INNOVATION THROUGH CONFLICT IN DIVERSITY WORKPLACE: CONFLICT IMPACT FACTORS

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This independent study paper has been approved to be partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master Business Administration in General Management

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Independent Title of Research: INNOVATION THROUGH CONFLICT IN DIVERSITY WORKPLACE: CONFLICT IMPACT FACTORS

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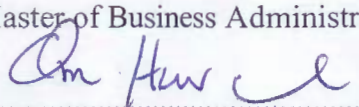**Title:** Innovation through Conflict in Diversity Workplace: Conflict Impact Factors

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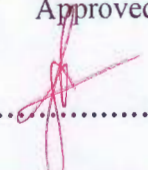**Degree:** International Master of Business Administration (IMBA)

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Abstract

This study is focused on the investigation of conflict impact factors on diversity management to empower innovation efficiency. The study conveys some related factors and influences between diversity workplace, conflict and innovation. The present research contributes to the discussion of workplace conflict as one of the business priorities and to investigate its influence including both healthy and harmful impacts on workplace diversity and innovative productivity. Documentary research method was used for this topic analysis. Overall, this study aimed to discover what strategies can be used to deal with upgrading diversity and workplace conflict based on the investigation of the links and interactions between them. Along with the methodologies and conceptual framework collaborated with the documentary research method, the main results of the study will be discussed by applying theoretical and managerial implication to its findings. The conclusion of this study will show some of its limitations and suggestions for the future investigations.

Keywords- diversity workplace, conflict, conflict simulation, models of management, innovation.
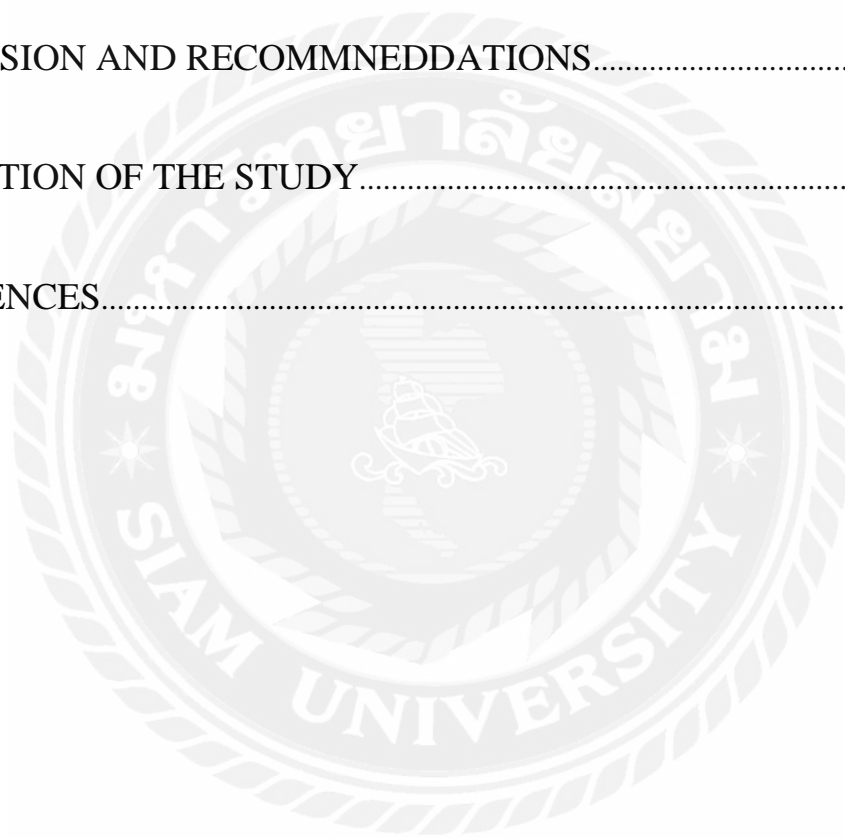
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Introduction

Why everyone in this globe, is trying so hard to be innovative? The answer is simple, and yes it is just to survive. With each passing day, the business markets become more and more competitive and challenging and it naturally pushes the one with special characteristic to the top. Due to this simple logic, everyone is trying so hard to be different, and it makes business communities becoming more competitive than ever, and which literally caused innovation as a success key for every each in this organization.

Each should be different to survive and to reach the top, being different only is not enough to survive in this competitive world. It is necessary to know how to utilize this difference in real life, to make it more different. These logic is the common phenomenon of innovative happening. Whether to survive in these competitive markets, every each of organization, especially for the ones from business community, must have their own typical competitive advantages for survival. When it comes to survival, role of innovation is essential and Innovation becomes one of the most important concerns of business organization and its role in the development and coordination of the market is unchangeable (H. Tohidi, M.M. Jabbari, 2012). For a business to be succeeded, not only a small business as SMEs (small and medium enterprises) but also for the large companies, achieving high innovative efficiency becomes crucial.

Innovation, is totally and basically influenced and altered by human resources. Employees with diverse backgrounds bring to bear their own perspectives, ideas and experiences, helping to create organizations that are resilient and effective, and which outperform organization that do not invest in diversity. Mainly due to this reason, when it comes to empowering innovative efficiency, many have the basic knowledge to upgrade their organization, for example, hiring difference people from different background especially education. Many intuitively thought that diversity is the key drive (V. Eswaran, 2019) when it comes to innovation and yes, all from every aspects of organization are trying to focus on achieving it. Based on that logic of "diversity can enhance innovative power", many are trying very hard to upgrade to their workplace to be diversified.

Due to the reasons of empowering innovative efficiency, becoming an effective diversified workplace is crucial and how to become an effective one is literally becomes lethal though everyone knows that all is based on its management. Upgrading workplace to being

diverse is already difficult to launch and how to manage that diverse team to be an effective one makes it more difficult due to the reasons of its management. Diversity has the same nature as other factors which can be both positive and negative influences based on the applied management in the workplace, and when trying to find the reasons of making diversity management to be difficult to launch is mainly based on conflict.

Though many intuitively knows that diversity is good for the business, how to become an effective diversity in the workplace still quite unsure and puzzled. Credible researchers such as McKinsey & Co and others have shown that achieving diversity in real-life practice can make a business succeed by maximizing its efficiency and productivity, but diversity is not easy to achieve (Shemla, 2018). Due to the lack of understanding or focusing to achieve only on the goal of diversity and less focused on its management gradually makes diversity workplace to be less effective. Aside from these negative aspects, achieving diversity is still one of the top trends that everyone is trying to achieve when it comes to achieving innovation. Failure of these three will not provide a completed successful organization so these three steps should be focused equally and precisely.

Every man is different and winning or losing, simply based on the way we utilizing of our own special characteristic in real life practice. One who knows how to use well reach the top and the one with no ideas will stay at the bottom. Such phenomena are more prominent for business organization as everyone trying to be different than the typical characteristic, which is simply described as business logic. And one question arose from that is how to make benefit and where to use it? Being different, a natural phenomenon, is the main element of being diverse, and which is also the main cause of being conflict. Conflict can be a benefit or threat depends on the resolution and handling techniques.

Apart from trying workplace to become diversified, the other aspect which can focus to empowering innovation is conflict handling. To empower innovative efficiency, diversity is important. And to become an effective diversity, it is a must to have a great knowledge of managing diversity especially conflict, its negative consequence. Conflict itself is unavoidable or unstoppable among human beings (French D, 1998) but conflict has the nature of whether it can be both benefit or threat to the organization depends on the resolution and handling techniques. When it negative aspects is surpassed, it can be the greatest strengths to the community that makes, conflict becomes special and awareness of conflict management becomes important and practice in our lives.

Conflicts is almost universally perceived as a negative occurrence but conflict, a result of having different perception cannot be described just in a bad way. Conflict is a natural phenomenon that is encountered by every individual and it is virtually impossible to avoid. However, conflicts can bring opportunities when its negative aspect is handled with rational and effective technique. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and apply the effective resolution techniques (Manjunatha, 2015).

For good ideas and true innovation, it simply needs human interaction, conflict, argument, debate (M, Heffernan 2006). Trying to achieve diversity is more difficult than launching conflict encouraging community. This research will explain conflict simulation can be considered as the underlying drive of empowering innovation and reconstruction of healthy conflict encouraging community will be more developed than the organization which is trying to upgrade diversity. Conflict as a result of having different perception from diverse condition is easy to create and if it manage well, it can be the greatest source of innovative efficiency than trying to achieve diversity. Nowadays, conflicts are welcomed with positive attitude and acknowledge that everyone is different and to overcome these negatives aspects of conflicts is one of the challenging stuffs for the organization.

Even a least significance amount of individual differences can be a reason for a conflict to happen (Sineriz, M.H, 2018). Conflict is very likely to happen especially in organization whether is diverse and different. Researchers believe that conflict handling is crucial and removing its negative aspects can be benefits to the society. Compared with upgrading diversity, conflict simulation is much easier and which also gives the same result as diversity. Therefore, in this study, it will investigate such topics including how to react and response diversity and conflict related problems effectively and ethically to create innovative community, and which drive should be applied more to become an effective organization and more. All the details and finding results will be followed by theories, definitions, researches based analysis and some related articles from the reliable source.

1.1. Objective

The purpose of this research is to point out

- Innovation is necessary for survival
- Conflict impacts on business community
- How does it link with the workplace diversity and its effects on innovative efficiency

- Moreover, its main objective as recommending workplace to appreciate conflict and ways to become a healthy workplace by enhancing its opportunities.

1.2. Scope of the Study

This scope of the study can be applied to the following processes:

- Organizational Behavior: "Every man is different" and this study will remind to acknowledge and respect such differences made by the diversity
- Diversity in the workplace: Diversity becomes one of the development goals in this business era but conflict as it consequences need to be considered to create effective diversity
- Workplace conflict: concepts of conflicts and its impact on business organization and conflict stimulation and conflict resolution
- Methodology: this study will also covered methods and management models for conflict management in the workplace
- Innovation through Conflict- why conflict is necessary for innovation

1.3. Research Significance

Conflict, a common phenomenon in each organization, also has a strong impact on economy depends on the ways of its management. Either positive benefits or negative outcomes can be occurred as its consequences. Thus, conflict needs to be considered as one of the most important priorities and take action to make competitive advantages through conflict. This study will raise the awareness of conflict drive on innovation based on the organizational differences.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

This chapter will cover scientific definitions, theories and a few articles related to the topic. Depend on the relationship between these terms, as diversity, conflict and innovation and the links between each other and some of its related factors and influence of each.

2:1 Workplace Diversity

By itself, the dictionary definitions of term 'Diversity' is fairly similar. It is described in many ways as 'Diversity' indicates the point of being difference. In Cambridge Dictionary,

condition or the state of being different or varied, or having of many different ideas or opinions about something is called diversity. It also described that diversity is the state of many different things existing together in a group. Merriam-Webster described its definition as the state of different elements existing together or the condition having of variety especially, different types of people such as people of different races, or cultures, in a group or organization.

As it described above, diversity can be generally or simply stated as the condition of being difference such as age, gender, races, ethnic, culture, belief, socio-economic statute, experience, skills or other ideologies. State or groups having of all these difference elements are called diversity. Every man can be different and having a significance amount of difference can become a diversity so the concept of diversity is understanding that every individual is unique and recognizing individual differences.

Reshaping workplace or upgrading it to being diverse is one of the trends that every workplace insisted and it becomes one of a business necessity that can ensure a benefit of leading a business to a whole new level. Having workplace diversity becomes crucial for the business environment and based on the research done by the McKinsey & Co and other credible researchers, having diversity makes organization more effective, more successful and more profitable (Shemla, 2018). A report of 35% of financial success were based on those with the most ethnic and racial diversity (McKinsey, 2015).

Having workplace diversity can lead you to increase the creativity and if it is managed well, it will be a great help to increase the employee insight and later to achieve the goals of productivity and innovation (Source T. Lyft, 2018). Having diversity can help a business to get many benefits but also the way to achieve diversity is not easy and the company with the deep insight of diversity and best ways of handling can have a more solid benefits than the one without strategies (Vaux & Seidel, 2019).

2:1:1 Pros and Cons of Having Workplace Diversity

In recent few years, having workplace diversity is one of the workplace trends that every company trying to achieve and also in 2019, it is still one of these 7 trends that need to be adopted, in order to reshape and upgrade employee's productivities and achieve better business results (Author G, 2019). There are several benefits that can be fostered by having diversity in a workplace, but it can be a mess to an organization that lead to be a severe deterioration.

No matter how small or large the size of a business is, having diversity can help to foster creativity by having a wide range of perspective and ideas (Deering, 2015). Strength lies in differences not in similarities (S.R Covey, 2005), and yes, having differences, dynamic network of workplace can widen the skills or the knowledge of each individual, which gives the greatest strength to achieve the goal of business development. Having a wide range of skillful employees with different background can help a business to maximize its efficiency such as innovative and productive efficiency.

Diversity is the act of thinking independently together. Thinking differently will give the outcomes of getting different results, as it arose from different ideas and perspectives, these make a team or a community end up getting conflicts. "Conflict its own is neither good nor bad- it depends on how it's managed," says Kaveh Mir, author of *"Wars at Work: An action guide for resolving workplace battles"* "Differences of wants and needs can act as an obstacle to reach your goal. Or, handled well, it can become a hidden resource that brings out innovation." (Zetlin, 2013) "If we manage conflict constructively, we harness its energy for creativity and development" – Kenneth Kaye (Source- Causely.com).

Diversified workplace surely helps to achieve innovative efficiency but also have some negative consequences. Due to the insufficiency of financial supply or supply or lack of its knowledge, when it comes to dealing with diversity, many are facing the problems of failure. No matter how much they have been tried to achieve diversity, its aspects of empower innovation becomes less effective than ever due to the lack of its management. Being different, having dynamic network can widen the skills or the knowledge of each individual, which gives the greatest strength to achieve the goal innovation and growth, but it also the origin of where such negative consequences uprising. So, to be an effective community, every organization must be aware of these three steps, start, create and manage.

Conflict, as diversity's consequences can yield innovative efficiency when its negative aspect is wipe out for workplace that lead business innovation to become effective and productive. Diversity conflicts can give both pros and cons for the business environment, when it well handled it can be a great help for the innovative creativity and the growth, but if it is not well manage, it can be destructive for organizational performance (Turkalj, Fosic & Dujak, 2008).

Diversity can help to maximize work benefits by changing work culture to a whole new level. And the most important is knowing how to leverage diversity benefits. If it is build and

managed well in a workplace, it can pertain a variety of benefits to the business and help to maximize the potential of having a wide variety of various perspectives, creativity, innovation, and reduction of turn-over rate.

2:2: Understanding Conflict; Conflict as a Necessary Evil

Conflict is almost universally perceived as a negative occurrence. Conflict itself can create a dynamic situation which can be either negative or positive influence on organization than the steady environment with no changes, thus, such reasons made conflict as necessary evil, can be a competitive advantages whether the nature of it seems to be a negative influence.

Conflict simply can occur based on the condition of having difference opinions or results, it nature itself has the possibilities of either negative or positive consequences can be followed. From one perspective, conflicts are just disputes or disagreement that gives only negative effects to organization and need to be wipe out or avoid, but from another point of view, conflict is necessary and important for enhancing innovative and productive efficiency and in many ways. Conflict is almost universally perceived as a negative occurrence. As a result of perception difference, it cannot be described only in a bad way. Where there is disagreement, there is an inherent potential for growth and development (Myatt, 2015).

2:3: Understanding Conflict; Characteristics of Conflict

Conflict can be determined in many ways. The term conflict can be stated as the appearance of difference, difference of opinions of interests (Mary Parker Follett, 2013). Disagreements based on variation of interests and values or goals of individuals or groups are called conflicts (Turkalj, Fosic & Dujak, 2008). It generally can be defined as the mental struggles resulting from a competitive or opposing actions, wants or drives.

Conflict, a common phenomenon in an organization, is almost universally perceived as a negative occurrence. Conflicts is a result of perception and it cannot be described only in a bad way. Conflicts cannot be avoided but it is possible to manage and change them into a positive benefits by utilizing resolutions well.

2:4 Conflict Management

Conflicts management is the understanding of conflict happening and taking action instead of using the method of avoiding (to recognize conflicts, find the right techniques to apply to maximize it opportunities). The key element of conflict management is having the

ability to identity conflict and manage them effectively and efficiently by applying the right techniques (Paul Mckinney). Methods of conflict handling can be different depend on its nature. There are many types of conflicts exposed by the business industry and resolution models and applied strategies can be varied.

The objective of conflict management is to maximize the potential of its benefits by reducing the possibilities of risks occurring in the future. Conflict itself can becomes troublesome and give a negative impact on cost, time, quality, and even on system performance, when they are not well managed. However, it can bring opportunities when its negative aspects is deal with rational and effective technique, therefore it is crucial to recognize and apply the effective resolution techniques (Manjunatha, 2015).

2:4:1 Five common types of Conflict in a Workplace

These five types of workplace conflicts are the most common in the business organization.

- Interdependent conflict- the situation occurs when one person performance is depend on the others performance
- Differ in Styles- conflicts based on the different preferences and styles individual acts
- Different in background and genre
- Different in leadership styles
- Personality clashes (Source- Sessoms, 2017).

2:4:2 Five Types of Conflict Resolution Strategies

According to the famous researches and credible researchers, five models of resolutions are mostly used in practice as for the purpose of conflict management and they are called **integrating, compromising, competing, smoothing and avoiding**. These five steps are acknowledged as the most effective strategies when it comes with conflicts handling. But how to apply the proper resolution can be different accordance with different characteristics of conflict.

2:4:3 Steps of conflict handling methods are as follow;

- Identity conflict whether it has negative or positive impacts on society: having more information about conflict occurrence so that precise resolution can be applied

- Determine the root of the conflict or looks beneath the surface to identify deeper issues: knowing its origin of where and how conflict arose can help in later resolution making progress
- Propose ways to resolve the conflict- normally based on the types and characteristic and result expectation based on the organization
- Find a middle ground so that helps to make individual to have a wide range of perspective and can make more exact and rightful resolution
- Be sensitive towards others' feelings- understanding of individuals differences and perspective, which can be great help in choosing the right resolution
- Compromise: final process of handling conflict, by setting an agreement reached by an arguments that effect economy in a positive ways. (Source- Forbes by Myatt, 2015 & Shonk 2019).

However, there is no unique scientific resolution to handle conflict. It can be different based on the composition of a team or nature or characteristics of conflict phenomenon and much more. In generally and basically, before choosing these above conditions, there are two important steps that need to be followed as prior, in order to apply a proper resolution.

- Know yourself – acknowledge everyone is different
- Stay on the facts – stay on the present moment and describe conflict in term of facts and resolve it based on the facts

When a conflict is occurred, the present moment will be the great help to find the origin of conflict, which will helps in the process called making right resolution so it (M. McGowan, 2016). Knowing that everyone can be different in their own ways can bring a positive mindset which can help to get more righteous solution when it comes to dealing with conflict. Therefore, these two steps should be followed and are very important when it comes to dealing with not only the negative consequences of diversity workplace but also for the positive conflict simulation for the enhancing workplace innovation.

2:5 Innovation through Conflicts

Many researches have shown that homogeneous work environment cannot contribute flourishing creativity solutions. A surprising discovery done by using design thinking as a confrontation tool "Curious Confrontation", defined as "facing differing ideas and mindsets

with the desire to investigate and learn" can offer a constructive management of diverse thinking and society that enhance the innovation opportunities (T. Lockwood, E. Papke, 2015).

Every each of company growth is defined by its employees and the uniqueness of the product the company is selling. Hence the importance of innovative efficiency cannot be excluded from the organization's perspective, be it in sales or product design. Hiring employees with diverse backgrounds, knowledge, beliefs or interests can strengthen their skill in creativity (Siddik, 2019).

Upgrading diversity by managing conflict or making positive conflict to empower innovative opportunities are relatively influence on each other. Avoiding conflict makes a business to be more destructive therefore instead of choosing the ways called avoiding, welcomes conflict as a positive tool and respond to stimulate to get its positive competitive advantages as creative interactions, innovation and employee engagements as well-managed conflicts is good for a business (Baril. M, B, 2017).

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
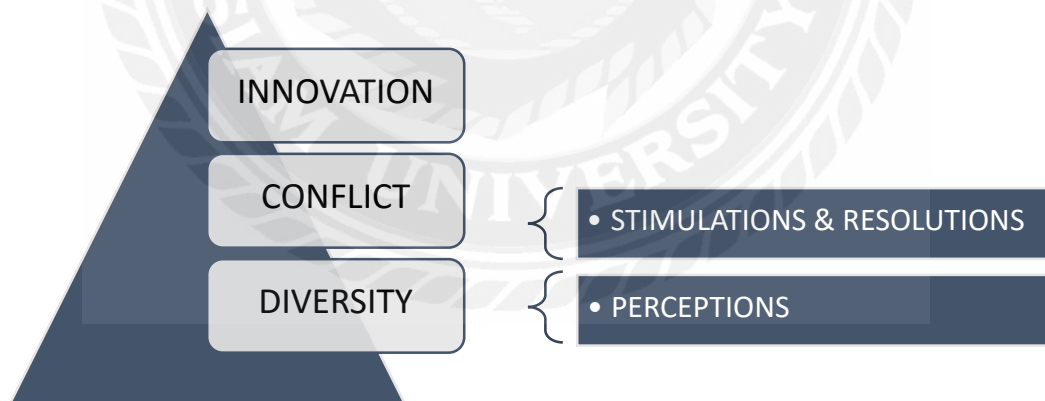

Figure 1: Data-driven innovation-empowering process via diversity management

The conceptual framework of this research was equipped with the documentary analysis. Researcher found that that model used to upgrade innovative efficiency is quite similar with other model so, the figurative model is used to summarize the simple sketch to show how this workflow proceed to be innovative.
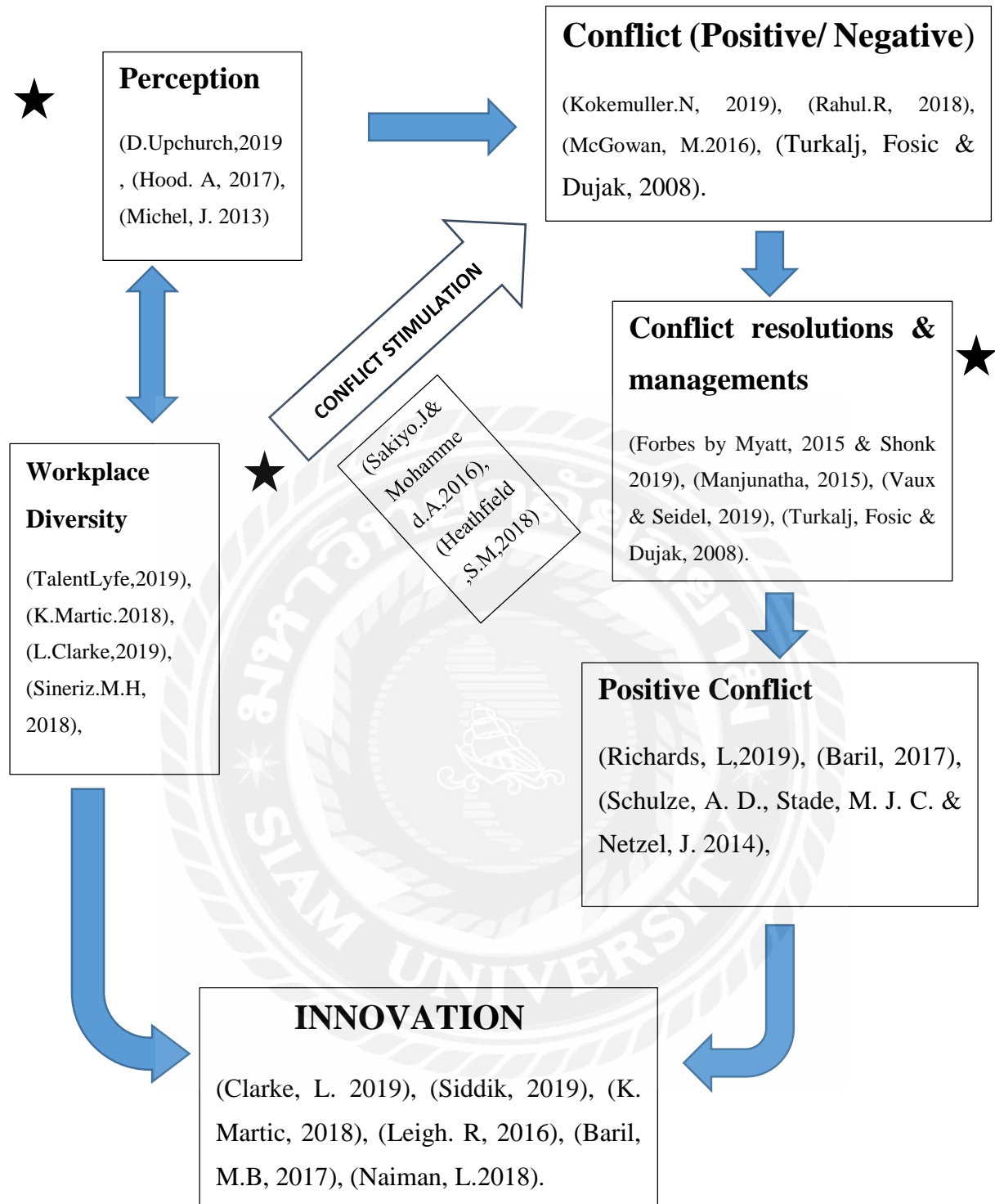
Figure 2: Model used as a Guideline for this Research

In basic of conceptual framework, will be followed by cycle explanation. Showing that, all these factors are related to each other, directly, indirectly or vice versa. In this framework, it mainly presents two factors which play as crucial roles and give strong impacts on empowering workplace innovation.

- Diversified workplace
- Conflict handling

And following to that, several underlying drive and factors which also give the significance influence on innovative efficiency and are also connected to the main factors respectively.

- The important of perception on diversity management and conflict handling
- Management of Negative Conflict
- Simulation of Positive Conflict

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This research uses documentary analysis and all these analysis are made accordance with the compared results which related to the study of the topic, "innovation through conflict in diversity workplace: the impact of conflict factors on diversity". The result has shown that conflict is generally very strongly related to becoming an effective diverse workforce whilst fostering an innovative as competitive advantage (Martic, 2018). Especially, having a cultural diversity can bring a business to maximize its productivity.

When a company recruits and retain a diverse pool of people, it brings about different benefit not only to the company but also the employees (L. Clarke, 2019). As such, it is not surprising that having diversity ensure the business to have a wide range of perspective which are important to make a decision making or the problem solving. When it is handle them well, being an effective diverse workforce will lead a company to a whole new level as its opportunities. Not only diverse workforce has many benefits to a company, but it also has the negative impact to it.

Diversity is the main reason of conflict occurrence and conflict, on its own is unique phenomenon which can be faced both in formal or informal social settings wherever human beings are interacting with each other. Since conflicts itself is impossible to void, so instead trying to avoid or neglect, how to manage or handle to bring opportunities ,which is submerged under it, becomes one of the necessity for the business to empower its competitive advantages.

Many resolutions are applied to respond and control to becoming positive conflict and the company with a strong knowledge of conflict handling with a complete understanding of individual being difference might be the winner among all. Reshaping workplace to achieve a

diverse goal is one of the priorities that every business is trying hard to achieve. Hence the goal of reshaping or upgrading to become a diverse workplace become higher, the higher the percentage of problems facing due to the lack of understanding of its following consequences and insufficient of managing strategies and resolutions.

Workplace diversity simply refers to hiring and retaining employee from a wide range of background (Sineriz, 2018). Perception is a key factor that affects choice of action which leads to a several consequences. Hence, conflict is inevitable and its nature as impossible to void, it may be plausible to contend that individuals use different strategies to handle conflicts depending on the perception of the situation. Perception is a two ways streets, individuals perceived each other in different perspective and different perception results in different responses (D. Upchurch, 2019).

Thus, it is important to study a relationship between perception and choice of selecting strategy in resolving conflicts. And researches proved that conflict itself is often good when it helps to raise and address problems, energize work to be on the appropriate issues, helps people learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences and help people to be real when it motivates them to participate effectively (J. Sakiyo, & A. Mohammed, 2016).

For those business, which are not affordable or have no ability to achieve the goal of workplace diversity, especially small business environment such as SMEs (small and medium enterprises) or family business, can bring similar advantages as having diversity by creating a workplace where a healthy conflict is encouraged, and all the different ideas and opinions are welcomed to help to build a strong workplace community. Knowing how to raise issue and participate in a meaningful work is one of the key success for business and in life (S.M. Heathfield, 2018).

"When there is no conflict, there is no changes", and conflict represent the opportunities to reconsidered which can lead to breakthrough thinking (L. Richards, 2016). Companies that encourage staff to approach conflict in positive and productive ways, can beat the stagnation that opens the doors to competitors and challenges the ability to continue to provide customers with new and innovation solutions for furthermore development (R. Rahul, 2018).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of this study suggest that reshaping diversity only will not be enough to those who want to empower the innovation or productivity. This study will be a great reminder to those who are trying to achieve the goal of being diverse, it will remind not to focus only on reshaping workforce becoming diverse, but also need a backup plan to handle or manage its several consequences from both benefits and negative effects. It will suggest both employers and employees that having great understanding of individual's differences and keen insight to change negative perspective based on these factors is crucial.

Diversity is one of the trends that every company is trying to achieve but when upgrading a diversity or reshaping a workforce, it is necessary to have a proper conflict management strategies while leading to an effective diversity. Managing workplace conflict differentiates between a good and a great manager. This is because managing employees is a challenge due to individual differences in personalities, worldviews and so on. Hence, the manager should be able to determine the problem that needs action fast and that which do not and the conflict management style appropriate for each conflict among the employees, (Sakiyo, J & Mohammed, A, 2016). Companies that encourage staff to approach conflict in positive and productive ways, can beat the stagnation that opens the doors to competitors and challenges the ability to continue to provide customers with new and innovation solutions to meet their needs. (Richards, L. 2016).

As this study final recommendation, conflict can bring a business innovation as diversity does, and thus, conflict simulation and management need to be considered as prior to the business organization than, just focusing on reshaping to become diversity workplace, which is more difficult to achieve. Conflict itself can make a strong impact to a company, whether it can be destructive or effective depends on the action we apply. It needs to be considered as an important priority and require keen insight for its awareness and precise actions need to be followed to wipe out its negative aspects and make benefits from it.

This documentary research investigated the important of conflict management and its purpose as not only to focus on identifying its negative aspects but also to evaluate and respond by applying the right solution so that it can bring furthermore growth to the business. Moreover, minimizing its threats which arose from its negative aspects and enhancing the opportunities by applying the right resolution to make a deliberate consideration toward

conflict of values and interest. Thus, both conflict stimulation and its management play imperative roles in creating a healthy business to enhance the power of innovation efficiency and productivity.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research is based on the analysis done by documentary research. The analysis and recommendations are done by comparison analysis of former researches, theories and articles from reliable sources. It is suggested to distribute the questionnaires in a wide range of time and accurate and comprehensive channels for getting more accurate information. Rather than documentary research, which just provide the theoretical sources, furthermore questionnaires based research analysis, are suggested to get more precise and reliable information to achieve more accurate solution.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The research of this study will provide reliable information or sources for the future works and researches related to that topics. From academic perspectives, this study will provide to future researcher and students to get the overview understanding of conflict and diversity related problems and more importantly, characteristic, concepts related to these two. And as from the business perspective, not only for the managers and employee, but also for the worker within these business fields will understand what is important for the business practice and need to be considered as the priority which need to follow several actions to change its flow. It will provide some crucial information of individual differences and understanding of its will change their perspective on other individuals, which will be a great help in later decision making or applying the right action or strategies for making conflicts resolutions.

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