

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
MASTER OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (MLC 506)
EXAMINATION PAPER
DURATION: 3 HOURS 30 MINUTES

Instructions and Information to Candidates

1. Section A is compulsory and carries 40 marks.
 2. Answer 'Question 1' from Section A and any three (3) questions from section B.
 3. The paper carries six questions.
 4. All questions in section B carry equal marks of 20 each.
 5. The use of cell phones is not allowed in the examination.
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JUN 2024

SECTION A: [COMPULSORY]

QUESTION 1

CASE STUDY: EMPLOYEE DIFFERENCES IN THE DEPARTMENT

It came to the attention of the CEO of a small company that there was a difficulty between two employees who had been working together for some time but recently appeared to have major differences that were affecting their entire department.

The CEO was being approached by both employees at different times and also by their Line Manager and was spending increasing amounts of time speaking to them, taking notes of their comments, meeting with their Line Manager and generally finding it difficult to get on with her own job, so time consuming were the conversations.

The Line Manager attempted to deal with the issue in informal conversations but ultimately one of the parties made a complaint of harassment against the other. The matter was dealt with internally and ended in a disciplinary warning which simply led to matters disintegrating. The rest of the employees inevitably fell into two camps and relations between staff reached an all time low when one party refused to pass important client information to the other and a complaint ensued from the client. Eventually one of the parties left the company and shortly after commenced Tribunal proceedings for constructive dismissal.

Almost a year after the proceedings began, the CEO suggested to their lawyers that a mediation might help – the company had spent thousands of dollars in legal costs up to that point and the CEO was becoming extremely anxious about her annual budget as the year end approached. The two sides agreed to a mediation and in a day the matter was resolved. Although it was too late to resolve the issue between the parties, at least they were able to save further legal costs. Had the mediation taken place at the earliest possible stage that is before the dispute spiralled to the point of one party leaving – far larger sums might have been saved and the impact on those involved, as well as the company, might have been considerably less.

Source: (Adopted from the Business Digest, 2023)

Required:

(a) Ascertain any **two (2)** major conflict management missteps that the Line Manager made in addressing conflict in his department . **(8 marks)**

(b) Establish any **three (3)** repercussions of poor conflict management that befell this company **(12 marks)**

(c) Elaborate on any **three (3)** limitations of the mediation process that were experienced by the CEO in resolving conflict at the company and proffer recommendations to address those limitations. **(20 marks)**

[Total: 40 marks]

SECTION B: Answer any three (3) questions from this section

QUESTION 2

‘Dr. Ronald S. Kraybill’s Conflict Style Inventory has outlived its usage and has no influence on Leaders in responding to conflict in modern day organisations.’ Substantiating your answer with examples, discuss this proposition.

[20 marks]

QUESTION 3

With reference to an organisation of your choice, elaborate on the implications of various stages of conflict escalation to leadership in managing conflict an organisation of your choice.

[20 marks]

QUESTION 4

Evaluate how the comprehension of the conflict management techniques impacts on leaders in their management of conflicts in organisations.

[20 marks]

QUESTION 5

With the aid of appropriate practical examples, any four (4) major bases for managing conflicts at workplaces.

[20 marks]

QUESTION 6

‘Conflicts are avoidable in organisations.’ Examine the validity of this finding by some Leaders, in light of perspectives of conflict in organisations.

[20 marks]

END OF EXAMINATION PAPER