

Course: M.Com Part I

Paper II

Topic: Conflict and Its Levels

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Conflict

Whenever two individuals opine in different ways, a conflict arises. In a layman's language conflict is nothing but a fight either between two individuals or among group members. No two individuals can think alike and there is definitely a difference in their thought process as well as their understanding. Disagreements among individuals lead to conflicts and fights. Conflict arises whenever individuals have different values, opinions, needs, interests and are unable to find a middle way.

Let us understand conflict in a better way

Tim and Joe were working in the same team and were best of friends. One fine day, they were asked to give their inputs on a particular project assigned to them by their superior. There was a major clash in their understanding of the project and both could not agree to each other's

opinions. Tim wanted to execute the project in a particular way which did not go well with Joe. The outcome of the difference in their opinions was a conflict between the two and now both of them just can't stand each other.

The dissimilarity in the interest, thought process, nature and attitude of Tim and Joe gave rise to a conflict between the two.

Conflict is defined as a clash between individuals arising out of a difference in thought process, attitudes, understanding, interests, requirements and even sometimes perceptions. A conflict results in heated arguments, physical abuses and definitely loss of peace and harmony. A conflict can actually change relationships. Friends can become foes as a result of conflict just as in the case of Tim and Joe.

You may experience conflict when working with people with different backgrounds, personalities and perspectives. However, resolving conflict can create powerful opportunities for open discussion, progress and improved relationships. Understanding the types of conflict that you may encounter in the workplace can help you identify the best approach to solving them.

In this article, we discuss the different levels of conflict and provide tips that you can use to manage conflict in your career.

What are the levels of conflict?

The "levels of conflict" are four types of disagreement that affect an individual or group of individuals. Each level comes with its own unique challenges and solutions. The four levels of conflict are:

1. Intrapersonal

2. Interpersonal

3. Intragroup

4. Intergroup

1. Intrapersonal

This level refers to an internal dispute and involves only one individual. This conflict arises out of your own thoughts, emotions, ideas, values and predispositions. It can occur when you are struggling between what you “want to do” and what you “should do.”

Example: Reyna is hiring a new member for her sales team. She interviews several candidates and feels strongly that three would make excellent sales representatives, but she can't decide which one to hire. She delays hiring for a month as she considers the hiring decision.

2. Interpersonal

This conflict occurs between two or more people in a larger organization. It can result from different personalities or differing perspectives on how to accomplish goals. Interpersonal conflict may even occur without one party realizing there was ever conflict.

Example: Tanya has been a digital marketer in her company for four years and always anticipated that she would take the place of the director of marketing when he retired. However, when it was time to fill the role, the company hired another employee who had only been with the company for one year. Tanya was upset with both her former supervisor and her new supervisor, although she never communicated her feelings with either of them.

3. Intragroup

This level of conflict occurs between members of a single group when there are multiple people with varying opinions, backgrounds and experiences working toward a common goal. Even though they may all want to achieve the same goal, they may disagree about how to reach it. Intragroup conflict can also occur when team members have differences in communication styles and personalities.

Example: A company is about to launch a new product, and Josh and Ashley believe that the best marketing strategy is a direct mail campaign to a targeted audience. Beth and Tom believe that social media ads are a better approach. Adam believes that an influencer campaign would have the strongest impact. Because of the disagreement, no campaign strategy is created and the launch date is only two weeks away. Tension is high, and the delays impact other departments.

4. Intergroup

This level of conflict occurs between different groups within a larger organization or those who do not have the same overarching goals.

Example: The marketing team at an e-commerce company is promoting an all-new initiative that should help increase the average order value of every order by 15%. They create a timeline and notify customers of the launch date. However, the web developers in charge of creating and implementing the new functionality on the website are behind on schedule, despite their best efforts. The web developers are frustrated because about unrealistic deadlines and the marketing department is frustrated about delaying the launch.