Employees' Conflict Management in Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises in Egypt: An Empirical Investigation of Management Perspective

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Abstract

Employees' conflicts represent a common phenomenon in todays' business organizations. The purpose of this study was to investigate employees' conflict management form the perspective of tourism and hospitality enterprise managers. It aimed to: explore how regular tourism and hospitality enterprises in Egypt have witnessed employees' conflicts; determine the reasons for employees' conflicts; identify the approaches and practices of conflict management; ascertain the perceived effectiveness of these practices. Primary data was collected using questionnaire survey that was conducted among managers/deputy managers and middle management of 140 tourism and hospitality enterprises in Egypt that were selected using convenience sampling technique. The results showed that most of the investigated enterprises had regularly witnessed employees' conflicts. There were several reasons that have led to experiencing employees' conflicts, such as: different cultural and environmental factors; ambiguity of employees' authorities and roles. The results also showed that tourism and hospitality enterprises have undertaken several practices to handle employees' conflicts, including: integrating ideas/opinions to jointly resolve conflicts; cooperating with employees/supervisors to figure a proper understanding of a problem/conflict. The study also revealed that these practices were perceived by both tourism and hospitality enterprises to be slightly effective for managing employees' conflicts. The study ended by providing some practical recommendations that would help handling employees' conflicts within the tourism and hospitality enterprises.

Keywords: Employees' conflicts, conflict management, tourism and hospitality

1.Introduction

Conflicts are very common in modern societies due to the scarcity of resources, division of functions/tasks, diversity and organization roles in society (Madalina, 2016). Conflicts in a society can stimulate creativity, independence and innovation (Gabriela et al., 2016) which are desired outcomes of human interaction and behavior (Rahim, 2000; 2001).

However, conflicts in the working environment of a business organization are different. They are usually attributed to disagreements in attitudes, perceptions, needs and values, tasks and policies, and conflicting interests. They can also be attributed to competition or negative behaviors and reactions of organizational members (Tjosvold & Hui, 2001; Kantek & Gezer, 2009; Shih & Susanto, 2010). Conflicts can be unavoidable and threatening for many employees as well as for many organizations (De Dreu & Van Knippenberg, 2005; Lena et al., 2016). They can create many problems in any business organizations including tourism and hospitality enterprises, such as miscommunication and dissatisfaction (Bibi & Siti 2014). On the other hand, employees' conflicts in a business organization can be viewed as important aspect for authentic involvement, empowerment and democracy. When adequately exploited, conflicts can have productive consequences, such as: effective task completion; effective problem solving; improved working relationships (Bodtker, 2001).

According to the classic management views, employee's conflicts in an organization should be avoided due to their negative effects through the imposition of penalties on those individuals obstructing collective effort. Nevertheless, modern management views agreed that the emergence of conflict is a positive indicator of organizational improved performance and profitability (Chen et al., 2011), reduced negative emotions (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012), and encouraged self-efficacy (Amin et al., 2017) that lead to better effectiveness (Chen et al., 2011). This study investigates employees' conflicts within the context of the tourism and hospitality enterprises in Egypt. It aims to explore the extent to which employees' conflicts are pervasive in these enterprises and to examine the reasons for experiencing employees' conflicts. It also aims to explore the managerial practices of handling employees' conflicts in the tourism and hospitality enterprises as well as to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of these practices.

2.Literature Review

2.1. Concept and types of conflict

Conflict refers to a situation in which a person or group encounter or perceive an encroaching difference. Conflict can be defined as "the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatibility and the possibility of interference from others as a result of this incompatibility" (Boonsathorn, 2007, p. 198). Conflict also refers to "an overt behavior that results when an individual or group of individuals thinks and perceives need of the individual or group as being blocked or is about to be blocked in an organization, so conflict occurs because individuals have different perceptions, beliefs and goals" (Rue & Byars, 2007, p.336). Conflict is considered by business organizations as an incompatible activity or behavior (Tjosvold, 1998; Tjosvold et al., 2000; Tjosvold & Su Fang, 2004). Conflict occurs between various individuals because of their frequent interaction with each other. It is an expression of hostility and lack of understanding between employees (Gebretensay, 2002; Tesfay, 2002).

Conflict can be classified into four main types. First, interpersonal conflict which refers to a conflict between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another. Second, intrapersonal conflict which occurs within an individual takes place in the person's mind. It is a type of psychological conflict involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions. Third, intra-group conflict which takes place among individuals within a team due to incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals. Fourth, inter-group conflict which occurs when a misunderstanding arises within an organization. This type of conflict may be found due to competition among different teams, lack of resources, or the boundaries set by a group against others which establishes their own identity as a team (Denohue, & Kott.1992).

2.2. Reasons for employees' conflicts

It is commonly thought that when the reasons for conflict are understood, its resolution can be found. However, many conflicts may not be understandable and therefore are not resolvable (Madalina, 2016). Conflict can occur due to several reasons, including: opposing interests; close supervision; role ambiguity; problem-solving methods. Moreover, conflict tends to originate form tasks, values, goals and norms (Tjosvold, 1998; Van de Vliert, 1998; Rahim, 2001). Based on a review of the relevant literature (including: Tjosvold, 1998; Van de Vliert, 1998; Rahim, 2001; Nir & Eyal, 2003; Fassoulis, 2006; Paraskevopoulos, 2008); the main reasons for employee's conflicts can be summarized in the following categories:

The first category is the role ambiguity. In every business organization, job positions are defined based on an organizational chart. Therefore, a certain role is expected to be performed by an employee (Van Wart, 2000; Mullins, 2007; Singh, 2008). Role ambiguity is the lack of clarity about roles expected or required from the employees while doing their job tasks (Chen et al., 2011; Schmidt et al., 2014; Trépanier et al., 2013; Michelle et al., 2017). Thus, ambiguity of employees' role lead to negative outcomes for employees and organization, such as poor performance and job dissatisfaction (Hershcovis & Reich, 2010; Michel et al., 2011). In addition, Kevin et al. (2015) explained that there is positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention. The second set of reasons incudes miscommunications.

The poor encoding of messages; poor human relations; the lack of appropriate information process; bad timing, are some factors that eliminate mutual understanding between employees and may lead to conflicts (Tourish & Robson, 2003, Tourish & Hargie, 2004). The third category involves the incompatible goals or conflicting interests. Conflicts may occur when employees understand that only one goal may be achieved and that there is less possibility for the others' goals to be reached (Tjosvold, 1998). The fourth set includes differences in values. Business organizations employ different people with distinctive interests. These differences can occasionally produce clashes in attitudes and misperceptions of values that lead to conflicts and subsequently become a major challenge for an organization (Rahim, 2001).

In addition, Auerbach and Dolan (1997); Rahim (2001); Champoux (2003); De Janasz, et al. (2006); Mohamad and Raman (2011), added two more reasons for employees' conflict, i.e. specialization and interdependence. Specialization-related conflicts occur when an individual may have insufficient knowledge of his or other's job responsibilities. However, interdependence-related conflicts take place when an employee needs to depend on another to complete a certain task (Auerbach & Dolan, 1997; Champoux, 2003). Furthermore, skills and abilities, perceptions, and diversity are common personal elements associated with organizational conflicts (Auerbach & Dolan, 1997; Rahim, 2001). Conflict can also emerge when an experienced employee works with a trainee/beginner who has suitable theoretical knowledge but few practical skills. It may also occur between two individuals who are unwilling to fulfill expectations of each other. Diversity of workforce, including differences in age; cultural background; ethics; values, may result in unequal treatment, lack of respect and discrimination which eventually lead to conflicts (Denice 2016).

2.4. Conflict management approaches and practices

Conflict management is one of the key aspects that lead to the success of an organization. It is necessary to manage and functionalize employees' conflicts or even to exploit conflicts for the organization's advance (Sepehri et al., 2014). Appropriate conflict management can lead to improved performance (Bao and Chun 2012) and optimum results in the organization (john et al., 2011; Amin et al., 2017). Conflict management involves channeling the energies, expertise, and resources of the members of conflicting groups for resolving their frequent problems. (Auerbach & Dolan, 1997; Rahim, 2001).

There are five main approaches for conflict management. Firstly, the avoidance approach which involves paying little or no concern for handling conflicts or caring for the conflicting parties' interests (Aguw, 2013). Avoiding conflict does not guarantee stronger relationships within and between organizations (Henkin et al., 2000; Tjosvold et al. 2000; Rahim, 2001; De Lima, 2001; Tjosvold & Su Fang, 2004; Hendel et al., 2005). Secondly, the compromise approach which includes finding a solution that satisfies all conflicting parties fully or partially. The follower of this approach is partially decisive and partially cooperative. (Aguw, 2013).

Thirdly, the collaboration/integration approach according to which the conflicting parties develop the necessary communication to overcome any misunderstandings and find the best solutions. Innovative solutions are achieved through open discussions of the problems (Chen & Tjosvold, 2002; Rahim, 2001; Tjosvold, 2008; Tjosvold et al., 2000). Fourthly, the forcing/competing approach which involves using force by one entity to resolve the conflict among the involved parties. This approach has a binary, 'win–lose' outcome and involves high concern for self and low concern for others (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979, cited by Rahim, 2001: 27–28; De Dreu et al. 2001; Rahim, 2002). Fifthly, the smoothing/accommodating approach. This approach determines the situation of the conflict and analyses its nature and the conditions in which it occurred. It involves little concern for self and more concern for others (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979, cited by Rahim, 2001: 27–28).

3. Research methodology

A quantitative approach was adopted in this study through using a questionnaire survey to gather primary data. The question form included five main sections. Section one addressed the profile of the participants through five multiple choice questions about: enterprise type; tourist grade; participant experience; participants job level; participant gender. The second section involved two questions and aimed to explore if the approached enterprises have experienced any employees' conflicts and the regularity of witnessing such conflicts. Section three aimed to explore the reasons for experiencing employees' conflicts through examining a list of 15 potential reasons on a five-response Likert scale. The fourth section addressed the practices of managing employees' conflicts through evaluating a list of 28 potential practices on a five-response Likert scale that were adopted from The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI; Rahim, 1983). It also aimed to explore the perceived effectiveness of these practices and the perceived satisfaction with these practices. The fifth section aimed at gathering any additional comments or suggestion that participants would have had to add. The reliability of the questionnaire form was confirmed through conducting Cronbach's alpha test and scored and overall score of 0.891.

The sample of the study included a total of 140 participants representing both tourism enterprises (55 tour operators/travel agents) and hospitality enterprises (85 resorts/hotels/floating hotels/ restaurants). A convenience sampling technique was adopted to select the sample participants. The sample included various tourist grades and types of both tourism and hospitality enterprises as well as participants from different genders and management levels and with various years of experiences. A total of 180 questionnaire forms were distributed and 140 were filled and vailed for analysis with a response rate about 78%. The valid forms were checked, coded and entered to SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including: frequencies; percentage; mean; standard deviation; rank, were produces to provide a general summery of the data. Also, Chi-square test and independent samples *t*-test were also performed to provide an analytic view of the collected data.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Characteristics of the sample participants

This section presents the profile of the sample participants. As shown in Table 1, the participants of the study represented both tourism enterprises (nearly 40%) and hospitality enterprises (about 60%). Both type B and C of the tourism enterprises were included while all three, four and five-star hotels were represented. As for the years of experience, most of the participants had more than 15 years of experience (approximately 50%) or experience between 10 to 15 years (35%) and the remaining participants had experience less than five years or between five and nine years. In addition, the sample included participants from both top and middle management, as well as both genders were also represented.

Table 1: Profile of the study participants (n= 140)

Enterprise type	Freq.	%	Participants' Experience History	Freq.	%
Tourism enterprises	55	39.3	Less than 5 years	8	5.7
Hospitality Enterprises	85	60.7	From 5 to 9 years	17	12.2
Total	**140**	**100**	From 10 to 15 years	49	35.0
Tourist grade	**Freq.**	**%**	More than 15 years	66	47.1
Tourism enterprises			**Total**	**140**	**100**
Type B	15	10.7	**Participants' management level**	**Freq.**	**%**
Type C	40	28.6	Top Management	68	48.5
Subtotal	**55**	**39.3**	Middle Management	72	51.5
Hospitality Enterprises			**Total**	**140**	**100**
Five-star	49	35.0	**Participants' gender**	**Freq.**	**%**
Four-star	20	14.3	Male	127	90.7
Three-star	16	11.4	Female	13	9.3
Subtotal	**85**	**60.7**	**Total**	**140**	**100**
Grand total	**140**	**100**			

4.2. Experiencing employees' conflicts

This part presents the results of the second section if the questionnaire survey which contained two questions and aimed to explore whether the approached enterprises have witnessed any employees' conflicts and the regularity of experiencing such conflicts. The results, as shown in Table 2, revealed that most of the investigated tourism and hospitality enterprises (78.2% and 94.1%, respectively) have witnessed employees' conflicts with an overall percentage of 87.8% while only very limited number of these enterprises did not witness employees' conflicts.

Table 2: Experiencing employees' conflicts (n= 140)

Response	Tourism enterprises		Hospitality enterprises		Overall	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Yes	43	78.2	80	94.1	123	87.8
No	12	21.8	5	5.9	17	12.2
Total	**55**	**100**	**85**	**100**	**140**	**100**

The results (Table 3) showed that most of the investigated tourism and hospitality enterprises (about 62%) have experienced employees' conflicts more than three times a year and a significant percentage of these enterprises (approximately 22%) have witnessed employees' conflicts at least three times a year. Another substantial percentage of these enterprises (roughly 14%) have encountered employees' conflicts at least twice a year while only 2.4% have witnessed these conflicts only once a year.

Table 3: Regularity of experiencing employees' conflicts (n= 140)

Response	Tourism enterprises		Hospitality enterprises		Overall	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Once a year	3	6.91	0	0	3	2.40
Twice a year	16	37.2	1	1.25	17	13.9
Three times a year	12	27.9	15	18.7	27	21.9
More than three times	12	27.9	64	80.0	76	61.80
Total	**43**	**100**	**80**	**100**	**123**	**100**

In addition, a Chi-square test was performed to examine any of association between enterprise type and both witnessing employees' conflicts and the regularity of witnessing such conflicts. The results (Table 4) revealed that there were a statistically-significant association between enterprise type (i.e. tourism or hospitality enterprise) and experiencing employees' conflicts, where X^2(2, N = 140) = 8.33, p<0.05. There was also a significant association between enterprise type and the regularity of witnessing employees' conflicts, where X^2(4, N = 140) = 50.9, p<0.05.

Table 4: The relation between enterprise type and conflicts

Variables	Enterprise type	
	X^2	*P*-value
Experiencing employees' conflicts	8.33	0.015*
Regularity of witnessing employees' conflicts	50.9	0.001*

*statistically-significant association where *p*-value < 0.05.

4.3. Reasons for employee's conflicts

This part discusses the results of the third section of the questionnaire survey. Participants were asked to state their opinions on a five-response Likert scale about 15 potential reasons that could have resulted in witnessing employees' conflicts. The results, as shown in Table 5, revealed that participants from tourism enterprises have provided slightly different values for these reasons than participants from hospitality enterprises. Overall, "different cultural and environmental factors" was perceived to be the most important reason for employees' conflicts with a mean score of 3.32 followed by "individual differences between employees" and scored a mean of 3.29 then "ambiguity of employees' authorities" with a mean score of 3.23. All "contradiction between the work requirements and the employee's objectives", "the difference between employees' personal goals and organizational objectives" and "intellectual and cultural differences between generations" came at the fourth rank and scored a mean of 3.15 each followed by "ambiguity of employees' authorities" at the fifth rank (with mean score of 3.08) and "absence of rules for distributing authorities to employees" at the sixth rank with a mean of 3.02.

At the seventh rank came "spread of partisans among employees" and scored a mean of 3.00 followed by "limited financial resources for achieving objectives" at the eighth rank (with mean of 2.96) while "absence of rules for distributing responsibilities to employees" came at the ninth rank and recorded 2.94 as a mean score. All "lack of workforce needed for achieving objectives", "imbalance between employees' authorities and responsibilities" and " empowerment of authorities of a small number of employees" came at the tenth, eleventh and twelfth rank respectively and recorded almost the same mean score (2.92, 2.91 and 2.90; respectively). At the thirteenth and last rank came "ambiguity in employees' responsibilities" and yielded a mean score of 2.88.

It was noticed that these reasons have recorded higher mean ratings among hospitality enterprises than tourism enterprises. Therefore, an independent samples t-test was conducted to statistically examine the difference between means of these two groups. The results (Table 6) showed that 8 out of the 15 examined reasons have recorded statistically significant differences. In other words, these reasons were perceived to be more important among hospitality enterprises than they were perceived by tourism enterprises. For example, "lack of workforce for achieving objectives" was perceived to be more influential reason among hospitality enterprises (M=3.15, SD=1.40) than tourism enterprises (M=2.56, SD=1.35); where t(138) = 2.873, p-value <0.05.

5: Reasons for employees' conflicts in tourism and hospitality enterprises

Reasons for employees' conflicts	**Tourism enterprises**			**Hospitality enterprises**			**Overall**		
	Mean*	SD	Rank	Mean*	SD	Rank	Mean*	SD	Rank
Lack of workforce needed for achieving objectives	2.56	1.35	11	3.15	1.40	11	2.92	1.40	10
Limited financial resources for achieving objectives	2.58	1.19	10	3.21	1.31	8	2.96	1.29	8
Ambiguity of employees' authorities	2.72	1.32	6	3.56	1.28	1	3.23	1.36	3
Absence of rules for distributing authorities to employees	2.67	1.36	7	3.25	1.21	6	3.02	1.30	6
Empowerment of authorities of a small number of employees	2.52	1.45	12	3.14	1.26	12	2.90	1.36	12
Ambiguity in employees' responsibilities	2.41	1.37	13	3.18	1.26	9	2.88	1.35	13
Absence of rules for distributing responsibilities to employees	2.65	1.32	8	3.12	1.30	13	2.94	1.32	9
Imbalance between employees' authorities and responsibilities	2.58	1.27	10	3.12	1.23	13	2.91	1.27	11
Spread of partisans among employees	2.63	1.39	9	3.23	1.25	7	3.00	1.33	7
Contradiction between the work requirements and the employee's objectives	2.98	1.32	3	3.27	1.26	5	3.15	1.29	4

The difference between employees' personal goals and organizational objectives	2.94	1.49	5	3.28	1.32	4	3.15	1.39	4
Intellectual and cultural differences between generations	2.96	1.47	4	3.28	1.31	4	3.15	1.38	4
Individual differences between employees	3.12	1.26	2	3.40	1.28	3	3.29	1.27	2
Different cultural and environmental factors	3.20	1.36	1	3.41	1.34	2	3.32	1.35	1
Ambiguity of employees' authorities	2.96	1.33	4	3.16	1.43	10	3.08	1.39	5

*Mean of agreeing with the reasons, where: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree

Table 6: Significant differences of reasons of employees' conflicts

Examined reasons of employees' conflicts	t	P-value
Lack of workforce for achieving objectives	2.873	0.005*
Limited financial resources for achieving objectives	3.718	0.001*
Ambiguity of employees' authorities	2.656	0.009*
Absence of rules for distributing authorities to employees	2.646	0.009*
Empowerment of authorities of a small number of employees	3.400	0.001*
Ambiguity in employees' responsibilities	2.089	0.039*
Absence of rules for distributing responsibilities to employees	2.535	0.012*
Imbalance between employees' authorities and responsibilities	2.646	0.009*

* Statistically-significant difference where P-value < 0.05.

4.4. Practices of managing employees' conflicts

This part presents the results of the fourth section of the questionnaire survey which addressed the practices of handling employees' conflicts in the tourism and hospitality industry. The results showed that both tourism enterprises and hospitality enterprises have reported a slightly different evaluation for the investigated practices, as shown in Table 7 and 8. Tourism enterprises have focused more on adopting a mixture of collaborating and competing practices for handling employees' conflicts where the first 6 practices (Table 7) were highly ranked among the examined practices in addition to two avoiding practices (with a mean score above 3.10). However, the other practices were found to be moderately implemented as they were weakly ranked among these practices and recorded lower mean ratings.

On the other hand, hospitality enterprises have focused more on adopting collaborating practices for managing employees' conflicts as they were highly ranked among these practices and recorded higher mean ratings (mean score greater than 3.20) with an exception of the first practice. In addition, two of the accommodating practices were found to be also highly ranked among hospitality enterprises, i.e. " I generally try to satisfy the needs of my superiors" and " I give in to the wishes of my superiors", and scored mean scores of 3.25 and 3.23; respectively. All the remaining practices were found to be adopted by the hospitality enterprises but at a smaller scale and scores below 3.00.

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the difference between adopting these conflict management practices among both tourism enterprises and hospitality enterprises. The results of the independent-samples *t*-test (Table 9) showed that a total of 9 practices have recorded significant differences between tourism enterprises and hospitality enterprises. Interestingly, four of these practices were significantly higher among tourism enterprises than hospitality enterprises, i.e.: "I try to investigate the issue with other to find an acceptable solution" (M=3.43, SD=1.19) t (138) = 2.619, P<0.05; "I try to work with others for a proper understanding of a problem" (M=3.43, SD=1.03) t (138) = 2.291, P<0.05;"I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor" (M=3.16, SD=1.15) t (138) = 2.528, P<0.05; "I usually propose a middle ground to resolve a conflict" (M=2.67, SD=1.08) t (138) = 2.282, P<0.05.

However, the remaining five practices were significantly higher among the hospitality enterprises than tourism enterprises; i.e.: "I generally try to satisfy the needs of my superiors" (M=2.81, SD=1.12) t (138) = 2.281, P<0.05; "I usually accommodate the wishes of my superiors" (M=3.03, SD=1.20) t (138) = 2.718, P<0.05; "I give in to the wishes of my superiors" (M=3.23, SD=1.18) t (138) = 3.341, P<0.05; "I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue" (M=3.18, SD=1.28) t (138) = 2.666, P<0.05; "I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation" (M=2.90, SD=1.25) t (138) = 2.068, P<0.05.

Table 7: Practices of handling employees' conflicts in tourism and hospitality enterprises

Practices of handling employees' conflicts	Tourism enterprises			Hospitality enterprises		
	M	**SD**	**Rank**	**M**	**SD**	**Rank**
I try to investigate the issue with other to find an acceptable solution	3.43	1.19	3	2.89	1.19	20
I try to integrate my ideas with others to come up with a decision jointly	3.50	1.13	1	3.21	1.25	9
I try to work with others to find solution to a problem that satisfies our expectations	3.43	0.99	3	3.22	1.20	8
I exchange accurate information with other to solve a problem together	3.47	1.05	2	3.24	1.20	6
I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way	3.38	1.26	4	3.27	1.20	3
I collaborate with others to come up with acceptable decisions	3.16	1.13	6	3.39	1.09	1
I try to work with others for a proper understanding of a problem	3.43	1.03	3	3.30	1.09	2
I generally try to satisfy the needs of my superiors	2.81	1.12	13	3.25	1.10	4
I usually accommodate the wishes of my superiors	2.54	1.28	19	3.03	1.20	16
I give in to the wishes of my superiors	2.67	1.21	16	3.23	1.18	7
I usually allow concessions to my superiors	2.36	1.25	21	3.07	1.20	14
I often go along with the suggestions of my superiors	2.87	1.37	12	3.10	1.15	13
I try to satisfy the expectations of my superiors	3.18	1.18	5	3.05	1.05	15
I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.	3.16	1.25	6	3.17	1.05	11
I use my authority to make a decision in my favor	3.12	1.17	7	3.18	1.14	10
I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor	3.16	1.15	6	3.15	1.18	12
I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue	2.65	1.10	17	3.18	1.28	10

I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation	2.34	1.14	22	2.90	1.25	19
I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my supervisor to myself	2.60	1.24	18	3.03	1.19	16
I usually avoid open discussion about my differences with my superiors	3.03	1.21	10	2.96	1.15	18
I try to stay away from disagreement with my superiors	2.72	1.23	15	2.83	1.25	
I avoid an encounter with my superiors	2.76	1.15	14	2.98	1.24	17
I try to keep my disagreement with my superiors to myself to avoid hard feelings	3.09	1.19	9	2.85	1.31	21
I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my superiors	3.10	1.27	8	2.90	1.33	19
I try to find a middle course to resolve a conflict	2.38	1.07	20	2.54	1.35	22
I usually propose a middle ground to resolve a conflict	2.67	1.08	16	2.32	1.41	24
I negotiate with my superiors so that a compromise can be reached	2.89	1.18	11	2.36	1.42	23
I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made	2.76	1.13	14	2.36	1.42	23

*Mean of agreeing with the reasons, where: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree

Table 8: Significant differences of conflict management practices

Examined practices	t	P-value
I try to investigate the issue with other to find an acceptable solution	2.619	0.010*
I try to work with others for a proper understanding of a problem	2.291	0.023*
I generally try to satisfy the needs of my superiors	2.281	0.024*
I usually accommodate the wishes of my superiors	2.718	0.007*
I give in to the wishes of my superiors	3.341	0.001*
I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor	2.528	0.013*
I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue	2.666	0.009*
I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation	2.068	0.040*
I usually propose a middle ground to resolve a conflict	2.282	0.024*

* Statistically-significant difference where *P*-value < 0.05.

4.5. Perceived effectiveness of conflict management practices

Participants were asked to indicate the effectiveness of the practices they have adopted to manage employees' conflicts on a five-response Likert scale; as well as to report their level of satisfaction with these practices on a five-response Likert scale. The results, as shown in Table 10, revealed that both tourism and hospitality enterprises have perceived these practices to be slightly effective for handling employees' conflicts with very close mean scores of effectiveness (3.61 and 3.51, respectively). Similarly, both tourism and hospitality enterprises were also slightly satisfied with the practices have undertaken to handle employees' conflicts and recorded above average mean scores and almost the same standard deviation.

Table 9: Perceived effectiveness and satisfaction with practices

Response	Tourism enterprises		Hospitality enterprises		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Perceived effectiveness	3.61*	0.93	3.51*	1.00	3.56*	0.96
Perceived satisfaction	3.65**	0.90	3.48**	0.99	3.56**	0.94

* Mean of effectiveness where 1= completely ineffective; 2= ineffective; 3= neutral; 4= effective; 5= completely effective. **Mean of satisfaction where 1= completely unsatisfied; 2= unsatisfied; 3= neutral; 4= satisfied; 5= completely satisfied

The results of the independent samples *t*-test (Table 11) showed that despite the slight differences between means of perceived effectiveness and perceived satisfaction with conflict management practices undertaken by both tourism and hospitality enterprises, these differences were found to be statistically insignificant differences. In other words, both tourism and hospitality enterprises have equally perceived the effectiveness of these practices as well as the satisfaction with these practices.

Table 10: Significant differences of effectiveness and satisfaction

Variable	t	P-value
Perceived effectiveness	0.594	0.554*
Perceived Satisfaction	1.035	0.303*

* Statistically-insignificant difference where *P*-value > 0.05.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Some significant conclusions can be inferred form this study. First, employees' conflicts represented a serious issue that many tourism and hospitality enterprises in Egypt have witnessed on a regular basis. Hospitality enterprises have experienced employees' conflicts more regularly than tourism enterprises. This may be because hospitality enterprises encompass various departments and employ greater number of employees than tourism enterprises. Second, there were many reasons that could have led to witnessing employees' conflicts. However, reasons related to different cultural and conflict of interests (either between employees or employees and the enterprise) were the most influential ones. Yet again, these reasons were significantly higher among hospitality enterprise than tourism enterprises.

The study also explored the main practices that tourism and hospitality enterprises have adopted to manage employees' conflicts. Interestingly, both tourism and hospitality enterprises have mainly adopted collaborating practices, such as "I try to investigate the issue with other to find an acceptable solution"; "I try to integrate my ideas with others to come up with a decision jointly", to handle employees' conflicts. The regularity of implementing these practices were very close among both tourism and hospitality enterprises with some exceptions for few practices. It was also concluded that practices of conflict management were slightly effective leading most of the investigated enterprises to be slightly satisfied with these practices. Based on its empirical results, this study suggests some recommendations for the manager of tourism and hospitality enterprises in Egypt regarding employees' conflict management. Managers of tourism and hospitality enterprises are advised develop a policy/strategy for handling employees' conflicts. Such policy/strategy should involve a combination established conflict management practices.

Managers are also advised to eliminate the major causes of employees' conflicts, such as: cultural/environmental differences; conflict of interest; ambiguity of employees' roles and authorities, to avert the occurrence of employees' conflicts. Managers are also encouraged to exploit employee's conflicts to improve employees' productivity through competition between employees and competitive task achievement. It is also worth recommending that tourism and hospitality enterprises need to instruct employees and raise their awareness about organizational conflict and address any conflict immediately because of its potential negative impact on the organization and staff. Another effective practice of handling conflicts includes the immediate intervention of the management in major conflict incidents through direct involvement of management in serious conflict incidents to quickly resolve it and reduce its negative impacts. Moreover, there should be a fair and objective compensation and bonus scheme to mitigate any conflicts related to this issue. Finally, managers are advised to clarify enterprise objectives, define the responsibilities and authorities of employees, seek to unite the culture within the organization to create a homogenous work environment and limit conflict occurrence.

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إدراة خلافات العاملين فى منشآت السياحة والضيافة فى مصر: دراسة تطبيقية علي منظور الإدارة

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الملخص العربي

تمثل الخلافات بين العاملين تحدي إداري كبير في العديد من منظمات الأعمال فى وقتنا الحاضر. وقد سعي هذ البحث إلي دراسة مشكلة خلافات العاملين فى منشآت السياحة والضيافة وسبل إدارة هذه الظاهرة والتعامل معها من منظور مديري مؤسسات السياحة والضيافة في مصر. وقد اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الكمي، وتم استخدام الاستبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات الأولية اللازمة وقد تم تحليل تلك البيانات وإجراء الاختبارت الإحصائية اللازمة لتحقيق أهداف البحث. وقد اشتملت عينة الدراسة على عدد 140 من مديري منشآت السياحة والضيافة فى مصر (55 منشأة سياحية و 85 منشأة ضيافة). وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن غالبية منشآت السياحة والضيافة التي شملتها العينة قد تعرضت لمشكلة وقوع خلافات بين العاملين بشكل متكرر سنويا. وكان من أهم أسباب هذه المشكلة العوامل الثقافية والبيئية المختلفة؛ غموض سلطات الموظفين وأدوارهم. وأظهرت النتائج أيضًا أن مؤسسات السياحة والضيافة فى مصر قد اتخذت العديد من الممارسات أو الإجراءات للتعامل مع مشكلة خلافات العاملين مثل دمج الأفكار والآراء المختلفة لحل النزاعات بشكل مشترك؛ التعاون بين العاملين والمشرفين للوصول إلي الفهم الصحيح للمشكلة أو الصراع وحله. وقد كشفت الدراسة أيضًا أن هذه الممارسات قد تم اعتبارها من قبل مؤسسات السياحة والضيافة على حد سواء فعالة إلي حد ما في إدارة نزاعات العاملين. وقد انتهت الدراسة إلي تقديم بعض التوصيات العملية التي من شأنها المساعدة في إدارة خلافات العاملين داخل منشآت السياحة والضيافة.