

AN ANALYSIS ON COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLE IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

Ph.D. Lecturer, Maria-Elena GHEORDUNESCU

"Constantin Brancoveanu" Pitesti, Faculty of Management Marketing in Economic Affairs
Rm. Valcea, psihologmg@yahoo.com

Abstract: Considered as a real psychosocial phenomenon, which might involve intra and intersubjective oppositions and confrontations, the organizational conflict highlights a series of characteristics and properties that may be objective, which can be analyzed and evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively. The communication style of a business organization refers to the set of characteristics that may manifest in the communication process of said enterprise. This whole process involves both the way of receiving and decoding a message, while engaged in communication, and the way of processing and interpreting it. These characteristics of speech and communication are closely related to the uniqueness and individuality of both the transmitter and receiver, being an outlet of self-expression. Through the data presented, this paper aims to perform an analysis on the communication style of three distinct business managers and the way they may reach a conflict resolution within their organization. Quantitative methods were used as the primary research method.

Keywords: communication style, conflict, style of conflict resolution, managers.

JEL classification: M21.

1. Introduction

The communication style refers to the set of particularities characteristic to a person in the act of communication. The style designates: the specific ways of receiving / decoding a message; personal ways of processing / interpreting messages; specific ways of expressing an answer and feedback. All these derive from the uniqueness and individuality of the human being, being the expression of the human personality.

The concept of a style of communication can be applied only where the formal, generally valid characteristics of the communicative act can be associated with certain personal ways of receiving, processing, or sending messages. The modes of communication formed during an individual's development can be stable and characteristic. They can also be relatively independent of the communicative content conveyed and of the concrete context in which they operate (see people who communicate "elegantly" in any circumstance / people who communicate vulgarly, aggressively, in any situation).

The communication style is primarily an indicator of how a person structures their world of social relationships. Secondly, the communication style is an indicator of the way information is processed and transformed into behavioral facts and into practical, social, and evaluative judgments, etc.

The communication style is fundamentally determined by three elements:

1. the attitudes of the person, as a constant way of placing themselves in a balance between their social life, peers, and self.
2. learned communication models - assertive, non-assertive, aggressive (with their passive-aggressive variant), manipulative.
3. temperament, as a type of nerve cell reactivity.

Thus, according to Stroe Marcus¹, communication styles can be non-assertive (passive), aggressive, assertive and manipulative.

¹ Romanian psychologist with important contributions in the study of the empathic phenomenon

The personal effort to solve conflicts is based on the research done by Thomas and Kilmann. Researchers Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann have identified five general styles of conflict management, resulting from the combination of two fundamental dimensions: concern for the other or cooperation and concern for the self or assertiveness. The five main conflict resolution strategies are: competition, collaboration, compromise, de-escalation, and avoidance. Avoidance - Turtle; Competition - Shark; De-escalation - Chameleon; Compromise - Fox; Collaboration - Owl.

2. Research methodology

The purpose of this research is to identify the style of communication of a manager and how they might behave with their employees. The research methods used were: Questionnaire S.C. Communication style analysis (Stroe Marcus) and the Thomas-Killman Questionnaire on behavior in conflict situations.

In the current context, the following hypothesis has been formulated: We assume that the desired style of communication influences the desired way of solving conflicts.

The main objective of the research is to highlight the communication style of the analyzed people, as well as their personal style of conflict resolution.

The paper has been written as an exploratory research that took place in February 2020 and uses as the main research method the quantitative methods, more precisely the S.C. Communication style analysis (Stroe Marcus) and the Thomas-Killman Questionnaire on Behavior in Conflict Situations.

The S.C. Questionnaire - An analysis of the communication style (Stroe Marcus) includes 60 questions, which can be answered with True or False.

The Thomas-Killman questionnaire on behavior in conflict situations includes a number of 35 questions, which can be answered thus: 5 points - very common; 4 points - frequently; 3 points - sometimes; 2 points - rarely; 1 point - never.

This paper tries to demonstrate that the way of solving conflicts depends on the style of communication and the behavior that managers have when solving conflict situations.

3. Data analysis and research results

In order to highlight the communication style within an organization, as well as the conflict resolution techniques, we chose to research three Heads of Office with different jobs: the head of a Communication Office; the head of an IT Office and the head of an Internal Audit Office.

For confidentiality of personal data, we have made the following change:

A = Head of the Communication Office

B = head of the IT Office

C = Head of the Internal Audit Office

The Head of the Communication Office is male, 38 years old and has been working for 16 years.

The Head of the IT Office B is male, 36 years old and has been working for 14 years.

The head of the Internal Audit Office is male, 48 years old and has been working for 24 years.

The subjects were informed that their responses would form the basis of a confidential study used in a profile research.

The subjects have been asked to answer all the questions and avoid neutral answers as much as possible. The questionnaire was given to the participants at their workplace. They were instructed to answer the questions honestly.

After completion, the questionnaires have been collected, and the results interpreted through reference to the standard of the applied questionnaire.

Table no.1. Scores obtained by the Head of Office A-Communication

	Non-assertive style	Aggressive style	Manipulative style	Assertive style
Head of Office A	3	2	4	12

Source: created by the author based on the gathered information

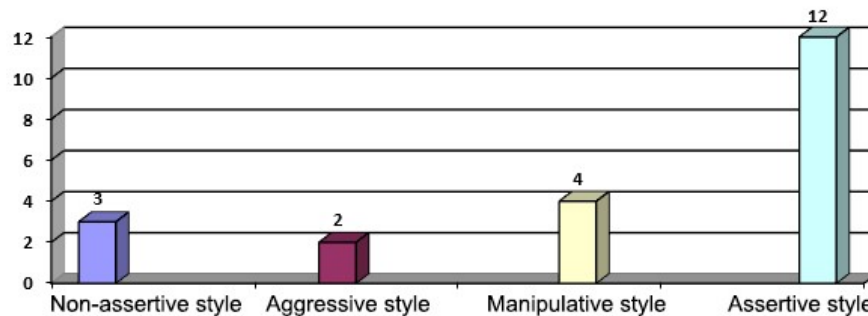


Chart no. 1. Communication style of Head of Office A-Communication

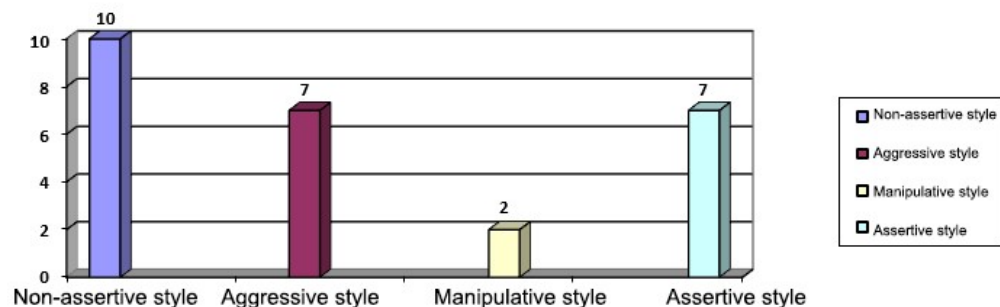
Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

We note that, according to table no. 1 and chart no. 1, the behavior of Head of Office A can be matched to an assertive communication style, which encompasses the capacity for self-affirmation, for an honest, direct and clear expression of one's opinions and rights without aggression and without harming the others and for the ability to pursue one's own interests without violating the needs of others. The person knows how to listen and is willing to understand, knows how to be themselves (without simulations and "role-playing games") and to rely on themselves. It is the best attitude because it allows them to achieve their goals without provoking the resentment of others. It might even lead to gaining the sympathy of others.

Table no.2. Scores obtained by the Head of IT Office B

	Non-assertive style	Aggressive style	Manipulative style	Assertive style
Head of Office B	10	2	7	7

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered



Graph no.2. Communication style of the Head of IT Office B

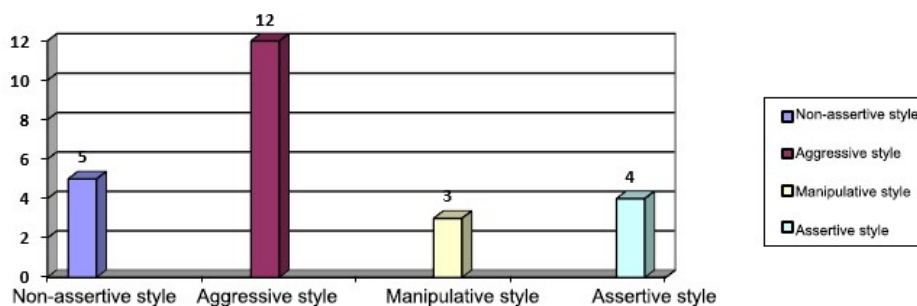
Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

According to table no. 2 and graph no.2 the communication style of the head of Office B is non-assertive (a passive attitude) - they have the tendency to hide, to run rather than face people. It can be manifested by an excess of kindness and conciliation, by the tendency to postpone making decisions and often by the impossibility of making them, accompanied by giving others the right to make decisions. At the root of these manifestations is an unhealthy fear of being judged by others, as well as the intense anger felt in the event of failure - in order to avoid them, the individual prefers to submit to the judgement of others. This can also include a feeling of resentment and smoldering anger.

Table no.3. Scores obtained by the Head of the Internal Audit Office C

	Non-assertive style	Aggressive style	Manipulative style	Assertive style
Head of Office C	5	12	3	4

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered



Graph no.3. Communication style of the Head of the Internal Audit OfficeC

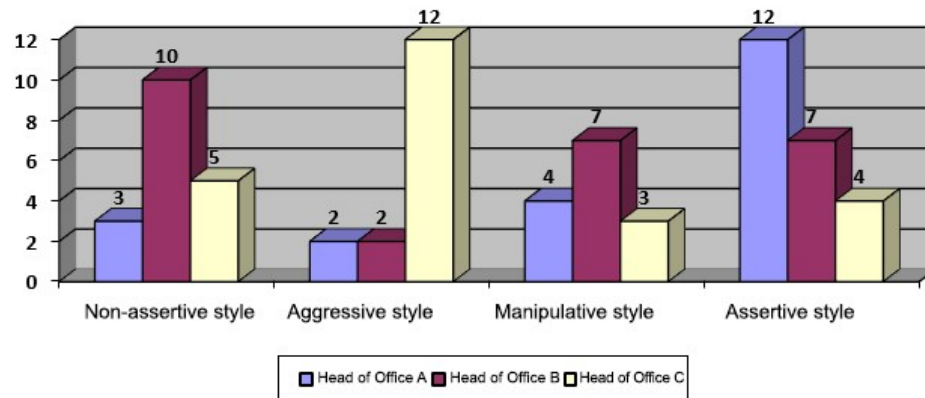
Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

According to table no. 3 and graph no.3 the communication style of the head of the Internal Audit Office - C, is an aggressive style, which involves the tendency to always be at the front, to have the last word, to impose oneself with any price, even at the cost of harming and upsetting others. To dominate by any means necessary, to use fear, contradiction, humiliation, compromising others, shocking attitudes and behaviors, revenge and taking excessive risks. This attitude amplifies the aggression and antipathy of employees and leads to the feeling of not being loved, respected or appreciated for the manager in question, making them become even more aggressive - a real vicious circle of aggression being created.

Table no.4. The scores obtained by the three managers

	Non-assertive style	Aggressive style	Manipulative style	Assertive style
Head of Office Communication A	3	2	4	12
Head of IT Office B	10	2	7	7
Head of Internal Audit Office C	5	12	3	4

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered



Graph no.4. Distribution of the 4 communication styles pertaining to the 3 office managers

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

From the table and graphno. 4we observe that the assertive communication style, which is also a desired communication style overall, is used by the head of office A.

We notice that the assertive communication style, which is the most desired style in achieving organizational goals and in solving conflict situations, has been used by the heads of office B and C, but not with happy results.

The non-assertive communication style is used by the head of office B. The other heads of office, A and C, have scored low on this style.

The manipulative style of communication is also practiced by the head of office B. People in this category aim for others to do what they want, but without involving open confrontation - be it rational, constructive - assertive or conflicting - aggressive; it is more of a matter of waiting for the situation to turn in their favor. Often these people "play various roles", as a sign of insufficient social maturity and a weak, precarious and unsatisfactory social status. The problem of manipulative individuals is that they seek to hide their weakness, to not be discovered, as they are afraid of the judgment of others and of not being marginalized.

The aggressive communication style is practiced by head of office C. Head of office A and B have scored low on this style.

Regarding the investigation of certain behaviors in conflictual situations, following the application of the questionnaire on the use of conflict strategies, the following can be stated.

Table no.5. The scores obtained by the Head of the Communication Office A, regarding conflict resolution strategies

	Avoidance	Competition	De-escalation	Compromise	Collaboration
Head of Office A	27	20	35	26	31

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

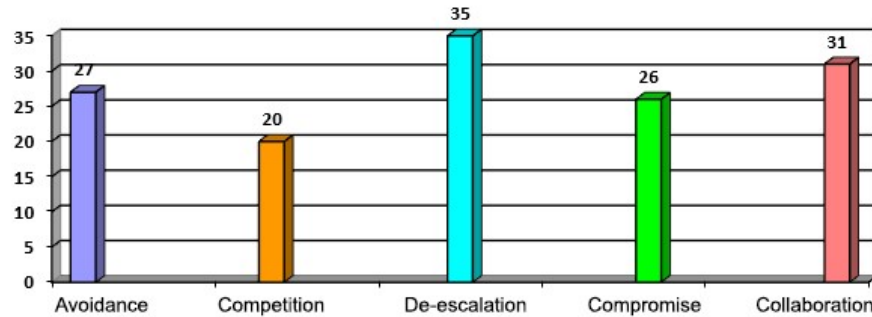


Chart no. 5. The Conflict Resolution Strategy of the Head of the Communication Office A

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

According to table and graph no. 5, we notice that the strategy used by the head of Communication A, regarding the behavior they have in conflict situations is De-escalation (Bear), meaning: I lose, you win. For the bear, interpersonal relationships are very important, while their own goals are of little importance. The bear wants to be liked and accepted by others. They believe that a conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony, and also believe that people cannot argue adversely without damaging relations between them. It is feared that if a conflict continues, someone will suffer, and this might compromise the relationship with that person. They are able to give up personal goals in order to maintain a relationship with someone. The bear says: "I give up my goals and interests and I let you get what you want, just so that you might like me". The bear tries to settle the conflict for fear of endangering the relationship with someone.

Table no.6. The scores obtained by the Head of the IT Office B, regarding conflict resolution strategies

	Avoidance	Competition	De-escalation	Compromise	Collaboration
Head of Office B	17	19	23	30	26

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

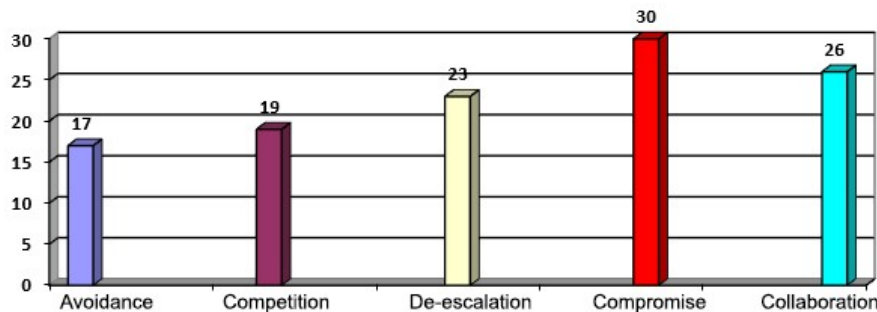


Chart no. 6. Conflict Strategy - Head of Office B

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

According to table and graph no.6, we notice that the strategy used by the Head of the IT Office B, regarding the behavior they have in conflict situations is Compromise - Fox, meaning: You bend down, I bend down. The fox is equally interested in their personal

goals as well as their relationships with others. The fox tends to compromise: they partially give up their goals, convincing the other side to do the same. In a conflict situation, the fox's solution will be that each involved party must win something - the middle ground between two extremes. They are able to partially give up their goals and relationships in order to reach an agreement.

Table no.7. Scores obtained by the Head of the Internal Audit Office C, regarding conflict resolution strategies

	Avoidance	Competition	De-escalation	Compromise	Collaboration
Head of Office B	21	23	23	22	27

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

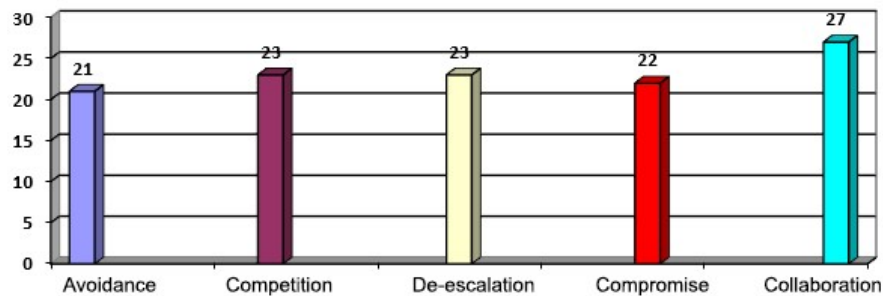


Chart no. 7. Conflict Strategy - Head of Office C

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

According to table and graph no. 7, we notice that the strategy used by the head of the Internal Audit office C, in conflict situations is Collaboration - Owl, meaning: I win, you win. The owl values highly both personal goals and interpersonal relationships. They see conflicts as problems that need to be solved and are looking for solutions that satisfy both their own interests and those of the opposing camp. The owl sees the conflict as a method of improving relations, by reducing the tension between two people. They try to start a discussion in order to identify the conflict itself as the problem. By looking for solutions that satisfy both parties, the owl maintains relations. The owl is not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have been fully resolved.

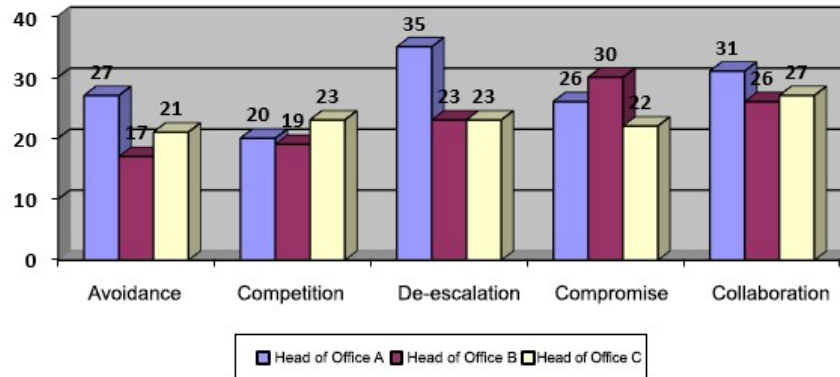


Chart no. 8. Conflict Strategy - Heads of Office A, B, C

Source: created by the author based on the information gathered

Graph no.8. shows us the choices of each leader in the conflict resolution strategy. Thus, head of office A chose de-escalation, head of office B chose compromise, head of office C chose collaboration.

In conclusion, head of office A chose an assertive communication style and their way to solve conflicts is De-escalation. Head of Office B chose the non-assertive style of communication and their way to solve conflicts is Compromise. Head of Office C has an aggressive communication style and their strategy for solving conflicts is Collaboration.

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