

CONFLICTS IN PROCESS MANAGEMENT IN ENTERPRISES

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Abstract: The publication shows the research results in the field of conflicts arising within the framework of process management in selected manufacturing enterprises. The purpose of the research was to find answers to two questions: 1) what are the most frequent conflicts in process management? 2) when conflicts are the cause of success and when process management fails? In the course of the research, methods were used, which included the literature studies, surveys, analysis and synthesis. The findings of the research were used to formulate recommendations on how to resolve conflicts in process management.

Keywords: types and causes of conflicts, conflict management, process management.

1. Introduction

Process management is currently one of the most extensively discussed concepts in theory and in practice. The implementation and use of such a concept requires complex changes to be made, including many elements of the process management system, focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of business activities in today's dynamic and competitive environment.

The application of the process management concept is also related to chances for improving the operations of Polish hard coal mining enterprises. For this reason, a model of a process management system for these enterprises has been developed (Bijańska, and Wodarski, 2019). For the development of guidelines for its implementation and use, research was conducted in other manufacturing enterprises, characterized by knowledge and experience in the field of process management. In the course of these studies it was observed that the management of these enterprises emphasised the issue of conflicts. It was noticed that managers indicated different types and causes of conflicts, and that the appearance of conflicts was perceived and treated differently by them, which resulted in defining the conflict as a source of successes or failures in process management. This was the basis for an in depth research on conflicts in process management aimed to address the following two research questions:

- 1) Which conflicts are most frequent in process management?
- 2) When conflicts are the cause of success and when process management fails?

This publication summarizes the most significant research findings in this area.

2. Research methods

The research was conducted in three stages, in which different research methods were used.

In the stage I, the literature study was conducted on the types and causes of conflicts, as well as views on conflicts and ways of responding to their occurrence.

In the stage II, a questionnaire was prepared and a questionnaire survey was conducted with the management of selected production enterprises.

In the stage III, based on analysis and synthesis of research results obtained in stages I and II, recommendations on how to cope with conflicts in process management in order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency of the application of this management concept were presented.

3. Results of the research

Stage I of the research

The literature on process management so far has shown that the implementation and functioning of this concept in enterprises encounters many issues and barriers, including conflicts (Bitkowska, 2013; Bitkowska, et al., 2011; Grajewski, 2007, 2009, 2012; Kraśniak, 2009; Maciejczyk, 2011). It should be emphasized, however, that no detailed and comprehensive considerations were presented concerning types and causes of conflicts in process management, as well as views on conflicts and ways of responding to them by management. This is why the literature on the occurrence of conflicts has been reviewed.

In the search for answers to the first research question, it was concluded that there are many types of conflicts presented in the literature, depending on the criterion chosen. In the context of the process management concept, the dimensional criterion, taking into consideration the parties to conflicts, is of major importance (Cowling, and Mailer, 1990; Karney, 1998; Retter, 2005; Wojtoszek, 2014; Omisore, and Abiodun, 2014). The following conflicts can be distinguished here:

- individual, caused by internal tension in the employee,
- interpersonal, caused by tension between two or more employees,
- inter-group, caused by the competition of groups in the enterprise.

These conflicts can take various forms (Stoner, and Wankel, 1997), including:

- evident, when employees openly manifest the causes and objectives of conflicts,
- hidden, when the causes of conflicts are not revealed or are indirectly revealed,
- organised, when conflicts take place according to accepted rules,
- not organised, when conflicts are spontaneous.

Christopher Moor's 'Circle of Conflict' (Moor, 2012) is also crucial in considering the types of conflicts that may be related to the implementation and application of process management. It distinguishes between five types of conflict, which are caused by specific causes. Especially these are:

1. Data conflicts that arise as a result of the lack, limitation or discrepancy of information available to the parties (conflict participants), which may be due to different methods of data collection, processing or interpretation. These conflicts are usually accompanied by mutual accusations of concealment, manipulation of information or intentional misrepresentation;
2. Relationship conflicts which are associated with the negative attitude of employees, especially with negative emotions arising in situations of disagreement or misunderstanding. They often have no objective reasons and may be triggered by misperceptions, stereotypes, bad communication, revengeful behavior and clashes of opposing personalities, and temperaments. These conflicts are usually characterized by unfriendly atmosphere and disturbances in cooperation;
3. Values conflicts which are caused by different behaviors and attitudes of employees, resulting from the system of values adopted by them: ideology, ethical and religious principles, but also habits and preferences. The strength of these conflicts is enhanced by the exposure of one's own values without any attitude of tolerance towards values respected by the other party. These conflicts are among the most problematic to resolve in practice;
4. Conflicts of interest, which are associated with an impediment of the ability to meet specific needs. They concern interests:
 - material (e.g. unequal distribution of resources, money or goods),
 - procedural (e.g. rules defining the allocation of promotions, awards),
 - psychological (e.g. trust, respect, security, justice);
5. Structural conflicts that arise from the structure of the situation in which employees are placed. They often occur as a result of organizational changes, improper coordination of teams, new or unclear tasks, duties and competences for particular positions, time pressure (a barrage of tasks or problems), or poor communication. These conflicts may be the starting point for conflicts of relations, data or values.

In search of answers to the second research question, it was found that in the literature views on conflicts and ways of responding to their occurrence by management are most often described in evolutionary terms (Robbins, and DeCenzo, 2002; Kisielnicki, 2005; Robbins, and Judge, 2012).

The first view is related to the classical school of management. It implies that conflicts are bad because they only have a negative impact on the organization and are a sign of insufficient communication, lack of openness and trust between people and managers' inability to manage. In this view, managers should avoid conflicts and prevent their arising and disclosure.

The second view is associated with the school of interpersonal relations. It is based on the full acceptance of conflict as an unavoidable and not necessarily harmful occurrence, as conflict can be a source of change and a solution to problems. In this view, managers should reduce the negative effects of conflicts and strengthen the positive ones.

The third view is connected with modern management theory. It stipulates that conflicts are a positive force and are essential for the enterprise to function efficiently. Within this view it is recommended to apply the concept of conflict management, under which managers should skillfully stimulate conflicts in order to force employees to take a specific attitude, creativity, innovation and initiative (Rummel-Syska, 1990; Buhler, 2002; Ratajczak, 2007; Bieniok, 2011). According to this view, the role of the managerial staff is to ensure that an appropriate level of conflict is maintained, at which the enterprise functions best. It is thought that too low a level (intensity) of conflict in an enterprise inhibits its effectiveness as a result of stagnation, while too high a level leads to chaos, distraction, antipathy and thus contributes to a decrease in effectiveness (Pocztowski, 1998; Penc, 2000; Hatch, 2002). Maintaining an appropriate level of conflict requires conflict management skills with particular emphasis on constructive conflict resolution.

It must be highlighted that although the views presented were dominant in the literature at various times, all of them still occur in real enterprise situations. It is thought that regardless of the recommendations presented in the management science, each person presents a specific, relatively stable attitude to conflict and a corresponding way of responding to its occurrence, which is related to his or her personality. In psychology, personality is a theoretical construction that enables one to assess the functioning of a person from the point of view of his or her ability to adapt to the environment. In considerations of personality, its traits are accentuated: extroversion, kindness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. It has been proven that these traits are of a vital role in explaining individual human behaviors such as control placement, Machiavellianism, self-esteem, self-control and risk taking (Bolton, 1986; Witkowski, 1999; Robbins, and DeCenzo, 2002). The way people behave is also influenced by their temperament. It is described as a set of relatively constant characteristics of behavior and action, enabling qualification of people to types such as: 1) sanguine, balanced and active type, 2) phlegmatic, strong, balanced and slow type, 3) choleric, unbalanced and stimulated type, violent, 4) melancholic, weak, passive type. The indicated personality traits

have an influence on the behavior of people in conflict situations. As a result of research conducted in this field, five basic ways of responding to conflicts were identified (Dąbrowski, 1991; Chelpa, and Witkowski, 1999; Munduate, et al., 1999; Quinn, et al., 2007). These methods, called styles of behavior, were determined in relation to the assertiveness of people and their attitude towards cooperation. It is assumed that assertive people are characterized by self-confidence, decisiveness, striving to achieve their goals, determined behavior, without fear and hesitation or aggression. However, cooperation is manifested in the cooperation for accomplishing outcomes that are beneficial for both sides, despite the fact that in a given situation one can accomplish outcomes that are beneficial only for one's self. Assertiveness and cooperation are independent traits, each person can be characterised as more or less assertive and more or less cooperative. The combination of these qualities determines the specific ways people react to conflicts. In particular:

- 1) Low assertiveness and low cooperativeness lead to a reaction called *avoidance*. People with such traits withdraw from conflicts, consciously fail to notice their existence (e.g. by deliberately dealing with other issues), diminish the importance of conflicts (e.g. convincing themselves and others that it is not a problem), try to wait it out, avoid confrontation, ignore conflicts in silence because they do not want to prove their own reasons or consider the views of the other party. This type of reaction derives from the belief that conflicts are a threat and that fear and emotional tension connected with it are so strong that they decide to withdraw from the conflict;
- 2) Low assertiveness and high cooperativeness lead to a reaction known as *submission*. People with such traits are able to give up their own views, objectives and interests. Conflicts are treated as a threat to the harmony and stability of the desired cooperation, so they give way to the other party, adapt to their views, objectives and interests and neglect their own;
- 3) Average assertiveness and average cooperativeness lead to a *compromise* reaction. People with such traits accept the possibility of giving up part of their interests to others, while at the same time trying to gain some benefit by giving the other party the right to part of them. Compromise is then based on the belief that agreement is feasible if everyone is satisfied with achieving only part of their own needs and goals and giving up part of it;
- 4) High assertiveness and high cooperativeness result in a reaction called *cooperation*. People with such traits cooperate with each other. They look for constructive solutions to build good relations and cooperation, while at the same time seeking to satisfy their own interests and those of the other side to the fullest. The cooperation aims to find the best solution for each of the parties. People who solve conflicts in this way usually strengthen their relationships and are able to achieve their goals and high performance;

- 5) High assertiveness and low cooperativeness result in a reaction called *competition*. People with such traits fight, compete with each other, are ambitious in resolving the conflict to their advantage, have a strong desire to prove the superiority of their own interests over those of the other party, strive to achieve all their own goals and needs, but at the expense of the other party.

The way in which people respond to conflict can be identified through research based on appropriate tests, the most famous of which is the ThomasKilmann questionnaire [<https://kilmanniagnostics.com/>].

In short, on the basis of the presented considerations with regard to views on conflicts and ways of responding to their occurrence, a thesis can be formulated that conflicts can be a cause of success when the management treats them as a natural and necessary occurrence, which contributes, among other things, to solving organizational problems and stimulates the activity, involvement and creativity of employees. In order for conflicts to be a cause of success, management must have knowledge of how employees react to conflicts. This knowledge should be the basis for conflict management, the essence of which is the active influence of the management on conflicts, particularly the identification of conflict situations, as well as the selection and application of appropriate strategies and methods of conflict resolution. The literature includes many of them, indicating the conditions of application depending on the level of conflict intensity (Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2012). The author of this publication first and foremost considered those strategies and methods that may be used to constructively resolve conflicts, so that they can be a cause of success. Hence, on the basis of the analysis and synthesis of the considerations presented in the literature, a thesis can be formulated that conflicts can be a cause of success when employees treat them as a problem to be solved in the course of compromise, cooperation or competition. With regard to such employees, three strategies can be applied within the framework of conflict management, supported by methods of negotiation, mediation, arbitration (Mastenbroek, 1996; Chelpa, and Witkowski, 1999; Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2012). In particular, with regard to employees who respond to a conflict in a manner defined as:

- 1) *Compromise* a strategy called *lose-lose* can be applied. This strategy should not be seen in a negative light, as its name is derived solely from the fact that, when it is applied, the parties involved in the conflict give up some of their expectations they make concessions, but in order to reach an agreement and the resulting benefits for both parties. This strategy can use negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement between the parties to the conflict, which requires sacrificing by both sides, because both sides are losing something in order to gain something;
- 2) *Cooperation* a strategy called *win-win* can be applied. The idea behind this strategy is to bring about an exchange of views and information in order to find the best integrating solutions, which both sides of the conflict are content with. Mediation can be used in this strategy (Posthuma, at al., 2002; Wood, 2004; Bercovitch, 2006). The mediator is

an intermediary whose role in conflict resolution is to create favourable conditions for reaching a consensus. Consensus determines the agreement between the parties to the conflict it is therefore a generalized, common position and the best conflict solution achieved in the course of communication;

- 3) *Competition* a strategy called *win-lose* can be applied. The essence of this strategy is to lead to the resolution of a conflict in favor of one side. In this strategy, arbitration can be used, as long as the chosen arbitrator (e.g. specialist, expert) is an authority for the parties and they respect his or her opinion. An arbitrator, on the basis of the information obtained, without the participation and possibility of influencing the parties, resolves a conflict for the benefit of one of them.

Correct use of the indicated strategies and methods should have a positive impact on the functioning of the enterprise, and in the context of the process management concept, on its effectiveness and efficiency. This impact should be defined as an impact:

- motivational, because conflicts force the parties involved in them to be active, engaged in the implementation of tasks set before them, counteracting apathy and routine,
- innovative, because conflicts call for change and the confrontation of different opinions can bring new, often better solutions,
- identification, because employees in conflict situations are conscious of their own attitudes, values recognised by them, and also observe differences in the attitudes of others, which enables rational management of their behavior (Kisielnicki, 2005).

The abovementioned strategies shall not be effective when employees react to conflicts in a way defined as avoiding or submitting to them. In such situations, conflicts can be a cause of failure, so conflict management should be based on extinction and adjustment strategies that support the use of traditional methods, such as ignoring, reorienting and separating (Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2012), directed at reducing the level of emotional tension associated with conflict.

Stage II of the research

Based on the results of the literature study, a questionnaire was prepared for the survey (Table 1). It consists of 12 questions:

- from 1 to 3 are aimed at obtaining answers to the first research question,
- from 4 to 12 are aimed at obtaining answers to the second research question.

Table 1.

Sample of the survey questionnaire

<i>When placing an X, please select one or more answers</i>	
1.	In what dimension do the most frequent conflicts in process management occur?
	Individual, caused by the internal tension of one of the members of the process team.
	Interpersonal, caused by tension between at least two members of the process team.
	Intergroup, caused by tension between at least two process teams.

Cont. table 1.

2.	What are the most frequent forms of conflicts in process management?
	Evident the causes of conflict are openly manifested (e.g. by complaints).
	Hidden the causes of conflict are not revealed, they are revealed indirectly (e.g. through gossip).
	Organised conflicts take place according to accepted rules (e.g. as part of a strike).
	Un-organised conflicts are spontaneous.
3.	Which types of conflicts are most common in process management?
	Data conflicts caused by lack of access or unequal access to information, misinterpretation of information by parties, false information.
	Relationship conflicts caused by the negative attitude of the members of the process team related mainly to negative emotions appearing in the situation of disagreement, unwillingness to cooperate, ignoring or destroying the ideas of others, prejudices, indifference, favoring selected employees, lack of mutual trust.
	Values conflicts caused by different behaviors and attitudes of people, resulting from the system of values adopted by them — ideology, ethical and religious principles, but also habits and preferences.
	Conflicts of interest caused by lack of ability to meet needs: - material (e.g. unequal distribution of resources money, goods), - procedural rules (e.g. lack of rules defining the allocation of promotions, awards), - psychological (e.g. lack of respect, security, justice).
	Structural conflicts caused by organizational disorder, defective coordination of the work of the process team members, organizational changes implemented as part of the implementation and application of process management implying increased requirements for employees, new or unclear tasks, duties and responsibilities for individual positions, improper communication, moving decisions to higher organizational levels.
4.	What is your view on conflicts?
	Conflicts are bad and always have a negative impact. They destroy relationships, disorganize process management. They are the source of failure. If they arise, avoid them, do not participate in them.
	Conflicts are a natural and inevitable occurrence in process management. They do not have to be harmful. If they occur, they should be used to bring about positive changes and new solutions to problems. Properly managed, they can be a source of success.
	Conflicts are a source of success and are essential to keep employees engaged and to stimulate innovation. They must be stimulated and maintained at a certain level. Properly managed, they strengthen the position of the managers/process owners.
5.	How would you rate your knowledge in the field of conflict management?
	None or very low level.
	Average level.
	High level.
6.	What is your source of knowledge in the field of conflict management?
	None. I have never heard of it.
	Higher education, courses, training.
	Own interests and experiences work experience.
7.	How do you assess your effectiveness of conflict management in the process team?
	Low. I am not achieving my objectives.
	Average. I sometimes achieve my objectives.
	High. I always achieve my objectives.
8.	How would you rate your knowledge of how the members of the process team react to a conflict?
	None or low level. I have never been interested in it.
	Average level resulting from observation.
	High level resulting from observation and research (e.g. using appropriate tests).
9.	Do you adjust your conflict management strategies to the way your team members respond to conflicts?
	No. I think it does not matter.
	Sometimes. However, it is more important to choose the strategy that I prefer and know well.
	Always. I believe that only then can conflicts be resolved constructively and be a source of success.

Cont. table 1.

<i>Please skip if the first answer in question 9 is answered with 'No'.</i>					
10. What conflict resolution strategies are used by you according to the behavioral style of the members of the process team?					
Strategies/Behavioral style	Avoidance	Submission	Compromise	Cooperation	Competition
extinction					
adaptation					
lose-lose					
win-win					
win-lose					
11. In what situations can conflicts be a source of success in process management?					
	When members of the process team withdraw from conflicts, avoid confrontation, weaken conflicts, give up their own ideas, views and interests to maintain good relations.				
	When members of the process team are open to different, not only their own solutions, they share their knowledge and experience to obtain constructive ideas, cooperate and engage in the search for the best solutions satisfying all parties to the conflict.				
	When members of the process team compete against each other, they are ambitious in resolving the conflict to their advantage, they become strongly involved because they want the best possible solution for themselves.				
12. In your opinion, what is the importance of conflict management knowledge for effective and efficient process management?					
	None or little meaning. Over time, conflicts disappear by themselves.				
	It is important, but experience and intuition are more important than theory.				
	It's very important. It gives guidance on how to deal with conflicts, depending on the specific situation. Combined with experience and intuition, it supports constructive conflict resolution and therefore contributes to effective and efficient process management.				

Source: own elaboration.

The research covered 9 large and 25 medium manufacturing enterprises¹ operating in the Silesian Voivodeship, which declared the use of process management concepts for at least four years and agreed to conduct a survey research among managers - process owners, who have been performing this role for at least two years. A total of 204 correctly completed questionnaires were collected.

The conducted research shows that (Table 1, part. I):

1. 77.9%, i.e. 159 respondents believe that in process management in enterprises the most frequent conflicts are interpersonal ones, which usually take the form of open (69.2% - 110 people)² and un-organised (93.1% - 148 people), and in terms of causes they can be described as structural (42.1% - 67 people), interests (30.2% - 48 people), relations (13.2% - 21 people), data (8.8% - 14 people), values (5.7% - 9 people).
2. 15.2%, i.e. 31 respondents believe that in process management in enterprises the most frequent conflicts are intergroup ones, which usually have an open form (90.3% - 28 people) and un-organised form (64.5% - 20 people), and in terms of causes they can be described as structural (41.9% - 13 people), interests (38.7% - 12 people), relations (9.7% - 3 people), data (6.5% - 2 people), values (3.2% - 1 person).

¹ The undertaken research is representative for the studied population of medium and large enterprises of the Silesian Voivodeship. The surveyed enterprises were selected from a group of 300 business entities due to the use of the process management concept.

² The percentage of responses received and the number of people who responded are given in brackets.

3. 6.9%, i.e. 14 respondents believe that in process management in enterprises the most frequent conflicts are individual ones, which usually have a hidden form (78.6% - 11 people) and un-organised form (92.9% - 13 people), and in terms of causes they can be described as conflicts of interest (35.7% - 5 people), relations (28.6% - 4 people), structural (21.4% - 3 people), data (7.1% - 1 person), values (7.1% - 1 person). Moreover, the conducted research shows that (Table 1, part. II).
4. 69.6%, i.e. 142 respondents believe that conflicts in process management are natural and inherent, and not necessarily a source of failure because they can be used to bring about positive change, meaning that properly managed conflicts can be a cause of success. Among the respondents:
 - 47.2%, i.e. 67 people declared the average level and 40.8%, i.e. 58 people declared a high level of knowledge on conflict management, acquired in the course of higher education, courses and training (62.7% - 89 people), also in their own scope and during work experience (37.3% - 53 people),
 - 62%, i.e. 88 people stated that sometimes and 38%, i.e. 54 people stated that always when managing conflicts, they achieve their objectives.
5. 21.6%, i.e. 44 respondents believe that conflicts occurring in process management are a source of success and are necessary to keep employees engaged, stimulate innovation, and therefore it is important to stimulate conflicts and keep them at a certain level. Among the respondents:
 - 88.6%, i.e. 39 people declared a high level and 11.4%, i.e. 5 people declared an average level of knowledge on conflict management acquired during higher education, courses and training (52.3% - 23 people), and also in their own scope and during work experience (47.7% - 21 people),
 - 72.7%, i.e. 32 people stated that always and 27.3%, i.e. 12 people stated that sometimes when managing conflicts, they achieve their objectives.
6. 8.8%, i.e. 18 respondents believe that conflicts occurring in process management are a source of failure, because they always cause adverse effects, destroy relationships, disorganize process management, and when they arise, they should be avoided and not participated in. Among the respondents:
 - 72.2%, i.e. 13 people declared none or low level and 27.8%, i.e. 5 people declared an average level of knowledge on conflict management acquired during higher education, courses and training (61.1% - 11 people), also in their own scope and during work experience (38.9% - 7 people),
 - 88.9%, i.e. 16 people stated that never and 11.1%, i.e. 2 people stated that sometimes when managing conflicts, they achieve their objectives.

The research also shows that (Table 1, part III):

7. 68.1%, i.e. 139 respondents believe that their knowledge of how their process team members react to conflict is at an average level and is the result of observations. Among the respondents:
 - 63.3%, i.e. 88 people declared that they always adjust their conflict management strategies to the way their process team members react to conflicts, because only then can conflicts be constructively settled and be a cause of success,
 - 36.7%, i.e. 51 people declared that they sometimes adjust their conflict management strategies to the ways the members of the process team react to conflicts, because their preferences are more crucial.
8. 18.1%, i.e. 37 respondents believe that their knowledge of how their process team members react to conflict is high and is the result of observations and research (e.g. using appropriate tests). Among the respondents:
 - 67.6%, i.e. 25 people declared that they always adjust their conflict management strategies to the way the members of the process team react to conflicts, because only then can conflicts be constructively settled and be a cause of success,
 - 32.4%, i.e. 12 people declared that they sometimes adjust their conflict management strategies to the ways the members of the process team react to conflicts, because their preferences are more crucial.
9. 13.7%, i.e. 28 respondents believe that their knowledge of how the members of the process team react to conflict is low or none at all, because it was not of interest to them. These respondents do not adjust their conflict management strategies to the way the process team members react to conflicts, believing that this is not significant. Moreover (Table 1, part IV).
10. Among 86.2%, i.e. 176 respondents who stated that their knowledge of how the members of the process team reacted to conflict was at a medium or high level:
 - 98.3%, i.e. 173 people declared that they use *extinction* (90.3% - 159 people) and *adaptation* (8% - 14 people) strategies in conflict resolution in relation to the behavioral style of members of the process team defined as *avoidance*,
 - 98.8%, i.e. 174 people declared that in conflict resolution, in relation to the style of behavior of members of the process team defined as *submission*, they use strategies of *adaptation* (84.1% - 148 people), *extinction* (10.2%, 18 people) and *lose-lose* (4.5% - 8 people),
 - 98.3%, i.e. 173 people declared that they used *win-win* (86.4% - 152 people) and *lose-lose* (11.9% - 21 people) strategies to solve conflicts in relation to the style of behavior of members of the process team defined as a *compromise*,
 - 98.9%, i.e. 174 people declared that they use *win-win* (88.1% - 155 people), *lose-lose* (10.8% - 19 people) strategies to solve conflicts in relation to the behavioral style of members of the process team defined as *cooperation*,

- 99.4%, i.e. 175 people declared that in solving conflicts in relation to the style of behavior of members of the process team defined as *competition*, they use strategies of *lose-win* (44.9% - 79 people), *win-win* (40.9% - 72 people), *lose-lose* (13.6% - 24 people). It should also be noted, that (Table 1, part V).
11. 76.5%, i.e. 156 respondents believe that conflicts can be a cause of success in the process management, when members of the process team are open to different, not only their own solutions, share knowledge and experience to obtain constructive ideas, cooperate and engage in the search for the best solutions, satisfying all parties of the conflict.
 12. 15.2%, i.e. 31 respondents believe that the conflicts can be a cause of success in the process management when members of the process team compete with each other, are ambitious in the resolution of the conflict to their advantage, are strongly committed because they want to achieve the best possible solution for themselves.
 13. 8.3%, i.e. 17 respondents believe that conflicts can be a cause of success in the process management, when members of the process team withdraw from them, avoid confrontation, weaken conflicts, give up their own ideas, views and interests to maintain good interpersonal relations.
 14. 77.9%, i.e. 159 respondents consider that the knowledge of conflict management is very crucial because it provides guidance on how to deal with conflicts, depending on the specific situations, and in combination with experience and intuition it supports constructive conflict resolution and therefore contributes to the successful and efficient management of processes. 14.2%, i.e. 29 respondents believe that the knowledge of conflict management is vital, but not as important as experience and intuition. On the other hand, 7.8%, i.e. 16 respondents believe that the knowledge of conflict management is either not important at all or is of little significance, because conflicts disappear on their own.

Table 2.

Results of the research (100% = 204 respondents)

<i>Part I. based on the answers to questions 1-3</i>		
Dimensions of conflicts in process management	Forms of conflicts	Types of conflicts
Individual: 6.9% - 14 people	evident: 21.4% - 3 people hidden: 78.6% - 11 people	data: 7.1% - 1 person relationship: 28.6% - 4 people values: 7.1% - 1 person interest: 35.7% - 5 people structural: 21.4% - 3 people
	organized: 7.1% - 1 person unorganized: 92.9% - 13 people	
Interpersonal: 77.9% - 159 people	evident: 69.2% - 110 people hidden: 30.8% - 49 people	data: 8.8% - 14 people relationship: 13.2% - 21 people values: 5.7% - 9 people interest: 30.2% - 48 people structural: 42.1% - 67 people
	organized: 6.9% - 11 people unorganized: 93.1%, 148 people	
Intergroup: 15.2% - 31 people	evident: 90.3% - 28 people hidden: 9.7% - people	data: 6.5% - 2 people relationship: 9.7% - 3 people values: 3.2% - 1 person interest: 38.7% - 12 people structural: 41.9% - 13 people
	organized: 35.5% - people unorganized: 64.5% - 20 people	

Cont. table 2.

<i>Part II. based on the answers to questions 4-7</i>					
View on conflicts of respondents	Level of knowledge of respondents in the field of conflict management	Source of knowledge of respondents in the field of conflict management		Self - assessment of effectiveness of conflict management	
Conflicts are the source of failure: 8.8%-18 people	none or very low: 72.2% - 13 people average: 27.8% - 5 people high: -	none: - higher education: 61.1% - 11 people own scope, work experience: 38.9% - 7 people		low: 88.9% - 16 people average: 11.1% - 2 people high: -	
Conflicts should be used to bring about positive changes - can be a cause of success: 69.6%, 142 people	none or very low: 12% - 17 people average: 47.2% - 67 people high: 40.8% - 58 people	none: - higher education: 62.7% - 89 people own scope, work experience: 37.3% - 53 people		low: - average: 62% - 88 people high: 38% - 54 people	
Conflicts are a source of success - they must be stimulated and maintained at a certain level 21.6% - 44 people	none or very low: - average: 11.4% - 5 people high: 88.6% - 39 people	none: - higher education: 52.3% - 23 people own scope, work experience: 47.7% - 21 people		low: - average: 27.3% - 12 people high: 72.7% - 32 people	
Part III. based on the answers to questions 8-9					
The level of knowledge of how the members of the process team react to a conflict			Adjustment of the conflict management strategies to the way of team members respond to conflicts?		
none or very low: 13.7% - 28 people			never: 100% - 28 people sometimes: - always: -		
average: 68.1% - 139 people			never: - sometimes: 36.7% - 51 people always: 63.3% - 88 people		
high: 18.1% - 37 people			never: - sometimes: 32.4% - 12 people always: 67.6% - 25 people		
Part IV. based on the answers to question 10 (100%=176 respondents)					
Conflict strategies used according to the behavioral style of the members of the process team	Avoidance	Submission	Compromise	Cooperation	Competition
extinction	90.3% 159 people	10.2% 18 people	0.6% 1person	-	-
adaptation	8% 14 people	84.1% 148 people	0.6% 1person	0.6% 1person	0.6% 1person
lose-lose	0.6% 1person	4.5% 8 people	11.9% 21 people	10.8% 19 people	13.6% 24 people
win-win	0.6% 1person	0.6% 1person	86.4% 152 people	88.1% 155 people	40.9% 72 people
win-lose	0.6% 1person	0.6% 1person	0.6% 1person	0.6% 1person	44.9% 79 people

Cont. table 2.

Part V. based on the answers to questions 11-12	
Conflicts can be a source of success in process management	when members of the process team:
	withdraw from conflicts, give up their own ideas, views and interests to maintain good relations: 8.3% - 17 people
	are open to different, not only their own solutions, cooperate and engage in the search for the best solutions satisfying all parties to the conflict: 76.5% - 156 people
	compete against each other, they get strongly involved because they want the best possible solution for themselves: 15.2% - 31 people
The importance of conflict management knowledge for effective and efficient process management	none or little meaning - over time, conflicts disappear on their own: 7.9% - 16 people
	it is important, but experience and intuition are more important than theory: 14.2% - 29 people
	it's very important - combined with experience and intuition, it supports constructive conflict resolution: 77.9% - 159 people

Source: own elaboration.

Stage III of the research

Based on the analysis and synthesis of the results achieved during the Stages I and II of the research, conclusions were formulated that provide answers to the defined research questions.

Question 1: Which conflicts are most frequent in process management?

In process management in manufacturing enterprises, interpersonal, open and un-organized conflicts occur most often, caused by:

- the structure of the situation in which employees find themselves, including organizational disorder, defective work coordination, organizational changes implying increased requirements for employees, new or unclear tasks, duties and responsibilities for individual positions, poor communication, moving decisions to higher organisational levels,
- interests, in particular obstacles or inability to fulfill material and procedural interests or psychological needs.

Question 2: When conflicts are the cause of success and when process management fails?

Conflicts are a cause of success, if:

- 1) Managerial staff – process owners have a positive view on the occurrence of conflicts and consider them as necessary situations, which have to be properly managed in order to achieve the assumed objectives;
- 2) Managerial staff – process owners have at least medium, and preferably high level of knowledge (both theoretical and acquired in work experience) in the field of conflict management. The level of this knowledge is closely linked with:
 - views on conflicts a high level of knowledge very often implies treating conflicts as a cause of success,
 - achieving goals a high level of knowledge very often implies a high effectiveness of achieving the assumed objectives;

3) Managerial staff – process owners have at least an average, or preferably high level of knowledge about how the process team members react to a conflict and when this knowledge is applied by them when selecting a conflict management strategy. It is worth noting that the vast majority of managers who use their knowledge of how the members of the process team react to conflicts apply:

- an *extinction* strategy for a behavioral style defined as *avoidance*,
- an *adaptation* strategy for a behavioral style defined as *submission*,
- a *win-win* strategy for a behavioral style defined as *compromise*,
- a *win-win* strategy for a behavioral style defined as *cooperation*,
- a *win-win* strategy and a *win-lose* strategy for a behavioral style defined as *competition*.

The indicated choices of strategies in practice are not equivalent to the guidelines presented in the literature on the subject, in relation to

- a *compromise* style of behavior for which a *lose-lose* strategy is recommended,
- a *cooperation* style of behavior for which a *win-win* strategy is recommended,
- a *competition* style of behavior for which a *win-lose* strategy is recommended;

4) Employees – members of process teams are very open to different, not only their own solutions, sharing knowledge and experience to obtain constructive ideas, cooperating and engaging in the search for the best solutions satisfying all parties of the conflict. The indicated traits determine the behavioral styles defined as *compromise* and *cooperation*. Only a small group of managers believe that conflicts can be a source of success in the process management when members of the process team compete with each other, are ambitious in resolving conflicts to their advantage, are strongly committed to achieving the best possible solution for themselves. These traits determine the behavioral style defined as *competition*.

Conflicts are the cause of failure, if:

- 1) Managerial staff – process owners are very negative about conflicts and they treat them as a bad, unnecessary, destructive occurrence resulting only in adverse effects, destroying relations, disorganizing process management. Such a view results in the fact that process owners avoid conflicts, and if they occur on their own, they try not to participate in them hoping that they will disappear on their own;
- 2) Managerial staff, process owners are known for their lack or low level of knowledge (both theoretical and acquired in work experience) in the field of conflict management. Lack of knowledge or low level of knowledge directly affects:
 - views on conflicts this often implies that conflicts are treated as a cause of failure,
 - achieving objectives this often implies a lack or low effectiveness in achieving objectives;

- 3) Managerial staff, process owners have no or low level of knowledge about how to react to a conflict by members of the process team, and as a result, they do not take it into account in conflict management;
- 4) Employees, members of process teams withdraw from conflicts, avoid confrontation, weaken conflicts, give up their own ideas, views and interests to maintain good relations.

Based on the presented research results, the following recommendations on how to tackle conflicts in process management have been developed:

1. Conflicts that occur in process management should be considered as a potential cause of success, which means that if they occur, they should not be avoided, but utilized to increase the level of activity and involvement of process team members in the search for new, innovative solutions or improvements to existing problems, which is essential in the context of process improvement.
2. In order to properly handle conflict situations and use them to achieve specific objectives, managerial staff must possess knowledge of conflict management. A proper level of such knowledge enhances positive thinking about conflicts and also influences the achievement of assumed objectives. For this reason, it is essential to allow managers to gain this knowledge, both during their studies, courses or training, and also during work experience, which involves, among other things, the need to accept the possibility of committing mistakes.
3. Effective conflict management demands that managerial staff have knowledge of how to respond to a conflict by members of the process team, based not only on observations but also on specific tests. This knowledge should be properly utilized in the selection of conflict management strategies.
4. A strategy described as *win-win* seems to be the most appropriate for effective conflict management. In practice, it is used in reference to behavioral styles defined as *compromise*, *cooperation* and *competition*. When it comes to the latter, the *win-lose* strategy is also used, but only few managers believe that this style of behavior towards conflicts should be developed because it is not beneficial for enhancing interpersonal relations.
5. Organizational culture is of crucial importance, which should be targeted at the participation of process team members in the development of change concepts. Among employees' members of process teams, it is necessary to build an atmosphere of openness to changes and new and constructive solutions developed by them, as well as to share knowledge, engage, be creative and innovative, so that they adopt attitudes appropriate for searching for compromises, cooperation and (to a lesser extent) for competition.

Conclusions

Conflicts in process management are a typical occurrence and they are frequently used by managerial staff to increase the level of activity and involvement of process team members in searching for new, innovative solutions or improvements to existing problems. The conducted research has shown that the vast majority of managers perceive conflicts as a potential cause of success in process management. These managers have knowledge of conflict management, which they use in a proper way, for instance, by choosing a conflict management strategy to react to conflicts among members of process teams. It is worth emphasizing that in practice, conflict management strategies defined as *win-win*, *compromise* and *cooperation* strategies that enhance interpersonal relationships are preferred. Only few managers believe that conflicts can be a cause of success when process team members are strongly *competitive*, so they seldom use a strategy called *win-win*. This is perhaps due to the fact that in process management, integration and good interpersonal relations are crucial, especially among members of the process team and therefore the application of the *win-lose* strategy seems to be justified only between process teams. The presented findings show that treating conflicts as an opportunity to make improvements, high competence of the managerial staff in conflict management, as well as building an appropriate organizational culture focused on the participation of process team members in the development and implementation of improvements, all contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of process management.

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