

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE'S EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT: STUDY OF A FIVE STAR HOSPITALITY BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

In tourism industry, attitudes and behaviors of hospitality businesses' employees who are in direct and continuous communication with guests constitutes a critical importance for the sector. Therefore, attitudes and behaviors developed by employees towards the organizational culture they are in, must be monitored and necessary measures to prevent possible conflicts must be taken. In this study, Çelik's (2007) Organization Culture Scale and Rahim's (1983) Organizational Conflict Scale have been utilized to determine the effects of organizational culture on organizational conflict and applied on 226 employees who work at a five star hospitality business in Antalya. Organization culture has been found to be influential on all personal, group and group identity conflicts as a result of the study.

Key Words: Organizational culture, organizational conflict, hospitality businesses, Tourism Cultures

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a global industry which has become a part of people's life styles with its suppliers and consumers spread throughout the world (Kandampully, 2000: 10). Individual arguments and conflicts inevitably arise due to individual differences wherever there is human factor as an input of socialization (Sims, 2002: 245). When the studies have been analyzed, conflict process has been determined as being significantly affected by culture. Therefore, in order to provide quality to tourism organizations, it is very important to minimize possible conflicts taking into account organization culture.

Organization Culture

Organization culture consists of common belief, life and expectation patterns of organization members. These beliefs and expectations determine norms that shape individual and group behaviors in the organization. According to another definition, organization culture is common beliefs, attitudes and values found in the organization (Brown, 1998: 7).

Organization culture consists of: "hypothesis and beliefs which exist in the organization's consciousness, functioning subconsciously, accepted without question, determining the way organization perceives itself and its environment and shared by organization members." In this definition of Schein, culture is emphasized as a totality of beliefs and expectations about organization itself and its environment which is not visible and palpable, in other words not objective, shared by employees but without questioning why. With these qualities, culture represents the covert inner dimension of an organization which cannot be observed from outside (Şimşek, 2007: 108).

Dimensions of Organization Culture

Robbins analyzes organization culture in 7 dimensions based on some implementations about management. Our study's analyses are based on Robbins' dimensions (Naktiyok, 2004: 78).

Organizational Structure: It expresses the division of labor and the level of expertise of employees, the attitude of management with regard to authorization, hierarchic structure within the organization (Efil, 1999: 249).

Individual Autonomy: These are the attitudes of managers against their workers. If managers have the need to use authority in a high level, show a inflexibility in the traditional behavior patterns and centralize the authority, then this organization structure has an autocratic management approach (Daft and Marcic, 1998: 424).

Organizational Support: Workers would have the need to follow innovations and developments. Organizations may provide support for this need by enabling them to participate to in service and out service trainings (Yıldız and Ardıç, 2002: 8).

Organizational Identity: The degree of workers' internalization of organization and identification with their coworkers are indicative of organizational identity. If workers feel close to the organization and internalize its activities, they would be talking very positively about their workplace everywhere (Ertekin, 1978: 67).

Organizational Justice: The most important aspect workers expect from their managers in a workplace is that they should be honest and just. Unjust practices of managers in a workplace could disincite workers from the organization. Therefore, practices of valuing personnel and rewarding accordingly should be constantly applied in an organization (Börü, 2001: 549).

Tolerance in Conflict: Conflicts arise all the time for various reasons in every organization structure which includes human. Most of the time, we think of negativities when we think of conflicts. But conflict benefits organizations provided that it is in a certain degree (Ceylan et al., 2000: 40).

Encouragement to Undertake Risk: Every innovation or new idea means risk. Organizations which undertake risks are the ones to create differences by being open to the new. Organization culture affects workers' attitudes in undertaking risks by using its encouraging or inhibiting influence (Sargut, 2001: 95).

Organizational Conflict

Conflict as a natural consequence of social life is an inevitable product of differences between individuals and groups; conflict is possible due to culture and life style differences wherever there is human (Özkalp and Kirel, 2001: 396). Therefore, conflict is a concept that draws attention of not only management or organization psychology but also is included in many research fields such as sociology, anthropology, economy (Asunakutlu and Safran 2004: 27).

Majority of conflicts experienced between individuals arise from properties of social or formal structures individuals belong. Structural properties that could cause organizational conflicts are (Eren, 2000: 379; Stoner, 1978: 348; Kılınc, 1985: 114; Robbins, 2001: 387; Newstorm and Davis, 1993: 226–228; Tuğlu, 1996: 29); statues and power, bureaucratic reasons, participation to management, social, rewarding system that is not just, manager not being acknowledged in the workplace, hierarchic structural order, functional dependency, role uncertainty, low performance, organizational change, organization politics, organization culture and organization climate etc.

Kinds of Organizational Conflict

Individual Conflicts: It arises in conditions where individual is not certain of what is expected from him/her or is expected more than he/she is capable of and creates discomfort and stress for individual (Ertürk, 2000: 219).

Interpersonal Conflicts: It is dispute of two or more individuals on various issues. Most important reasons for this are the differences of purpose, methods, information, data and value judgment between individuals (Akut et al., 2002: 405).

Group Conflicts: In general, these are considered as interpersonal conflicts. Nevertheless, in group conflicts, there is the presence of unity of a group and a group idea differing from interpersonal conflicts. It is suggested that group behaviors are different than individual behaviors, so group dynamics have an interesting role in conflicts; different organizations being in conflict as groups could cause lack of coordination and work inefficiency within the organization (Callahan and Fleenor, 1988: 202; Johnson and Johnson, 1994: 4–20; Rahim, 1992: 101).

Group Identity Conflicts: Group identity conflicts are mostly due to disputes arising between worker groups who work under the same department manager (Eren, 2000: 535).

Correlation of Organization Culture and Intra-organizational Conflict

In a globalizing world, fast developing economy and multinational companies as well as strategic mergers brought along variety of workers in terms of background, education, ethnic origin and culture; labor force becomes more and more heterogeneous every day. This heterogeneity shows itself as an important increase in numbers of potential issues, misunderstandings and tensions and conflicts between workers. It also brings along work load and work stress. Therefore, conflict management becomes more and more important for management discipline everyday. Culture constitutes one of the main sources of conflict now (Değirmenci, 2008: 42).

The process of conflict is influenced by culture significantly. The role of culture in interpersonal interactions has been discussed many times in literature. As studies of Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) refer, Leung and others analyze the role of responsibility attributes as well as procedural justice, equity and properties in the choice of conflict strategy. Every interaction between individuals, include power ranges too, even to a degree. Level and manifestation of this power changes from culture to culture and it determines not only the nature of process of conflict but also adopted conflict management strategies (Holt and DeVore, 2005: 168).

In organizations which have a flexible organization culture, enough freedom would be present to enable members to communicate to each other easily. The reason of conflict between employer and employee is especially the non-humanistic character of behavior. The reason for this non-humanistic behavior is the fears of managers. Managers' lack of self-confidence due to personal reasons may cause them to act in a way that is not within the frame of ethical rules. In addition to all these, in workplace, personnel in argument with other individuals are inclined to communicate about this situation. The experienced difficulty could be resolved before getting out of hand by adopting behaviors such as trying to find a common ground or empathy (Yirik, 2011:84).

It is predicted that organizations dominated by a flexible culture which tolerates faults, encourages workers to take responsibility, communicate and compete by working on new ideas, would adopt reconciliation and problem solving strategies in conflict management and would stay away from strategies of avoidance, mollification and use of power (Santaro and Gopalakrishnan, 2000: 304).

Aim and Importance of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyze the effect of organizational culture a five star hotel organization has on organizational conflict. Since tourism sector has a labor-intense structure, many problems could arise if necessary measures are not taken. The organization culture belonging to hospitality businesses could create conflicts between employees due to differences in culture. Planning of an organizational culture independent from than that of employees while forming organizational culture could triggers these negative results. Managements should take into account employee profile too when forming organizational cultures. Considering negativities direct effects on quality and efficiency in tourism sector which has a very sensitive balance, businesses need to determine the possible conflicts that organizational culture could give rise to between employees and develop measures to prevent these. From this perspective, it is very important to determine the effects of organizational culture on organizational conflict in hospitality businesses.

The universe of this study is consisted of employees of five star "x" hotel business which operates in tourism sector in Antalya. Study has been conducted just on one company because every company has its own unique culture. The results obtained are thought to provide important tips for the workers and managers of tourism sector.

Method of Study

In this study, literature has been reviewed and then, secondary data were analyzed. Study's theoretical frame has been determined based on these information and findings. Then, starting from this theoretical frame, an empirical study has been carried out. Field survey has been conducted in a five star hotel business in Antalya. "x" business which stays open after the high season was operating during November 2011 in which survey was conducted and its employees have been given survey forms. Business consisted of 350 employees in total. 232 survey forms were returned from all that has been distributed. 6 of these forms were considered invalid. 226 survey forms which were considered valid to be taken for evaluation of survey, consist more than 60% of employees which constituted the study's universe. This number is at an adequate level for statistical analyses.

Questionnaire method has been used in field study as data collection tool and 5 point Likert type scales have been used in survey (1: Definitely agree, 5: Definitely do not agree). First section of questionnaire consists of questions related to demographic properties of employees. Questions concerning demographic properties are related to data such as gender, marital status, education level, term of employment in sector, term of employment in business, department of work, monthly income.

Organization culture scale that could be found in second section of questionnaire is taken from Çelik's (2007) doctoral dissertation. This scale which consists of 26 questions is used to measure seven dimensions of organization culture (individual autonomy, organizational structure, organizational support, organizational identity, organizational justice, tolerance in conflict, encouragement to undertake risk). Reliability analyses have been conducted on the scale and Organization Culture Scale alpha coefficient has been calculated as 0.928.

Organizational conflict scale which can be found in the third and the last section of the study has been taken from "Organizational Conflict Inventory I" found in Rahim's (1983) study. Reliability of the scale has been tested and alpha coefficient is calculated as 0.960. Rahim's scale is observed to be used in many studies both domestic and international in the field of organizational conflict in recent years. Organizational conflict has been analyzed in three dimensions. First dimension is personal conflict, second dimension is group conflict, and third dimension is group identity conflict. SPSS 16.0 for Windows package software has been utilized in all the analyses of data collected during survey.

Questions and Hypothesis of the Study

The questions to be answered in the study and main hypothesis of the study may be summarized as below.

Is there a relation between personal conflict and organization culture?

Is there a relation between group conflict and organization culture?

Is there a relation between group identity conflict and organization culture?

In this direction, main hypothesis of the study has been determined as "there is a relation between dimensions of organization culture and dimensions of organizational conflict."

Findings of Study and Interpretations

We can summarize socio-demographic properties of organization employees in the scope of the study as follows. Of 226 employees in total, 45% is female, 55% is male; education level 32% primary school, 43% secondary school and 25% higher education; marital status 54% single, 46% married. It is established that; employees' terms of employment in tourism sector 21% is 1–3 years, 54% is 4–6 years, 4% is 7–9 years and 21% is 9 years and above; terms of employment in the same firm 45% is less than 1 year, 55% is 1–3 years; monthly average income, 10% is 0–750 TL, 42% is 751–1000 TL, 41% is 1001–2000 TL and 7% is 2000 TL and more; department of work, 20% is housekeeping, 18% front desk, 21% service and bar, 19% kitchen, 13% administrative departments and 9% security.

Factor Analyses

In the study, data related to organizational culture and organizational conflict scales have been subjected to factor analyses in order to enable a more accurate determination of variables.

Organizational Culture Scale Factor Analysis

Before factor analysis with regard to organization culture scale, the compliance of scale consisting of 26 questions to factor analysis has been checked. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling sufficiency has proven to be 0.786. This value shows that data is suitable for factor analysis. Collected data have been subjected to factor analysis according to varimax rotation through principal component method. Reliability analysis which was performed of the dimensions obtained in factor analysis conducted with 26 variables resulted in reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of 0.928. In this way 6 factors in total have been obtained which have eigenvalues above 1 and factor loads above 0.40. Obtained 6 factors are respectively: Organizational structure and identity, individual autonomy, encouragement to undertake risk, organizational support,

organizational justice and tolerance in conflict. 6 factors obtained, explain 85.841% of total variance. Bartlett test value has proven to be 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), and this shows that correlation between variables is meaningful.

Organizational Conflict Scale Factor Analysis

Before factor analysis with regard to organizational conflict scale, the compliance of scale consisting of 21 questions to factor analysis has been checked. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling sufficiency has proven to be 0.817. This value shows that data is suitable for factor analysis. Collected data have been subjected to factor analysis according to varimax rotation through principal component method. 3 factors have been obtained in the first analysis performed. Reliability analysis which was performed of the dimensions obtained in factor analysis conducted with 20 variables resulted in reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of 0.960. In this way 3 factors in total have been obtained which have eigenvalues above 1 and factor loads above 0.40. Obtained 3 factors are respectively: Personal conflict, group conflict and group identity conflict. 3 factors obtained, explain 85.361% of total variance. Bartlett test value has proven to be 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), and this shows that correlation between variables is meaningful.

“Correlation” Analyses Regarding Organizational Culture and Organizational Conflict Factors

When looked at Table 1. Correlation analysis is utilized when a study concerning direction and force of relation between two variables is desired to be performed. Table 5 shows correlation matrix of factors obtained on organization culture. With regard to organizational structure and identity, determined correlations with individual autonomy ($r = .400$), encouragement to undertake risk ($r = .425$) and tolerance in conflict ($r = .473$) were positive, significant and slightly weak; but no correlation has been determined with organizational justice. With regard to individual autonomy, determined correlations with encouragement to undertake risk ($r = .275$) and with organizational support ($r = .267$) were positive, significant and weak; correlation with tolerance in conflict ($r = .514$) was positive, significant and slightly strong. There were no significant correlation between individual autonomy and organizational justice. With regard to encouragement to undertake risk, determined correlation with organizational support ($r = .353$) was positive, significant and relatively weak; with tolerance in conflict ($r = .481$) was positive, significant and slightly weak; with organizational justice there were no significant correlation. Between organizational support and tolerance in conflict ($r = .412$) positive, significant and slightly weak correlation was determined. There were no significant correlation between organizational justice and organizational support, and tolerance in conflict and organizational justice.

Correlation Analysis of Organizational Conflict Factors

When looked at Table 2. When the relations between organizational conflict dimensions are analyzed, positive and significant relations have been found between all dimensions. Correlation between personal conflict and group conflict ($r = .694$) was positive, significant and relatively strong; correlation between personal conflict and group identity ($r = .334$) was positive, significant and relatively weak and finally correlation between group conflict and group identity conflict dimensions ($r = .547$) was positive, significant and slightly strong.

When correlation analysis results are examined it is seen that correlation coefficient numbers are not above 0.85. This also shows that the study has discrimination validity. By this way, after structural validity has been proved by factor analysis, discrimination validity is proven by correlation analysis.

“Regression” Analysis Results Concerning Hypothesis

Regression analyses have been performed to determine the influence of employees' organization cultures on personal conflicts. The result of anova analysis aimed at determining whether or not model is statistically meaningful, was $F = 29.899$, $p = 0.000$ and this value has been found to be meaningful statistically at the significant level of 1%. R^2 value concerning analysis has been found to be 0.450. In other words; approximately 45% of personal conflict variable is explained by organizational culture variables ($R = .671$, $R^2 = .450$, $P < 0.01$). This rate shows that employees' organizational cultures have a relatively strong influence on personal conflicts. When we look at the results with regard to Durbin-Watson test, the value is determined as 2.082 in the study. Durbin-Watson value indicates that there is no autocorrelation in the model if it is in the range of 1.5-2.5.

Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Organization Culture Factors Influencing Personal Conflict

When looked at Table 3, it is observed that employees' organization culture's most influential factor on personal conflicts is “organizational structure and climate.” According to regression coefficient (β) which is standardized to test the predictive power of independent variables concerning personal conflicts; organizational structure and climate, encouragement to undertake risk and organizational support have been observed to be meaningfully predictive ($p < 0.01$). Individual autonomy,

organizational justice and tolerance in conflict have been determined as having no statistically meaningful influence on personal conflict.

Another effective factor on personal conflict is “organizational support.” Encouragement to undertake risk, on the other hand, has a counter wise and low relation with personal conflict.

Regression analyses have been performed to determine the influence of employees' organization cultures on group conflicts. The result of anova analysis aimed at determining whether or not model is statistically meaningful, was $F=20.466$, $p=0.000$ and this value has been found to be meaningful statistically at the significant level of 1%. R^2 value concerning analysis has been found to be 0.359. In other words; approximately 36% of group conflict variable is explained by organizational culture variables ($R=.599$, $R^2=.359$, $P<0.01$). This rate shows that employees' organizational cultures have an influence on group conflicts, although not a strong one. When we look at the results with regard to Durbin-Watson test, the value is determined as 2.481 in the study. Durbin-Watson value indicates that there is no autocorrelation in the model if it is in the range of 1.5-2.5.

Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Organization Culture Factors Influencing Group Conflict

When looked at Table 4, it is observed that employees' organization culture's most influential factor on group conflicts is “organizational structure and climate.” According to regression coefficient (β) which is standardized to test the predictive power of independent variables concerning personal conflicts; organizational structure and climate, organizational support and tolerance in conflict have been observed to be meaningfully predictive ($p<0.01$). Individual autonomy, encouragement to undertake risk and organizational justice, on the other hand, have been found to have no statistically meaningful influence on group conflict.

Another effective factor on personal conflict is “organizational support.” Tolerance in conflict, on the other hand, has a counter wise and low relation with group conflict. Regression analyses have been performed to determine the influence of employees' organization cultures on group identity conflicts. The result of anova analysis aimed at determining whether or not model is statistically meaningful at the level of 1%, was $F=24.830$, $p=0.000$ and this value has been found to be meaningful statistically at the significant. R^2 value concerning analysis has been found to be 0.405. In other words; approximately 40% of group identity conflict variable is explained by organizational culture variables ($R=.636$, $R^2=.405$, $P<0.01$). This rate shows that employees' organizational cultures have a relatively strong influence on group identity conflicts. When we look at the results with regard to Durbin-Watson test, the value is determined as 1.662 in the study. Durbin-Watson value indicates that there is no autocorrelation in the model if it is in the range of 1.5-2.5.

Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Organization Culture Factors Influencing Group Identity Conflict

When looked at Table 5, it is observed that employees' organization culture's most influential factor on group identity conflicts is “organizational support.” According to regression coefficient (β) which is standardized to test the predictive power of independent variables concerning personal conflicts; organizational support and individual autonomy have been observed to be meaningfully predictive ($p<0.01$). Organizational structure and climate, encouragement to undertake risk, organizational justice and tolerance in conflict have been determined as having no statistically meaningful influence on group identity conflict. Another slightly influential factor on group identity conflict is individual autonomy. Individual autonomy has a low level influence on group identity conflict but not as much as organizational support.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As the subject of this study, five star hotel sector addresses to both national and international markets. It is multinational and multicultural due to employee profile and organization structures of hotels. In the hotel business analyzed within the scope of this study, leading dimension of organization culture to cause conflict is organizational support.

When all the dimensions of organizational conflict have been evaluated, it is observed that organization culture has 45% of influence on personal conflict, 36% of influence on group conflict and 40% of influence on group identity conflict. According to this result, the dimension in which organizational conflict is experienced the most is personal conflict. But we still observe that organization culture is influential on all dimensions of conflict in levels that are close to each other.

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Tables

Table 1. Correlation Analysis of Organization Culture Factors

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Organizational Structure and Identity	1					
2. Individual Autonomy	,400**	1				
3. Encouragement to Undertake Risk	,517**	,275**	1			
4. Organizational Support	,425**	,267**	,353**	1		
5. Organizational Justice	-,124	,088	-,015	,082	1	
6. Tolerance in Conflict	,473**	,514**	,481*	,412**	,013	1

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Table 2. Correlation Analysis of Organizational Conflict Factors

Dimensions	1	2	3
1- Personal Conflict	1		
2- Group Conflict	,694**	1	
3- Group Identity Conflict	,334**	,547**	1

** p<0.01

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Organization Culture Factors Influencing Personal Conflict

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Beta Value	T Value	P Value
Individual Conflict	Organizational Structure and Climate	,506	7,694	,000**
	Individual Autonomy	,104	1,724	,086
	Encouragement to Undertake Risk	-,174	-2,805	,005**
	Organizational Support	,297	5,105	,000**
	Organizational Justice	-,063	-1,224	,222
	Tolerance in Conflict	,014	,204	,839

** p<0.01

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Organization Culture Factors Influencing Group Conflict

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Beta Value	T Value	P Value
Group Conflict	Organizational Structure and Climate	, 401	5, 649	, 000**
	Individual Autonomy	, 122	1, 868	, 063
	Encouragement to Undertake Risk	-, 001	-, 015	, 988
	Organizational Support	, 338	5, 386	, 000**
	Organizational Justice	, 011	, 198	, 843
	Tolerance in Conflict	-, 174	-2, 423	, 016*

* p<0.05

** p<0.01

Table 5. Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Organization Culture Factors Influencing Group Identity Conflict

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Beta Value	T Value	P Value
Group Identity Conflict	Organizational Structure and Climate	, 012	, 173	, 863
	Individual Autonomy	, 204	3, 257	, 001**
	Encouragement to Undertake Risk	-, 064	-, 999	, 319
	Organizational Support	, 577	9, 530	, 000**
	Organizational Justice	, 087	1, 613	, 108
	Tolerance in Conflict	-, 049	-, 711	, 478

** p<0.01