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Understanding Conflict Escalations in Virtual Teams: A Social Network Approach

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ABSTRACT

One crucial aspect of conflict management in teams is to avoid conflict escalation. When escalation occurs the entire team will be consumed by arguments among disputants and cannot accomplish its task. While many studies have provided theoretic framework for the academic understanding of team conflicts, they did not suggest convenient measurement for the monitoring of the status of team conflicts. This project seeks to bridge this gap by studying four hundred virtual teams that were formed over past ten for complex tasks. We will apply social network analysis to identify the social network patterns associated with conflict escalations. We believe that the results from this research could contribute to the theoretic understanding of the conflicts in virtual teams. In addition, this study could provide managers and team leaders measurements to monitor the status of conflict. Finally, the research described may provide insight for the design of CMC systems.

Keywords

Social Network Analysis, Virtual Teams, Team Conflict.