

Communication Dynamics in Conflict Resolution

Numfor Thaddeus Tanifum¹ and Sundjo Fabien^{1, 2}

¹Kesmonds International University

²University of Bamenda, Higher Teacher Training College, Cameroon

Email address: sohdecamgroup@gmail.com

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Abstract

Communication dynamics in conflict resolution emphasize the importance of transparent and respectful communication to navigate conflicts, reach mutually agreeable solutions and maintain positive relationships throughout the resolution process. The main objective of this paper was to evaluate the intricate ways in which communication influences the resolution process. The specific objectives were to a) identify the causes of conflicts, b) evaluate how ineffective communication results in violent conflict c) implement effective communication skills which are fundamental to successful conflict resolution. To achieve these objectives, use was made of the desk research design. The findings suggested that causes of conflicts are categorized under three main groups namely, political, identity and economic conflicts. It was also found out that language barriers, the lack of clarity of the roles, expectations of the employees, low morals of employees and unresolved conflicts result to escalation and violent conflicts. Summarily, respect, grace, empathy and active listening are central components for effective communication for conflict resolution. As recommendation, we suggested that effective mechanisms should be put in place that can hinder the occurrence, escalation and violence of conflicts. Efforts should also be made at all levels by mediators so that all unresolved conflicts should find a solution to avoid it escalates or becomes violent.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication dynamics in conflict resolution involve the intricate ways in which communication influences the resolution process. Effective communication skills are fundamental to successful conflict resolution, as they help in understanding the underlying causes of disputes, promoting open dialogue, and fostering collaboration among parties involved. Clear and open communication serves as the cornerstone of dispute resolution, enabling parties to express concerns, ideas and expectations in a constructive manner. These dynamics emphasize the importance of transparent and respectful communication to navigate conflicts, reach mutually agreeable solutions and maintain positive relationships throughout the resolution process. Communication should aim to foster collaboration and mutual problem-solving. Encouraging open dialogue, brainstorming solutions together and seeking win-win outcomes can lead to more sustainable resolutions. Techniques like mediation or negotiation can help parties find common ground and reach agreements.

Miscommunication, such as message mistranslation, availability of gaps, and too many noises, can lead to misunderstanding and destructive conflicts. Clear communication with fewer noises and comprehensible codes will lead to understanding and thus develop a constructive conflict resolution process. Prejudice and stereotyping could affect communicative intention, causing a conflict to take a destructive direction. To achieve a constructive conflict resolution, one must ensure that the audience's perspective fits properly in the message design.

Communication dynamics play a crucial role in conflict resolution, serving as a foundational element in understanding how parties interact during disputes. The background to this study involves several key areas: Theoretical Foundations, Conflict Theory: The study of communication dynamics in conflict resolution is often grounded in various conflict theories, such as the Conflict Transformation Theory, which emphasizes the need to change the underlying structures and relationships that perpetuate conflict. This theory posits that effective communication can facilitate understanding and empathy between conflicting parties, ultimately leading to sustainable peace. Human Needs Theory: This framework suggests that conflicts arise when basic human needs such as security, identity, and recognition—are unmet. Effective communication is essential for identifying these needs and addressing them constructively during conflict resolution processes. Contingency Theory: This theory highlights that the effectiveness of conflict management strategies depends on the specific context of the conflict. It suggests that communication strategies must be adaptable to the unique circumstances surrounding each conflict situation.

Empirical Context in case studies, research often draws from empirical case studies that illustrate how communication dynamics influence conflict resolution outcomes. For instance, studies on local peace committees in countries like Kenya and Burundi show how community-based dialogue can effectively resolve disputes by fostering open communication among conflicting parties. The concept of community-based dialogue for conflict resolution is discussed in several of the search results, for example, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) offers courses on designing community-based dialogue, which they describe as "a practical and effective process for advancing conflict transformation and peace building at the community level" Search for Common Ground developed a Community Dialogue Approach (CDA) in Yemen, which is described as "a form of local-level mediation which places community members at the heart of dialogue to resolve local conflicts". Eric Mutisya Kioko (2023) defended a master's thesis from Uppsala University discusses local peace committees in Kenya, though it focuses more on their funding rather than specific examples of dispute resolution. These sources provide context for how community-based dialogue is used in conflict resolution in various settings. Educational Institutions: Conflicts within

educational settings, such as universities, provide a rich context for examining communication strategies. Studies have shown that unresolved conflicts can negatively impact academic performance and institutional goals, highlighting the importance of effective communication in managing these disputes. Conflicts within universities often arise from diverse perspectives among students, faculty, and administration.

Examples of Conflicts and Communication Strategies: University of California, Berkeley - Free Speech Movement. The Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley in the 1960s highlighted tensions between student activism and administrative control. Students protested for their right to free speech and political activism on campus. **Communication Strategies used included:** Open Dialogues: The university administration began to hold open forums where students could express their concerns directly, fostering a culture of dialogue. Policy Revisions: In response to protests, the university revised its policies on free speech, demonstrating a commitment to addressing student grievances through transparent communication.

University of Virginia - Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: At the University of Virginia (UVA), conflicts arose regarding diversity and inclusion efforts, particularly after incidents that sparked national conversations about race. **Communication Strategies:** Feedback Mechanisms: UVA implemented feedback loops through surveys and town hall meetings to gather input from students and faculty on diversity initiatives, ensuring that all voices were heard in the decision-making process. Regular Updates: The University communicated progress on diversity initiatives through newsletters and social media, keeping the community informed and engaged with ongoing efforts. 2023: UVA's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives faced significant criticism amid a broader backlash against such programs in Virginia, particularly under the administration of Governor Glenn Youngkin. The governor has publicly stated that DEI efforts have gone too far, leading to increased scrutiny of institutions like UVA and the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). April 2024: Reports surfaced indicating that UVA's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was under fire for its spending and staffing levels. An organization called Open The Books claimed that UVA had 235 DEI-related employees costing approximately \$20 million annually. The university contested these figures, arguing they were inflated and misrepresented. **Historical Context:** The conflicts are rooted in UVA's complex history, which includes its founding by enslaved laborers and its past support for segregationist policies. This historical legacy continues to shape discussions around diversity and inclusion at the university today.

The university's leadership has employed various communication strategies to address the criticisms: **Defensive Stance:** Both UVA and VMI have defended their DEI initiatives against claims that they promote divisive ideologies or undermine meritocracy. Leaders at these institutions emphasize their commitment to creating inclusive environments while pushing back against mischaracterizations of their programs. **Transparency Efforts:** In response to allegations regarding the size and cost of DEI staff, UVA officials have attempted to clarify the roles of various employees classified under DEI, asserting that many are misidentified in external reports. **Community Engagement:** UVA aims to foster a dialogue about its DEI efforts through various community partnerships and outreach programs designed to engage diverse perspectives within the university.

Leiden University - Internal Communication Challenges: Leiden University faced internal conflicts related to departmental silos that hindered effective collaboration among faculty and staff. **Communication Strategies:** Cross-Department Meetings: The University instituted regular cross-departmental meetings to enhance collaboration and share updates on projects, which helped break down barriers between departments. Internal Newsletters: They developed internal newsletters to keep staff informed about university developments and achievements, promoting a sense of community and shared purpose. **University of North Texas - Student**

Communication Issues: The University of North Texas experienced challenges with student engagement due to ineffective communication channels, leading to confusion about important updates. Communication Strategies: Centralized Communication System: The University adopted a centralized communication platform that streamlined information dissemination across various departments, ensuring that students received timely updates regarding policies and events. Interactive Feedback Tools: They incorporated interactive feedback mechanisms to assess how well students were receiving information and what improvements could be made. Cedarville University response to external controversies, Cedarville University faced scrutiny during political events that involved its faculty members, which led to conflicts regarding the institution's public image. Communication Strategies: Proactive Media Engagement: The University engaged with local media proactively during controversies by issuing statements and organizing events that highlighted its values and community contributions. Crisis Communication Plans: Cedarville developed crisis communication strategies to manage public relations effectively during contentious situations, ensuring consistent messaging across platforms. These examples illustrate how universities have and can effectively navigate conflicts through strategic communication efforts that engage various stakeholders while fostering an inclusive environment Political and Economic Factors: In contexts like Zimbabwe, where political and economic crises intersect with food insecurity, understanding how communication affects stakeholder engagement and dialogue is critical for developing effective conflict resolution strategies.

Significance of Communication Dynamics include: Facilitating Dialogue: Effective communication is essential for facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties, allowing them to express their grievances, needs, and aspirations openly. This process can help de-escalate tensions and foster mutual understanding. Building Trust: Communication dynamics are crucial for building trust among parties involved in a conflict. Trust is often a prerequisite for successful negotiation and resolution efforts, making it imperative to develop communication strategies that promote transparency and honesty. Empowering Stakeholders: Engaging stakeholders through effective communication can empower them to take ownership of the resolution process, leading to more sustainable outcomes. This empowerment is particularly important in community-based settings where local actors play a significant role in peace building efforts. In summary, the study of communication dynamics in conflict resolution encompasses various theoretical frameworks and empirical contexts that highlight its significance in fostering understanding, trust, and effective engagement among conflicting parties. This research area not only contributes to academic discourse but also has practical implications for policymakers and practitioners involved in conflict management and peace building. The main objective of this paper is to evaluate the intricate ways in which communication influences the resolution process. The specific objectives are to 1, identify the causes of conflicts, 2, and evaluate how ineffective communication results in violent conflict, 3, implementing effective communication skills which are fundamental to successful conflict resolution. To achieve these objectives, use was made of the Desk Research design. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section 2, identifying the root causes of conflicts, section 3, evaluate the dangers of ineffective communication in conflict resolution, section 4, successful conflict resolution through effective communication skills, and section 5 concludes the paper.

IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

The root causes of conflicts are complex and multifaceted, involving various factors that contribute to the emergence and escalation of conflicts. Here are some key root causes of conflicts.

Firstly, political conflict is one of the root causes, a prominent political scientist, Harold Lasswell, described politics as who gets what,

when, and how. This type of conflict can be as a result of frustration. Political conflicts arise from a complex interplay of factors, including: Politics inherently involves diverse perspectives on governance, resource allocation and other issues, leading to conflicts. When individuals or groups have private interests that may compromise their ability to make impartial decisions, it can lead to corruption, favoritism, and unfair competition. This can be termed political conflict of interest. Conflicts can arise when identity beliefs, closely tied to political views and affiliations clash. This can lead to feelings of threat or disrespect, resulting in tension or aggression. The use of influence, manipulation, and coercion to gain or maintain power can disrupt inclusive environments, leading to conflicts within organizations and political systems. Adversarial processes can lead to political polarization, which can escalate into chronic conflict as a result of poor management of political disagreements. Failure to address underlying issues can persist when the root causes, such as differences in perspectives, interests, and values, are not adequately addressed. Sharp inequalities between groups, particularly in political access and economic dimensions, can lead to conflict. Personal gain or interests can play a role in prolonging or causing conflict. Low per capita incomes, life expectancy, and economic growth can contribute to an environment conducive to conflict.

Skoog (2019), focused to develop a theoretical framework for studying causes and effects of political conflicts in local governments. Specifically, he examined two forms of political conflict relevant for parliamentary arenas – political dissent and antagonistic behavior. He argued that it is important to distinguish between these two, as they have different characteristics, are caused by different factors, and produce different effects. The author also explored how administrative reforms affect the expression of political conflicts, and the significance of political conflicts for the relationship between politicians and public officials. Use was made of multi-method approach, with the first three papers and a literature review focusing on causes of political conflicts at the structural, organizational and individual levels. Pelican, Willis and Adama (2023) focused on providing an in-depth exploration of the historical and political context surrounding the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon. They delved into the root causes, consequences, and complexities of the conflict, shedding light on the devastating impact it has had on civilian populations. They highlighted the marginalization, harmonization, subjugation, state capture, radicalization that have fueled the conflict, emphasizing the urgent need for conflict resolution efforts amidst a highly constrained environment. The authors analyzed the historical origins of the conflict, rising grievances, protests, and repression, the emergence of armed groups, the impact on the civilian population, and the prospects for conflict resolution. Additionally, the authors addressed the international community's response, the role of civil society actors, and the challenges faced in mediating the conflict on behalf of affected minorities, providing a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted dimensions of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon.

Secondly, there is another cause of conflict called identity conflict. This is the type of conflict where individuals or groups desire recognition, their abilities, qualities, and distinct identities as opposed to the other. It could be caused by ethnicity. In multi-linguistic societies, ethnicity finds its way through control of state power, development plans; educational controversies, resource control, religious intolerance and land disputes. Identity conflicts stem from the clash between different identities, values and beliefs, leading to tensions, anxiety and uncertainty. Understanding the causes of identity conflict is crucial for developing effective conflict resolution strategies that address the underlying sources of conflict and promote harmonious relationships. The causes of identity conflict can be attributed to various factors that trigger tensions and disputes related to individuals' psychological, cultural, basic values, shared history and beliefs. These conflicts arise when the needs and responsibilities of one identity clash with those of another, leading to a state of conflict known as "identity conflict". Conflicts can arise when multiple identities become equally salient, activating distinct normative

standards that are incompatible with each other, leading to conflict-related activity and heightened anxiety and uncertainty.

Real or perceived inequalities and fears can turn ethnicity into a political instrument for channelling ethnic-based interests and needs, contributing to ethnic conflicts with territorial dimensions expressed in secessionism. Democratization in previously authoritarian countries, international concern for minority rights and gaps in self-determination rights can also influence the wave of contemporary ethnic conflicts. The discourse of ancient ethnic hatred can escalate and provoke violent ethnic conflict, making contemporary internal wars primarily wars over identity. This discourse nurtures attitudes, fears and stereotypes that contribute to conflict, emphasizing the need to integrate conflict transformation approaches into peace processes to address deeply rooted identity conflicts. Conflicts can emerge when two or more valued identities are made equally salient, placing incompatible normative expectations on behavior. This conflict can be transiently induced by priming multiple conflicting identities simultaneously, leading to conflicting norms and heightened tensions.

Identity conflicts involving salient and central identities are likely to have stronger psychological effects and emotional tensions. These conflicts threaten people's basic needs and survival, leading to abstract, ambiguous, and intangible issues that can be challenging to resolve. Identity conflicts stem from the clash between different identities, values and beliefs, leading to tensions, anxiety, and uncertainty. Understanding the causes of identity conflict is crucial for developing effective conflict resolution strategies that address the underlying sources of conflict and promote harmonious relationships. Identity conflicts can be fueled by perceptions of injustice, inequality or unfair treatment. When individuals feel that their rights, dignity or access to justice are compromised, it can lead to conflict as they seek to address these perceived injustices. Violations of individual or group rights, whether political, social, cultural or economic, can trigger identity conflicts.

When rights are infringed upon, marginalized or denied, it can create grievances and fuel tensions based on identity-related factors. Unmet human needs, including the need for recognition, security, belonging, autonomy and self-esteem, can be a significant cause of identity conflicts. When these fundamental needs are not fulfilled, individuals or groups may engage in conflict to assert their identity and address these unmet needs. Distributional issues are associated with the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, power or benefits among different identity groups. Disparities in access to resources or benefits can lead to identity-based conflicts as groups compete for or feel disadvantaged by unequal distributions. These underlying causes highlight the multifaceted nature of identity conflicts, emphasizing the importance of addressing moral, justice, rights, needs and distributional issues to effectively understand, manage and resolve conflicts rooted in identity dynamics. By recognizing and addressing these underlying causes, stakeholders can work towards promoting dialogue, reconciliation and sustainable solutions to identity conflicts.

Maalouf (1998) focused on exploring the concept of identity, particularly how it relates to violence and the human need for belonging. He delved into the complexities of identity, emphasizing that it is not something that can be compartmentalized into separate segments but rather a unique mixture of various components that make up an individual's sense of self. The author also discussed the challenges individuals face in defining their identities, the impact of migration on identity formation, and the importance of acceptance and understanding of diverse identities. He also touched on the idea of a "global human" identity while acknowledging the multifaceted nature of individual identities and the need for acceptance of differences to foster peace and cooperation. The main argument of Maalouf was that identity, when interpreted in an oversimplified and hostile manner, can lead to violence, hatred and crimes, and added that many people commit atrocities in the name of religious, ethnic, national and other forms of identity.

Keen (1991) focused on exploring how ordinary individuals can be influenced to hate and even commit violent acts against others through the manipulation of propaganda, biased cartoons and distorted images in various media forms. Keen delved into the psychological mechanisms underlying enmity, going beyond surface grievances and moral judgments to examine the roots of hostility and the ways in which individuals perceive and dehumanize their perceived enemies. He equally delved into the psychological complexities of enmity, shedding light on how individuals are swayed to view others as adversaries and the implications of such perceptions on interpersonal relationships and societal dynamics. Staub (1992) explored the psychological, cultural and societal roots of group aggression, particularly focusing on genocide and other forms of mass violence. He delved into the complex influences that contribute to one group's desire to harm another, including cultural and social patterns predisposing to violence, historical circumstances leading to persistent life problems, and the needs and modes of adaptation arising from these interactions.

The author addressed various concepts such as cultural stereotyping, devaluation, societal self-concept, moral exclusion, and the need for connection, authority orientation, personal and group goals, ideologies of a better world, justification, and moral equilibrium in analyzing the roots of group aggression. He also examined the behavior of perpetrators and bystanders in historical situations like the Holocaust, the genocide of Armenians in Turkey, the auto genocide in Cambodia, and the disappearances in Argentina, while emphasizing the roots of caring and the psychology of heroic helpers. Additionally, he reflected on the socialization of children and societal practices that promote caring, cooperation, and the development of compassionate individuals and groups.

Lasswell (1936), focused primarily on the definition and analysis of politics, describing it as the process of determining who gets what, when and how, but did not explicitly discuss identity conflicts or their resolution, however framework for understanding politics can be applied to the context of identity conflicts. The concept of who gets what, when and how can be used to analyze the distribution of power, resources and influence among different identity groups in a society. This approach can help in understanding the dynamics of identity-based conflicts and the strategies employed by different groups to achieve their goals. For instance, the book's emphasis on understanding the parties involved, their stakes, and the rules that shape the outcome can be applied to identity conflicts. This framework can help in identifying the key actors, their interests and the power structures that influence the conflict. By analyzing these factors, one can better understand the underlying causes of identity conflicts and develop more effective strategies for resolving them. Rothman (1997), the focused on transforming identity-based conflicts into productive relationships, and emphasized the following key points regarding identity conflicts: identity conflicts are often mistaken for disputes over material resources and resolving misdiagnosed conflicts without addressing the real underlying causes tends to fail.

He contrasted identity-based conflicts with interest-based disputes, highlighted that identity conflicts are rooted in people's psychology, culture, basic values, shared history and beliefs, threatening their basic needs and survival. He introduced the ARIA framework (Antagonism, Resonance, Invention, Action) for transforming identity conflicts into productive relations by making explicit the sources of identity threat and insecurity, and by promoting dialogue about needs and values to empower and recognize the parties involved. Rothman illustrates the application of the ARIA framework in various settings, including national conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, organizational conflicts between management and labor, and community-based identity disputes. Tools such as the conflict audit and identity conflict assessment are presented to help in identifying and addressing identity conflicts effectively. González (2009), emphasized on the conflicts, disputes and tensions that arise between different identity groups in modern school settings, and aimed at providing guidance for school leaders on how to manage and address these conflicts effectively.

Thirdly, economic conflicts as one of the causes refer to tensions arising from economic factors such as access to basic economic resources and opportunities, the demand for economic redistribution caused by socio-economic deprivation, inequality in the system, and the drive for raw materials. Access to basic economic resources and opportunities can cause conflicts by creating competition, disparities and tensions among individuals, groups or nations. When resources like water, land, minerals and oil are scarce or unequally distributed, disputes can arise as different parties compete for access to these essential resources. There are various factors that contribute to conflicts related to economic resources, scarcity of resources, such as water in arid regions, can lead to disputes as access to vital resources becomes a focal point of contention. Established social, political and economic structures can underpin conflicts over resources, especially when customary and state laws clash, leading to complex disputes. Policies, programs and projects aimed at resource management can inadvertently become sources of conflict, even when intended to reduce conflicts or improve livelihoods. Conflicts often arise from disputes over the distribution of resources, whether tangible like land or intangible like social status. When resources are limited, conflicts can intensify as parties compete for a share. Access to resources like oil, coal and rare earth minerals has historically been a significant driver of conflicts between nations, highlighting how economic factors can lead to tensions and wars. The exploitation of natural resources, such as timber, diamonds and minerals, has fueled violent conflicts globally, emphasizing the link between resource scarcity and conflict. Furthermore, the demand for economic redistribution caused by socioeconomic deprivation can lead to conflicts by creating a sense of relative deprivation, failing to meet human needs, exacerbating structural causes of conflict and incentivizing investment in conflict tools as parties compete for limited resources.

In the same direction, inequality in a system can cause conflict through several mechanisms, the perception of unequal distribution of resources or opportunities can lead to feelings of relative deprivation, which can fuel grievances and mobilize groups to take action against the perceived injustices. Inequalities between groups, whether based on ethnicity, religion or region, can contribute to conflict by creating a sense of disadvantage among certain groups. This can lead to collective action and violence if the perceived injustices are not addressed. Vertical inequality between the rich and the poor can also contribute to conflict, as the relatively disadvantaged may feel that the system is unfair and that they have no other option but to rebel against the privileged groups. Inequality can be embedded in the social, political and economic structures of a society, perpetuating disparities and creating an environment conducive to conflict. The way groups perceive inequalities can be a critical factor in determining whether violence erupts. Even if structural inequalities exist, if they are not perceived as unjust, violence may not occur.

However, if groups feel that the system is unfair and that their interests are not being represented, conflict can ensue. This sociological perspective views inequality as harmful to society, as it creates a fixed system of winners and losers. The wealthy and powerful maintain their position at the expense of the poor, leading to a system of stratification that is difficult to change. The family can also play a role in perpetuating social inequality, as it is often a vehicle for maintaining patriarchy and social inequality in society. This can contribute to broader social and economic inequalities, which can lead to conflict.

The drive for raw materials can also result to conflicts for example, in a scenario where two parties contest a specific resource; the winner claims the entire resource, leaving nothing for the losing party. This model illustrates how the drive for raw materials can intensify competition and lead to conflicts as parties compete for control over valuable resources. In the same light, where agents must decide between producing resources and producing tools (guns) for conflict to appropriate the resources produced by others. The relative numbers of guns produced determine the probability of winning the contest, highlighting how the pursuit of raw materials can

incentivize investment in conflict tools as parties compete for these resources. Parties may prefer settlement over conflict if they have an aversion to uncertainty. However, in the long term, conflict might be the dominant strategy as it secures resources for the future, leading to confrontations driven by the desire for raw materials.

Anderton and Carter (2019) mainly focused on understanding violent conflict and peace through the application of economic concepts and models. They contributed to this understanding in two key ways. They applied economic analysis to diverse conflict activities such as war, terrorism, genocide and peace. This helped in understanding these activities as purposeful choices responsive to underlying incentives. They also treated coercive appropriation as a fundamental economic activity, joining production and exchange as a means of wealth acquisition. This perspective highlighted the importance of coercion in conflict and its impact on the economy, and also provided comprehensive coverage of the key themes and principles of conflict economics, including new scholarship on well-established areas like war and terrorism, as well as under-researched areas such as genocides, individual and family aspects of war, and conflict prevention. They also incorporated new economic tools like behavioral economics and economics of identity to enhance the analysis of war and peace.

THE DANGERS OF INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Language barriers can hinder effective communication, create misunderstandings and escalate tensions, making conflict resolution more difficult. Language barriers occur when parties speak different languages, have different accents, use different jargon or have different levels of fluency, leading to misunderstandings and confusion. Lack of active listening, in which people do not fully engage with the speaker, paying attention to what they say and showing empathy, makes it difficult to understand the underlying concerns. When individuals become defensive in response to conflict, it aggravates the situation and limits their ability to listen to and understand the other party's perspective. Dismissing the topic as unimportant, where one party responds to the other's concerns by minimizing their feelings or telling them they shouldn't feel that way, instead of getting to the root of why they feel that way. Jumping to conclusions without having all the facts, can lead to assumptions and biased judgments. Inability to stay calm when conflict escalates, with parties raising their voices, becoming aggressive, can be the most damaging barrier to resolving conflict. Philosophical differences hinder the parties to find a middle ground for agreement due to conflicting values, and unwillingness to compromise, where one or more parties refuse to negotiate a solution or give up any ground, making resolution unattainable.

Uncertainty and lack of clarity about roles, expectations and objectives, can lead to confusion and unproductive work in various ways. When employees are unsure about what is expected of them or the goals they are working towards, it can result in confusion in prioritization, miscommunication, and decreased motivation, ineffective decision-making and increased stress. It can also create a stressful work environment, as employees may feel overwhelmed by the ambiguity of their roles and responsibilities, affecting their well-being and performance. Conflict escalation can occur due to misunderstandings or misconstrued words or/actions. Unresolved conflicts can negatively impact company culture, employee performance and retention. Another challenge can be as a result of low employee morale and motivation stemming from poor communication. Employees may feel guilty, embarrassed or have low self-esteem if they experience low morale. There will also be less effective collaboration and teamwork when communication is lacking. Teams cannot pursue common goals without first exchanging knowledge and ideas.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication skills that assist conflict resolution include: active listening which involves fully focusing on the speaker, understanding their message, acknowledging their points and responding thoughtfully. It ensures that all parties feel heard and understood, paving the way for a more effective resolution. Empathy is another communication skill that allows individuals to see the situation from the other person's perspective, fostering understanding and respect. This skill is particularly useful in situations where understanding others' viewpoints can help build rapport and prevent misunderstandings. Another communication skill is assertiveness; it involves expressing one's thoughts and feelings in a confident and respectful manner. It's a key component of confident communication and essential presentation skills, helping to prevent conflicts from arising and ensuring that one's voice is heard when conflicts do occur. In addition, there is the skill termed problem-solving, this involves identifying and overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. In conflict resolution, problem-solving skills can help individuals find effective solutions that satisfy all parties involved.

Emotional intelligence cannot be over emphasized, this refers to the ability to understand, use and manage one's own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict. It's a key skill for building gravitas and executive presence, as it allows individuals to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. Softening the Startup is also a very important. Starting a conversation by expressing appreciation, focusing on problems one at a time and taking responsibility for thoughts and feelings can help overcome communication roadblocks. Making and receiving repair attempts by learning to make and receive repair attempts, which are efforts to keep an increasingly negative interaction from going any further by taking a break or making amends, is crucial in overcoming communication roadblocks. Effective speaking and listening skills are essential for effective communication, which is critical in conflict resolution. They involve using the right communication strategies, such as encouraging active listening, choosing the right time and place, seeking common ground and using third-party facilitation when necessary.

Respect, grace, empathy and active listening are key components of effective communication for conflict resolution, as they add value to the person being heard and foster a positive environment for resolution. Expressing oneself clearly by stating thoughts, feelings, and needs in a way that is honest, respectful and specific is important for effective communication in conflict resolution. This can be achieved by using "I" statements, for example, I suggest that, I think that. Blame and accusations and counter-accusations that can escalate and even degenerate into violence will be avoided. Another important communication skills involves showing empathy and respect, these elements involve trying to understand the other person's feelings, needs and values, and acknowledging them without judging or dismissing them. This helps build rapport, trust and goodwill, and reduces defensiveness and hostility. Leaders must clearly communicate expectations to employees and keep them informed to build trust and engagement, organizations need clear communication strategies to resolve workplace conflicts, set expectations and practice active listening transparency and allowing employees to voice their concerns can help fix low morale, recognizing differences in how people interpret situations and communicate can help build understanding and, varying questioning techniques can help get to the root of problems.

Eadie (2001), a significant role in conflict resolution by highlighting the crucial importance of language and communication in managing and resolving disputes or conflicts between parties involved. The author emphasized that language is the key to understanding and resolving conflicts effectively, and that effective communication is essential for achieving a peaceful outcome. He also emphasized the importance of active listening, which involves fully focusing on the speaker, understanding their message, acknowledging their points, and responding thoughtfully. Active listening ensures all parties feel heard and understood. Encourages the use of I statements to

express thoughts, feelings and needs in a clear, honest and specific way and avoids blame or accusations and reduces defensiveness. The author also highlighted the value of empathy and respect, trying to understand the other person's perspective, validating their emotions and acknowledging their needs without judgment builds rapport and trust. He stressed the need for clear, congruent communication, and ensuring body language, tone of voice and words all convey the same message prevents confusion and frustration, and equally recommended seeking feedback and clarification by asking open-ended questions, summarizing key points, and confirming understanding. This avoids assumptions and misunderstandings. He emphasized the importance of making and receiving repair attempts to de-escalate increasingly negative interactions. Taking breaks to calm down allows for more productive discussions.

According to Sharland (2018), focus was made on the role of communication in resolving disputes and conflicts. The author emphasized the importance of effective communication in managing and resolving conflicts, highlighting the benefits of communication in promoting understanding, empathy and growth through conflict. Pollack (2020), emphasized the importance of communication in resolving conflicts and provides strategies for effective communication to prevent misunderstandings and manage disputes. The author focused mainly on developing practical communication skills to manage and resolve conflicts effectively in both personal and professional relationships. He provided real-life solutions to everyday problems and emphasizes the importance of understanding conflict itself, including where it comes from, why it cuts so deep, and how it can be of value.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this paper was to evaluate the intricate ways in which communication influences the resolution process. The specific objectives were to 1, identify the causes of conflicts, 2, evaluate how ineffective communication results in violent conflict 3, implementing effective communication skills which are fundamental to successful conflict resolution. To achieve these objectives, use was made of the desk research design. The findings suggested that causes of conflicts are categorized under three main groups namely, political, identity and economic conflicts. It was also found out that language barriers, the lack of clarity of the roles, expectations of the employees, low morals of employees and unresolved conflicts result to escalation and violent conflicts. Summarily, respect, grace, empathy and active listening are central components for effective communication for conflict resolution. As recommendation we suggest that effective mechanisms should be put in place that can hinder the occurrence, escalation and violence of conflicts. Efforts should also be made at all levels by mediators so that all unresolved conflicts should find a solution to avoid it escalates or becomes violent.

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