

**A PROPOSED METHODOLOGY OF RESOLVING CONFLICTS
WITHIN MULTICULTURAL TEAMS IN INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES**

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the presented paper is to clarify the need of resolving conflicts within multicultural teams in industrial enterprises, increasing awareness of multiculturalism in Slovakia as necessary part of our life and to suggest the structure of the dissertation thesis. The author bases the study on the assumption that extensively developed intercultural relationships lead to mutual understanding between people and consequently to less interpersonal conflicts. The paper is divided into two main chapters. The first one deals with the theoretical bases of the given issue, to clarify the concept of multiculturalism. The emphasis is primarily on the issue of conflict resolution within multicultural teams in industrial enterprises. The second one consists of reasoning and continuity of the paper, brief characteristics, goals, hypotheses, theses and benefits valuation.

KEY WORDS

globalization, multicultural, conflict, team, multicultural team

INTRODUCTION

In the introduction, the authors explain the importance of increased attention and interest in the area of multiculturalism. Industrial enterprises nowadays are increasingly aware of this issue as they become more open to different cultures and they are confronted with intensive international migration and previously isolated societies become more pluralistic. As a result of these processes, individuals are more frequently in contact with members of different cultures. "Think globally, act locally" has become a slogan for our society. This way of thinking and acting was transferred to almost all areas of life (economic, political and educational) and it is applied in the context of schools, societies and enterprises as well. The ability to understand and accept cultural diversity is becoming essential in the ordinary working environment. Enterprises supporting the knowledge improvement of their own

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employees have understood that a friendly working environment leads to increased motivation, consequently reflected in their performance. The training focused on skills development in this area can help to reduce interpersonal misunderstandings, bring new ways of conflict resolution and harmony in the workplace and thereby also increase productivity. Furthermore, it teaches us to be tolerant towards others, their habits, culture and history. "Strangers" can be a source of experience for us and they can enrich our personal lives. Discussion of the issues surrounding multiculturalism and also the identification of sustainable key performance parameters within multicultural work environments can contribute to more effective conflict resolution in the workplace and promote awareness towards the tolerant coexistence and social cohesion.

According to systems theory can not fully understand anything in isolation, but everything must be seen as a dynamic and multi-layered system. Everything is in conjunction, the functioning of the system consists of many simultaneous and mutually dependent elements. The system is always more than the mere sum of its individual parts. If we accept this interpretation of the world, some traditional and sacred concepts soon lose their meaning. If everything is judged in terms of global, interconnected system, where is then the place for the "national culture", "the interest of the nation", "national history" and of course "nation-state"? "Global" and "local" converge together (Figure 1) [1].

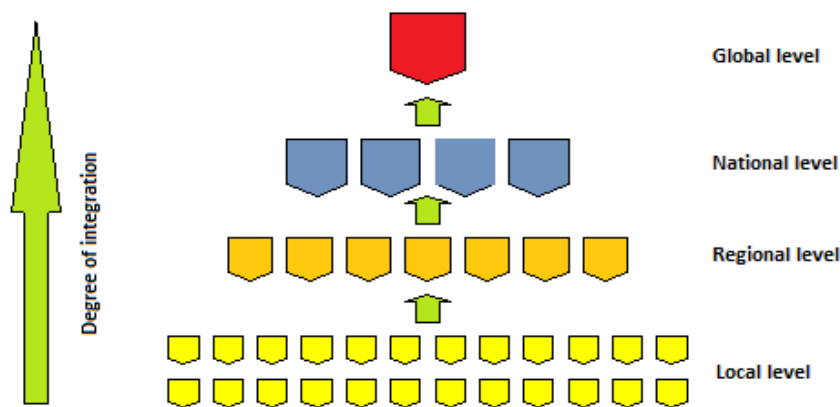


Fig. 1 Integration of society [Own elaboration]

THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE CONFLICT, TEAM AND MULTICULTURALISM

Conflict is a meeting of two or more opposing views, trends, attitudes, interests and so on. The course of this dynamic process depends on the participants of the conflict, their temperament and processing. Research in the field of leadership and management has shown that conflict resolution requires 20 to 21% of the time management. Conflict situations are situations in which the efforts, plans, or the interests of two or more parties appear to be incompatible, inconsistent, contradictory. Conflicts arise at all levels mainly of the existence of different co-operating partners with their own objectives [2].

Conflict in a team is not necessarily seen as a negative phenomenon. Conflict can bring new ideas and new approaches for organizations how to solve problems. It can help detect problems and provide important opportunities for improving communication skills [3].

There is no single accepted definition of what is a conflict. Generally, the conflict is situation where at least two participants seek to obtain the same farm which is not enough or is indivisible. The topic of the paper is the proposal of methodology how to resolve conflict

effectively within multicultural teams in industrial enterprises. Below is Videnová's definition of conflict: "misunderstanding, disagreement, change, failure of two or more conflicting interests, values, goals emerging in all processes of the organization based on of cause of cooperation of various people who working in teams for accomplish the objectives of the team as well as the whole society with limited resources (human, financial, material and so on.). The emphasis is focus on sustainability and terms of constant changes as well."

Conflict as a three-dimensional parameter

In the paper, the conflict is perceived as three-dimensional parameter. It can help to approach the issue closer to reality. However, the authors will resolve conflicts that result from any changes or failures between two or more processes in the enterprises. For example, between work teams in production and logistic. Conflict "C" will be perceived as the function "f" and the three variables: entity "e" time "t" and also place "p". In practice, it can help to find out why, where (p), when (t) and by whom (e) the problem was occurred [4].

$$C = f(e, t, p)$$

The conflict will be perceived as a process that has varying degrees - phase (Figure 2). The individual stages of the conflict can be defined as the appearance of a conflict, disagreement, polarization, separation, destruction and frustration.

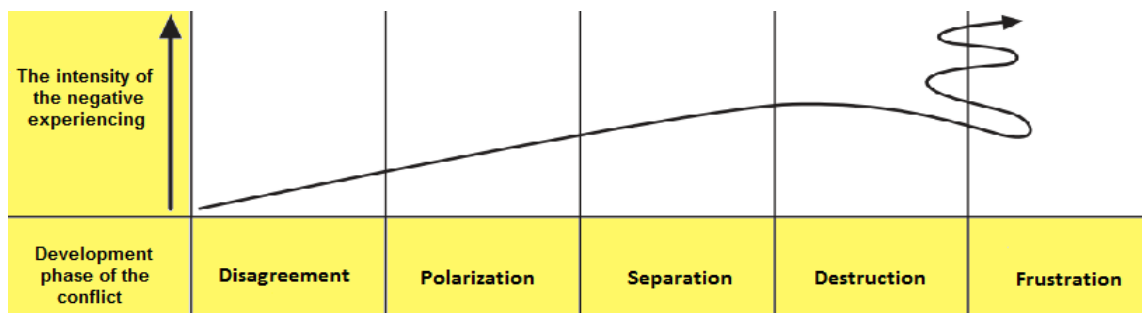


Fig. 2 Development phase of the conflict (Own elaboration according [5])

The authors focused mainly on describing aspects that give rise to misunderstandings in the workplace. Figure 3 shows the area of authors's interest. The authors will examine the reasons of conflicts in multicultural teams in industrial enterprises and why conflicts are appearing. Then it will be explored in the following months through getting information from analysis, questionnaire and interview with experts in this area.

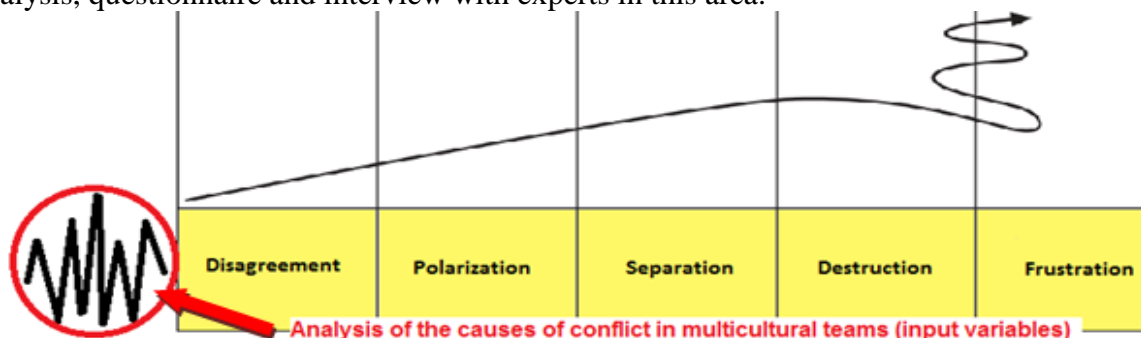


Fig. 3 The main part of research [Videnová]

The most common and easiest way of conflict resolution is no solution. Therefore, the simplest solution of conflicts is to prevent them. Prevent problems in the team is possible with good teamwork and good work of manager [6].

The basis of resolving of each conflict is an agreement. Figure shows the possible ways of resolving conflicts (agreement) by Thomas Kilmanna [7] and [8].

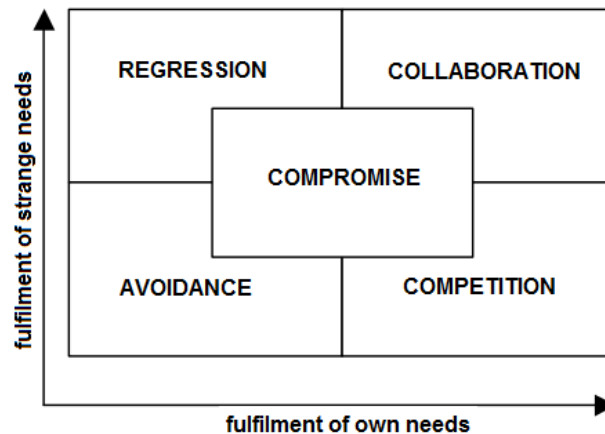


Fig. 4 The basic strategy for resolving conflicts by Thomas Kilmanna [7]

MULTICULTURAL TEAM AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

The main difference between intercultural and multicultural management is defined below. According to the authors, this paper is necessary in order to define and know this concept and differences for understanding this issue:

- Intercultural management is the most dynamic term of these focusing on the interaction between cultures on an interpersonal level, for example researching how the member of one culture is adjusting and acting in another culture.
- Multicultural management research focuses on several (usually more than two) cultures living side by side and deals with basic psychological processes.

Takeuchi defines multicultural team as a group of individual members from different nationalities and cultures with different values and cultures who are working towards the common goal [9].

Videnová created and defined multicultural team as: „ *a group of people cooperating together to achieve the objectives of the group and thus the whole society, where at least two or more members of the group come from different nationalities, have different values and culture. Group of people of one country cooperating with a group of people in another country in order to achieve the objective will regard as multicultural team as well.*

Objectives of this paper are as follows:

The main goal of this paper is the analysis of theoretical knowledge in practical terms of multicultural teams industrial enterprises and create "A proposed methodology of resolving conflict within multicultural teams in industrial enterprises."

1. To achieve the main objective will be supported by the achievement of the the following objectives:

2. Based on the study of literature and other sources to analyze the theoretical background. To elaborate a comprehensive overview of the issues of conflict resolution, teams, multicultural teams, conflict management standards in different cultures.
3. To define and to specify the terms of conflict, a multicultural team and create own definition of these terms.
4. To define existing methods and techniques in conflict resolution. To define and analyze work in multicultural teams and to find relationship between them.
5. To define standards for resolving conflicts in different cultures (the three most common cultures cooperating with industry in Slovakia).
6. To analyze the current situation of conflict resolution and perception of multiculturalism through research in an environment of industrial enterprises.
7. To summarize and evaluate the outcomes obtained by the analysis of the current situation. To evaluate their relationship to the hypothesis and define the problems that occur in these areas.
8. To propose a methodology for resolving conflicts within multicultural teams in industrial enterprises.
9. To assess and evaluate outcomes and applicability of the proposed methodology in practice by the experts.
10. To evaluate the benefits from a theoretical and practical perspective.

In the paper, the authors defined the research presumptions and working hypothesis based on theoretical knowledge. In the future the authors intend to examine the following working hypotheses whose confirmation respectively rebuttal will be based on the results of the evaluation questionnaires and interviews with experts from this area.

Research presumptions:

RQ1: Presume that the majority of industrial enterprises don't have overworked method on resolve conflicts in multicultural teams.

RQ2: Presume that the majority of Slovak industrial enterprises to don't deal with the issue of multiculturalism and multicultural teams.

RQ3: Presume that most enterprises perceive a conflict as a threat not as opportunity.

RQ4: Presume that is a growing number of multicultural teams in Slovakia.

Working hypothesis:

H1: If industrial enterprises will have overworked method to resolve conflicts in multicultural teams thus the overall time needed to resolve conflicts will be reducing.

CONCLUSION

Due of expanding globalization of the working market the more and more industrial enterprises are becoming open for employees from all corners of the world. This phenomenon is mainly due to the lack of skilled labor in local work markets and especially the nature of multinational companies. The authors of this paper focused on theoretical basis of conflict resolution within multicultural teams in industrial enterprises. Using of the literature the authors has summarized the theoretical knowledge of conflict resolution, team and multiculturalism. However, Videnová defined the notion of conflict and team for. The authors had set the main objective and sub-objectives, hypotheses and research presumptions and also pointed out the reasons why it is necessary to resolve this issue. The main objective of this work is to develop theoretical and analytical basis of the field for further processing.

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