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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT AND INTENTION TO QUIT

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**Abstract:**
*The present study examines the relationship between conflict and employees' intention to quit from the organizations. Forty eight bottom level employees from private sector were selected for the purpose of the study as the sample. Sample employee was selected using convenient sampling technique. A self -administrated questionnaire was used to measure the constructs in the model. A hypothesis was formulated as 'the relationship conflict is positively associated with the intention of quit'. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS 21 version. It was found that the relationship conflict among bottom level employees and their intention to quit from the organization is positively associated with each other.*

**Keywords:** *Bottom Level Employees; Intention to Quit; Relationship Conflict.*

## 1. Introduction

Performance of every organization is highly depending on the activities of employees who work in, and work for the organization. Disagreement or Conflict among the employees is inevitable part of organizational life due the different perspective among stakeholders such as managers, employees and etc. their goals are incompatible, influencing individual and organizational processes and outcomes (Hotepo and Asokere, 2010). Conflict is a part of organizational life and may occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups. Conflict is disagreement among people in any organization as they compete for various task related aspects such as getting or accessibility of resources, power to influence others, recognition and security (Hentry, 2009). Goal achievement related conflict is good to the organizations if it is acceptable level. Therefore organizations have to take additional care in resolving conflict and its root. Higher level of conflict among employees brings many problems to organization therefore they try to minimize conflicts at all costs. Researchers and organizations pay their attention on conflict between employer and employees as it affects directly performance and reputation of the organization in many ways whereas conflict among employees has varying effect on performance and other employees' related outcome as per the degree or the level of it. Organizational conflict is categorized mainly into two such as task conflict and relationship conflict. Managers have to consider due to the different consequences of

them. Simons & Peterson (2000) cited Guetzkow and Gyr (1954) in their writings that the authors first identified the distinction between task and relationship conflict in groups. Jehn (1995) pointed out that task conflict, or cognitive conflict, is a perception of disagreements among group members with regard to their task related decisions such as the content of their decisions and involves differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions. Relationship conflict, or emotional conflict, is a perception of interpersonal incompatibility and typically includes tension, annoyance, and animosity among group members due to the interpersonal related issues.

Generally in Sri Lanka, small and medium scale private sector organizations who are engaged with trading and other service operations employed a large number of employees with very lower level educational qualifications. Many of these categories of employees have been doing physical works in the organizations. Due to the autocratic entrepreneurial leadership characteristics of owner-managers, they face various inconveniences in the organizations. On the other hand conflict between employer and employees and among employees causes various problems in the organization and in the life of the employees. Conflict between employer/ managers and employees initially affect work performance and job satisfaction, but in later it causes intention of quit. At the same time, conflict among the employees affects satisfaction and team spirits.

## 1.1. Research Problem

According to the report of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka, youth unemployment rate is 21 percent in fourth quarter of 2016 and unemployment rate was estimated 4.3 percent. A large number of men and women are working in the private sector. Due to the unemployment rate, it is generally believed that whether work environment is good or bad, employees will stay in the organization but it differs from one industry to another. Some authors like Rajapaksha (2015) pointed out that apparel industry face higher labour turnover. Bottom line employees in private sector are working in lower grade manual jobs. They are mostly unskilled and possess lower level education. Due to the various reasons, they pay higher cost to sustain their position in the organization: poor salary and work overload are some of them. Harassment and job insecurity affect their entire work life. Many employees in the unorganized private sector are working without knowing their rights. Therefore it is necessary to analyze that relationship conflict and their consequences among the sample.

Is there any relationship between relationship conflict and intention to quit among bottom line employees in the private sector?

## 1.2. Objectives Of The Study

The study set out the following objectives
- To identify the relationship between role conflict and intention to quit.

## 1.3. Literature Review

Hjertø, & Kuvaas developed to examine four types of intragroup conflict using the 4IC model, the model consist of an emotional person, a cognitive task, an emotional task, and a cognitive

person conflict. The two first conflict types are similar to existing conceptualizations, whereas the two latter represent new dimensions of group conflict. The results of this study challenge common use of emotional and relationship/person conflicts as interchangeable conflict types, and cognitive and task conflict as interchangeable conflict types. Accordingly, the study suggests new ways to understand conflicts in groups.

De Dreu & Van Vianen (2001) found that relationship conflict negatively associate with team functioning (i.e., voice, compliance, helping behavior) and overall team effectiveness.

Mills& Schulz (2009) examined sports clubs and found that relationship conflict was related to both organizational commitment and satisfaction.

Ching-Ting Tien stated that the relationship conflict and process conflict which one has more effect on team learning performance. The study revealed that the relationship conflict has a greater effect on team learning than process conflict.

Simons & Peterson (2000) say relationship conflict leads to poor decision making whereas task conflict usually associated with effective decision making. They further mentioned many of the previous studies demonstrated that relationship conflict in work group is associated with poor performance.

Medina et al (2005) studied 169 employees from Hotels in Spain and different constructs such as task and relationship conflict, wellbeing, job satisfaction, and propensity to leave the job. The results revealed that two types of conflicts have different consequences. Relationship conflict is negatively associated with affective reactions and it has a positive influence on the desire to leave the current job. The interactive effect of relationships and task conflict shows that this interaction contributes substantially to predict the propensity to leave the organizations.

### 1.4. Hypotheses

$H_1$: The relationship conflict is positively associated with intention of quit

### 2. Material and Methods

A survey research design was used in this study to investigate relationship conflict and intention to quit bottom line employees in private sector. A self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect relevant information about role conflict, and intention to quit as well as their personal details. Among the population forty eight of convenient sample size was selected from private sector medium size organization in Jaffna district. The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS version 21. Cronbach Alphas were calculated to examine the internal reliability of each of the scales used in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of conflict and the participants. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was done to identify relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

## 2.1. Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire comprised of four sections. The first section was about demographic factors such as sex, education, experience and the types of business. The second section of the questionnaire measured the levels of conflict, Relationship conflict comprised of ten items, it was developed based on the work of De Dreu and Van Vianen (2001) ;Cox (1998);Friedman et al.(2000).

Table 1: Reliability statistics

| Constructs | Number of items | Cronbach's Alpha (α ) |
|---|---|---|
| Relationship Conflict | 10 | 0.71 |
| Intention to quit | 18 | 0.79 |

## 3. The Results and Discussion

## 3.1. The Participants

The study involved forty eight employees from various types of medium size private organizations. A total of 64 percent were male, and 36 percent female. Participants had different educational levels: Grade 5 -G.C.E (O/L) (52 percent), and G.C.E (A/L) (48.2percent), Work experience ranged from 3 years to 10 years,. The sample employees work from the following types of businesses 30 percent from Textile trading, 12 percent from Hotels, 20 percent from groceries, 16 percent from pharmacies and 22 percent from Hardware trading. In terms of working hours, 64 percent work more than 10 hours per day, 36 percent less than 10 hours

## 3.2. Correlation Coefficient

The correlation coefficient and correlation determinant were used to find out the association between the relationship conflict and the intention to quit.

Table 2: Relationship between relationship conflict and intention to quit

| | | Conflict | Int. Quit |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Conflict** | Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N | 1<br><br>48 | .603**<br>.000<br>48 |
| **Int.Quit** | Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N | .603**<br>.000<br>48 | 1<br><br>48 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

According to the above table the relationship between the relationship conflict and intention of quit from the organization was 0.603. The value of the correlation coefficient clearly expressed there was a moderate positive relationship existing between tested both of the variables.

Therefore the hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand 36% of changes on intention of quit decision was explained by the relationship conflict.

### 4. Conclusions

Relationship conflict between the employer and employees and among employees seemed as common problem among bottom line employees in private sector as their job description and job specification were not clear. Experienced play vital role in conflict resolution because people who have highest experience know how to adjust themselves to confirm their survival in the organization. On the other hand if the conflict is between owners and employees, the owners also give importance to experience. Based on the experience and the nature of the conflict, the decision taken to resolve the conflict also varies. Power distance is high in this sector. Gender discrimination is seemed at higher level.

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