

In conclusion, the four variables account for 34.6 percent of variation in the dependent variable. The following multivariate linear regression model shows the relationship between the predictor variables on the dependent variable.

$$\text{Unstandardized score : } \hat{Y} = 1.525 + 0.167(X_8) + 0.139(X_5) + 0.098(X_1) + 0.110(X_2)$$

$$\text{Standardized score : } \hat{Y} = 0.255(X_8) + 0.239(X_5) + 0.150(X_1) + 0.159(X_2)$$

5.5. Suggestion to improve personnel conflict management

Data derived from the open-ended question regarding suggestions to improve conflict management have been concluded as below:

Organization should organize further successful personnel development in order to make the development process as a team. The exchange of information between personnel should be planned through weekly or monthly events on the basis of creating a good climate for working. In addition, the organizational leaders have to determine the format of the message used in the modern communication to avoid any message or content ambiguous and vagueness.

Organizational leaders should establish guidelines for standard operation and performance of the personnel in their organization as essential management system. On top of that, organizational leaders should encourage their personnel to respect the right of personnel as well as have the same opportunity to give comment freely. Organizational leaders should treat their personnel equally and call for meeting in case of conflict occurs. Conflict management should emphasize on process rather than pinpointing on the individually fault which could allow the two parties to freely give clarification and comment regarding the issue in order to encourage the process of exchanging ideas and suggestions among the personnel involved.

Organizational leaders at all level should compliment and provide reward to personnel organization who has worked successfully to strengthen incentives, words of appreciation and praise in success or promotion. Promotion must be given appropriately to personnel organization in order to be able to boost the enthusiasm in work and morale of the personnel. Additionally, this encouragement may encourage dedication, devotion, and commitment towards successful endeavors.

6. Discussion

On this line of reasoning, this study was conducted to examine the effect organizational climate on conflict management among the personnel of Wangsaphung Hospital, Loei province, Thailand. The

findings of this study revealed that all the nine organizational climate dimensions were averagely practiced. This finding is consistent with past research findings from Pichote Bumpungthai (2010) and Saipin Saidum (2009) but is contradicted with Manee Chaitup (2012). Pichote found that organizational climate to the medical doctors in Chaiyapum province was at moderate level. Saipin also found that organizational climate to the operational standard of pharmacist was at moderate too. However Manee found that organizational climate to the operational standard to the professional nurse was at high level.

In addition, result of this study showed that all the conflict management styles were at moderate level. This result was supported by Mali Singaena (2012) and Nucharee Arbsuwan's (2008) findings but not in accordance to Suchart Kaiviriya's (2009) finding. Mali found that conflict management of directors in Nongkai district hospital was at moderate level. Meanwhile Nucharee's finding among the personnel staff in the soldier hospital in Udon Thani province was at moderate level too. However Suchart found that conflict management of the directors at local district organizations was at high level.

Additionally, results of this study showed that all the nine organizational climate dimensions had either 'moderate to substantial' or 'low to moderate' relationships with conflict management. This finding implies that although the method or process of organizational conflict management or executive is very effective on the issues of conflict arising, but do not respond to what personnel would expect to get a result would affect the conflict resolution may not be good enough. This finding was found to be in accordance to Pornpan Soontronsuk (2011) and Saipin Saidum (2009) findings. Pornpan found that professional nurses in Udon Thani province whereas Saipin found that physical therapists in Northeast province have moderate correlations between the two variables namely organizational climate and conflict management.

According to the results from stepwise regression analysis, there are four organizational climate dimensions which have predictive power of 0.346 at significantly level as 0.05. Therefore the four organizational climate dimensions namely conflict, warmth, structure, and responsibility are able to predict the conflict management. The evidence from this study shows that organizational leaders should pay prior attention to these four significant predictors since these four predictors are able to explain 34.6 percent variance of conflict management.

This finding was found to be consistent with Sirinapa Pongla's (2009), Arreeratana Ratanasupachai's (2009), and Chut Muangcote's (2008) findings. Sirinapa found that motivation is able to explain 30.6 percent variance of conflict management while Arreeratana found that commitment is able to explain 32.5 percent variance of conflict management. Finally Chut found that quality of life is able to explain 68.4 percent variance of conflict management.

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