



UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

Postgraduate & Mid-career Development Unit

Master of Business Administration/ Master of Business Administration in HRM 2022/2024

Weekend Programmes Trimester VI Examination – February, 2025

MBA 5222/ MBAHR 5228 – Conflict and Negotiation Management

Three (03) Hours

This is an Open Book Examination. This paper comprises four (04) questions printed on four (04) pages. Answer Three (03) questions including question One (01).

Question 01

An employee had worked for his employer for over two years when a new line manager was appointed. At first, the manager appeared to be taking an active interest in the employee's work; however, as time progressed this interest seemed to turn into micromanaging employee activities. The employees had always been competent at their job and had attained a certain level of autonomy for some activities, so having their work undermined was becoming stressful and distressing. Being consistently undermined and having to constantly seek approval for routine actions began to affect the employees' morale. They became less motivated to take on any tasks outside their job description, leading to conflict between the employees and their manager. This undermining behaviour was starting to make the employees feel less competent and was affecting how they were actually viewed by others at work. It was also beginning to impact on their health and wellbeing as they felt stressed and started to have difficulties sleeping. The working relationship between the two parties was beginning to break down, and was starting to create a toxic atmosphere in the department too. The situation had reached the point where the employee considered raising a grievance against the manager; however, in the first instance, they approached HR for advice. When conflict breaks out between an employee and their line manager, interventions often need to come from an outside party such as HR. To address the

situation and to find a resolution to the conflict, HR took the time to find out exactly what was going on by investigating the situation. Once they had gathered information, HR arranged an informal meeting between the employee and their manager, explaining the objective of the meeting to both of them and giving both the opportunity to prepare. HR mediated the meeting and advised the employee that the purpose of the meeting was to support them in addressing their concerns. This meeting allowed both parties to talk through their issues in a safe environment, and help them to find healthy solutions to the issues. Both parties spoke candidly about how they were feeling about the situation, and the HR mediator used open questioning to help to draw out concerns. The meeting enabled both parties to view the situation from the other's perspective and to identify areas of compromise in order to be able to move forward. In compromising, each party was able to feel that they had made a concession, which should lead to a more peaceful and cooperative relationship in the long run.

As HR drew the meeting to a close, they agreed follow-up actions with both parties which would be reflected in the individuals' objectives. Although this was deemed an informal resolution meeting, HR documented the meeting and agreed outcomes, as the information needs to be kept on record and made available for a formal grievance or disciplinary procedure need to be conducted at a future date. The HR monitored and reviewed the situation to be able to address any new issues or concerns promptly. It was identified during the resolution meeting that the line manager's management style may have impacted the issue, so in a follow-up one-to-one meeting, the manager's line manager discussed and agreed training options including developing management styles and performance management programmes to help the manager develop their skills. And, a follow-up meeting was also arranged to review the progress. Mediation is an effective way to mend relationships when there is a disagreement at work. The mediator, in this case the HR, is impartial. This means that they do not take sides. They are there to help everyone involved find a solution they can all agree to. Mediation can be used at any stage in a disagreement, but it is best to start it as soon as possible. The earlier the disagreement is dealt with, the less chance there is of things getting worse. Mediation can provide a swifter response to conflict and can nip potentially damaging disputes in the bud. It has been shown to reduce levels of grievances and is helpful in rebuilding trust and morale.

- i. Identify the possible causes of conflict in the given case study and analyze the role of each party in contributing to the conflict.
(10 Marks)
 - ii. Assess and propose strategic options for managing the conflict described in the case study.
(10 Marks)
 - iii. Discuss the role of the Human Resource Department in handling the conflict and facilitating resolution.
(10 Marks)
 - iv. Analyze the potential outcomes of the conflict as presented in the case study.
(10 Marks)
 - v. Examine the role of management in managing the conflict within an organization.
(10 Marks)
 - vi. Suggest effective strategies for managing workplace conflicts constructively.
(10 Marks)
- (Total 60 marks)**

Question 02

- i. Recognize the role of a negotiator in a conflicting organizational situation.
(05 Marks)
 - ii. Elaborate prospective negotiating strategies aligning with the prospective conflicting situations.
(07 Marks)
 - iii. Critique on the reasons for the failures in the negotiation process with suitable examples.
(08 Marks)
- (Total; 20 marks)**

Question 03

- i. Recognize how a culture could influence the formation of conflicts and the success or impasses of negotiation efforts.
(05 Marks)

- ii. Discuss the circumstances under which a manager should consider using distributive bargaining instead of integrative bargaining..

(07 Marks)

- iii. Explain the impact of collective bargaining and collective agreement in deciding the industrial peace.

(08 Marks)

(Total 20 marks)

Question 04

- i. What skills does a negotiator possess to become effective in practice?

(05 Marks)

- ii. Elaborate on the organisational and environmental factors required to make the organisation a healthy conflict zone.

(07 Marks)

- iii. Recognize how the third-party negotiation could operate in handling organizational conflicts.

(08 Marks)

(Total 20 marks)
